

Statistical bulletin

Short-Term International Migration for England and Wales: year ending June 2016

Visits to and from the UK lasting less than 1 year analysed by the main reason for visiting, age, sex, citizenship and country of residence.



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Release date:
24 May 2018

Next release:
23 May 2019

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1 . Main points

- Estimates of Short-Term International Migration are available based on three definitions – 1 to 12 or 3 to 12 months for all reasons (including “other” reasons such as holidays or visiting family), and the United Nations (UN) definition of 3 to 12 months for work or study only.
- In the year to June 2016, twice as many people made short-term visits abroad than to England and Wales for 1 to 12 months; this pattern has been similar since reporting began in the year ending June 2004.
- The most common reason for visits to and from England and Wales remains “other”; “other” reasons account for the larger flow of people visiting abroad, who are predominantly British.
- The number of visits to England and Wales for 1 to 12 months has increased since the year ending June 2015, as more EU, particularly EU2 citizens (up 62%) visit for “other” reasons.
- The number of visits abroad for 3 to 12 months increased as 19% more people left for “other” reasons.
- Using the UN definition there are more visits to England and Wales than abroad; the number of visits to England and Wales has increased, in particular for both EU and Non-EU students.
- Most visits to England and Wales under the UN definition are to London or the South East, however, local variation exists; the most common study destinations were Birmingham, Nottingham and Newcastle upon Tyne; while short-term workers most commonly visited in Newham, Brent and Birmingham.
- Of the 1.7 million short-term (under one year) entry clearance visas to the UK issued in 2017, the vast majority were for “other” reasons (87%), including visitors; the next highest category was study; where the number of visas issued increased by 18%.

2 . Statistician's comment

"Notably these figures show that the number of visits for study has increased. More EU, particularly from western EU countries such as France, Germany and Spain, and non-EU students than ever before came to England and Wales to study for 3 to 12 months.

However, overall the picture shows that more people are leaving England and Wales for short term visits than are arriving. This is mainly due to the number of British citizens going on holiday or visiting family. This pattern has been similar since reporting began in the year ending June 2004"

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

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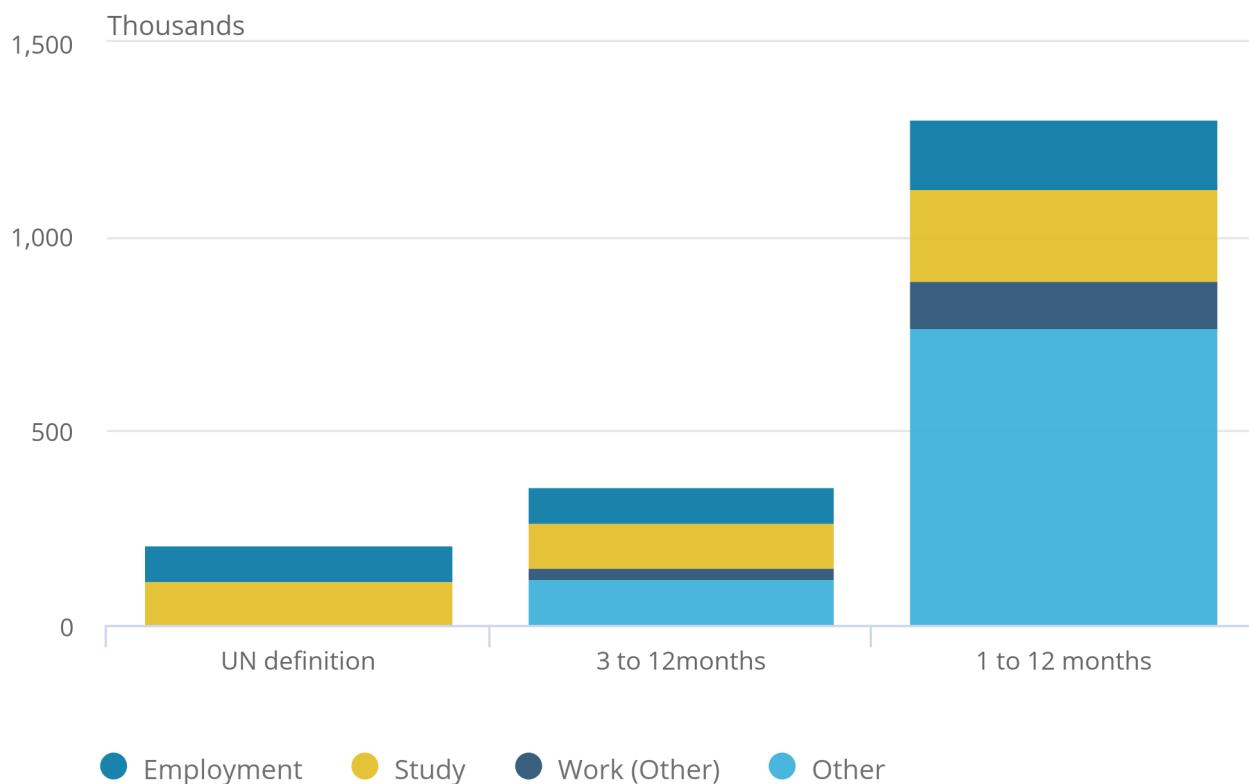
3 . Things you need to know about this release

Office for National Statistics (ONS) produce Short-Term International Migration (STIM) estimates for England and Wales based on three definitions:

- United Nations (UN) definition of a short-term migrant – “a person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least three months but less than a year (12 months), except in cases where the movement to that country is for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends or relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage”
- 3 to 12 months – all reasons for migration, this includes the UN definition and the categories “Work (other)” and “Other”
- 1 to 12 months – all reasons for migration, this includes the above but for 1 to 12 months; as such this definition captures more visits made for holidays and to visit family and friends

Figure 1: Short-Term International immigration by reason for visit England and Wales, year ending June 2016

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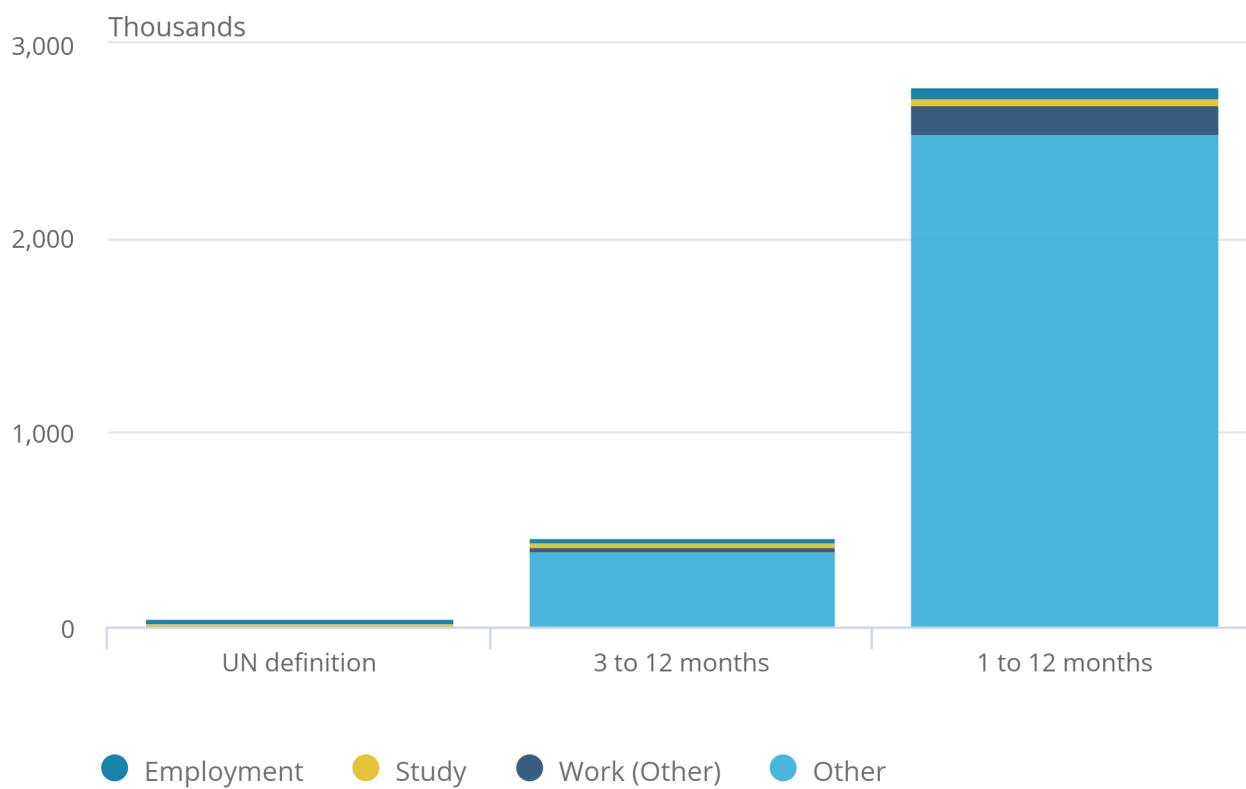
Source: Office for National Statistics - Short-Term International Migration

Notes:

1. Figures for 2016 are provisional.

Figure 2: Short-Term International emigration by reason for visit England and Wales, year ending June 2016

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Source: Office for National Statistics - Short-Term International Migration

Notes:

1. Figures for 2016 are provisional.

The [data tables](#) associated with this publication are available for all three definitions. This bulletin primarily refers to the 3 to 12 months definition as this group are more likely to use resources and services in their destination country than those visiting for one to two months.

STIM estimates are produced directly from the International Passenger Survey (IPS) at the end of the person's stay in the country, so measure actual migration behaviours. This differs from the estimates of [Long-Term International Migration \(LTIM\)](#) published in the [Migration Statistics Quarterly Report \(MSQR\)](#), where people are interviewed at the start of their stay and defined as long-term migrants by their intended length of stay. More timely short-term migration estimates, based on intentions (thereby more consistent with LTIM) were published as part of the [Note on the difference between National Insurance number registrations and the estimate of long-term international migration: 2016](#).

To help improve timeliness, [provisional STIM estimates](#) are published which use 18 months of final IPS data and six months of provisional data. The provisional estimates are then updated the following year.

To be included as a short-term international immigrant to England and Wales under any of these definitions, a person arriving must have been usually resident outside the UK for 12 months or more (these tend to be foreign citizens, but can include British citizens). Similarly, a short-term international emigrant from England and Wales must have been usually resident in the UK for 12 months or more prior to leaving (these tend to be British citizens, but can include foreign citizens).

Adding together LTIM and STIM estimates does not provide a reliable measure of all immigration and emigration to the UK within a specific time-period:

- short-term immigration flows are based on journeys to England and Wales, not the movement of people into and out of the UK, and have methodological differences from LTIM flows
- it is possible for someone to be both a long-term and short-term migrant in a given period
- STIM estimates are based on actual migration behaviours whereas LTIM uses migrants' intentions to infer their length of stay

Although they cannot be added together to provide one single measure of international migration, LTIM and STIM estimates of immigration and emigration should be considered alongside and in the context of each other. These estimates represent different people migrating for different reasons but they can help to provide an overall picture of international migration.

Visa data provides only partial coverage of short-term migrants since it normally relates to those non-European Economic Area (EEA) nationals, who are subject to immigration control, and who require a visa. EEA nationals do not normally require a visa to enter the UK (although a small number of EEA nationals do apply and are issued with visas). Additionally, for those non-EEA nationals classified as "non-visa nationals" (for example, citizens of the USA, Brazil and Japan) a visa is not normally required for visits of less than six months.

It is important to recognise that visa duration does not necessarily represent length of stay. Many individuals will depart prior to the expiry date, whilst a proportion of these may also be granted extensions of stay. Furthermore, visa statistics presented here are for the UK, not England and Wales and include individuals visiting for under one month. Some individuals may visit more than once during the period that their visa is valid for.

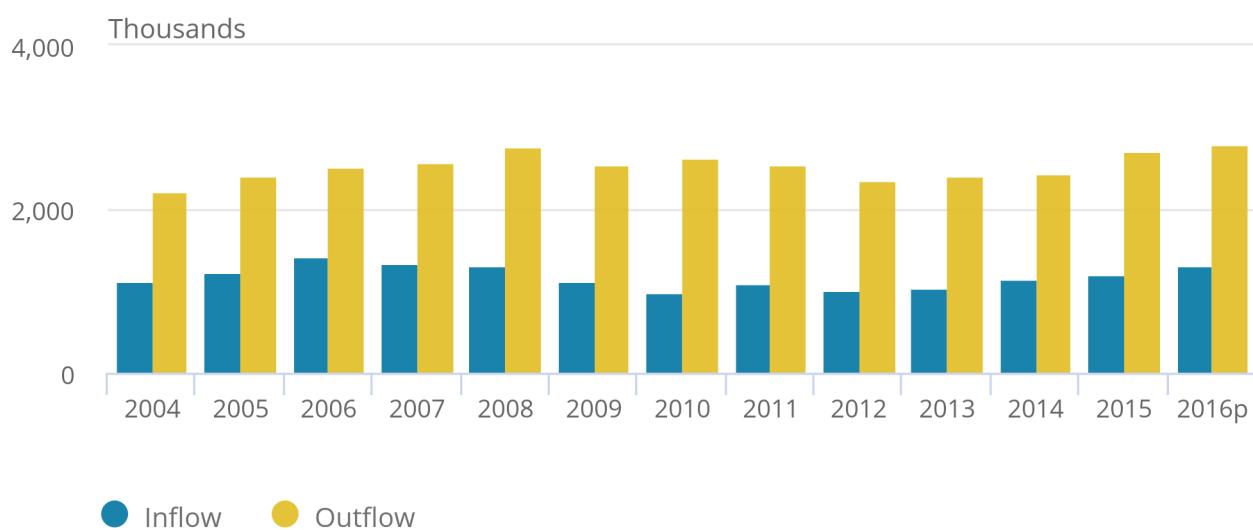
4 . More short-term visits abroad than to England and Wales

Each year more short-term visits are made abroad, than to England and Wales. In the year to June 2016, the number of visits to England and Wales for 1 to 12 months was 1.3 million. The number leaving was more than twice as high, at 2.8 million – similar to levels last seen in 2008 (Figure 3). The number of visits made to England and Wales increased by 103,000 compared with the previous year.

Short-term visits to and from England and Wales have both increased since 2012, which is also consistent with higher levels of tourism to and from the UK over the same period, as reported in [Travel Trends](#).

Figure 3: Short-Term International Migration for 1 to 12 months. England and Wales, year ending June 2004 to 2016

Figure 3: Short-Term International Migration for 1 to 12 months. England and Wales, year ending June 2004 to 2016



Source: Office for National Statistics - Short-Term International Migration

Notes:

1. Figures for 2016 are provisional.

A similar pattern is seen for short-term visits of 3 to 12 months. The number of visits to England and Wales was 358,000 while the number of visits abroad was higher at 465,000, an increase of 75,000 compared with the previous year.

In contrast when using the United Nations (UN) definition, more short-term visits were made to England and Wales (209,000, up 49,000) than abroad (45,000).

For all three definitions, most visits made to England and Wales were from EU and Non-EU citizens while most visits made abroad were by British citizens. For every 10-people visiting England and Wales for 1 to 12 or 3 to 12 months, five were EU, four were non-EU and one was a British citizen. For every 10 people visiting abroad, seven were British, two were non-EU and one was an EU citizen.

For all three definitions, most visits to and from England and Wales are made by people aged 16 to 24. More detailed Short-Term International Migration (STIM) estimates by age and sex are available in Tables STIM.04, 05 and 06 in the [accompanying datasets](#).

In 2017 the number of short-term entry clearance visas¹ issued increased by 143,000 (an increase of 9%) from the previous year, to 1.7 million. Visas (including both short-term entry clearance visas and short-term study visas²) were primarily granted to individuals with East Asian (29%) and European (18%) nationalities.

The impact of short-term migrant stocks on the population

Short-term migrants do not stay for more than 12 months, so do not become “usually resident” in a country; therefore, there are no estimates of “net” Short-Term International Migration (STIM). Instead, the most appropriate estimates to measure the impact of short-term international migration on the population are stocks.

STIM stocks give the average number of “long-term international migrant equivalents” in the country on an average day. For example, two short-term migrants staying six months each, would produce a stock estimate of one. [Short-Term International Migration methodology – national estimates](#) explains how these stock estimates are calculated in more detail.

Similar to the short-term migration flows they are derived from, the out-stock estimates are higher than the in-stock estimates when using the 1 to 12 and 3 to 12-month definitions. That is; people usually resident abroad, who came to England and Wales for 3 to 12 months added the equivalent of 153,000 people to the population. However, people usually resident in England and Wales who visited abroad, added 177,000 people to the populations of their [destination countries](#) – such as Spain (17,000), Australia (16,000) and India (11,000).

Notes for:

1. Short-term entry clearance visas include all visas that are less than 12 months in duration and issued to those who have arrived in the UK for the purposes of: sponsored study, work, family, joining or accompanying and other reasons.
2. [Short-term study visas](#) (formerly known as student visitors) are allowed to come to the UK for six months (or 11 months if they will be studying an English Language course) and cannot extend their stay. These are not included in the “Sponsored study” category or the total number of short-term entry clearance visas.

5 . Why do people make short-term visits?

“Other” reasons

“Other” has consistently been the most common reason for people to come to, and leave from England and Wales. “Other” reasons include recreation, holiday, visits to friends or relatives, medical treatment and religious pilgrimage.

In the year to June 2016, “other” reasons predominantly accounted for the changes seen in both those coming to and leaving from England and Wales.

The number of visits to England and Wales for 1 to 12 months has increased by 103,000 to 1.3 million. Over half (59%) of these visits were for “other” reasons. Around half of this increase was due to more EU citizens visiting England and Wales for “other” reasons, in particular EU2 citizens. Around 92% of visits made abroad for 1 to 12 months were for “other” reasons (Figure 2).

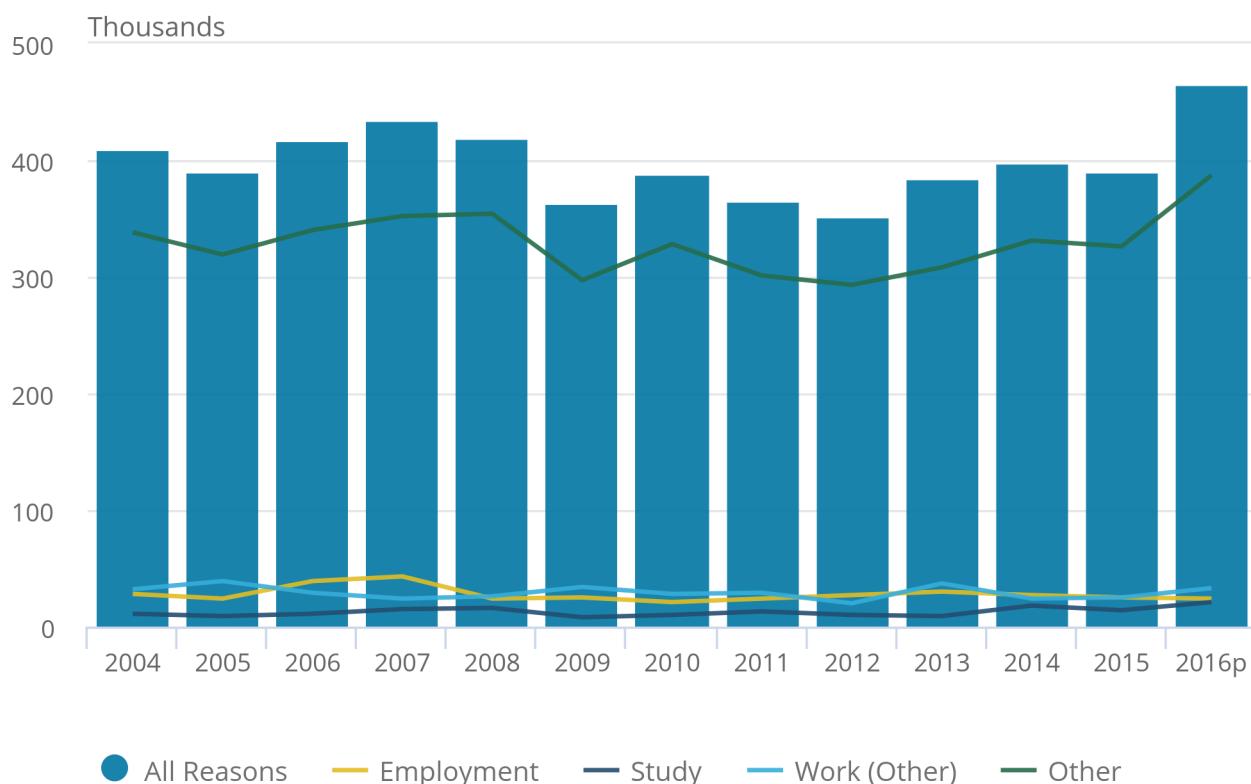
The number of visits abroad for 3 to 12 months was 465,000 – an increase of 75,000 compared with the previous year and the highest estimate recorded. Of those visiting abroad, 83% said they were leaving England and Wales for “other” reasons (Figure 4); , the number of visits abroad by EU15 citizens for the reason “other” increased by 18,000 compared with the previous year.

This is reflected in the [top countries visited](#); where Portugal has joined fellow EU15 countries Spain, France and Italy. Spain remains the most popular country to visit for those leaving England and Wales for 3 to 12 months.

The vast majority of the 1.7 million short-term entry clearance visas issued in 2017 were for what we define as “other” reasons (1.5 million or 87%). Of these, 96% were “visitors”¹. The next highest categories were sponsored study (167,000 or 10%) and work (52,000 or 3%).

Figure 4: Short-Term international emigration for 3 to 12 months by main reason for visit England and Wales, year ending June 2004 to 2016

Figure 4: Short-Term international emigration for 3 to 12 months by main reason for visit England and Wales, year ending June 2004 to 2016



Source: Office for National Statistics - Short-Term International Migration

Notes:

- Figures for 2016 are provisional.

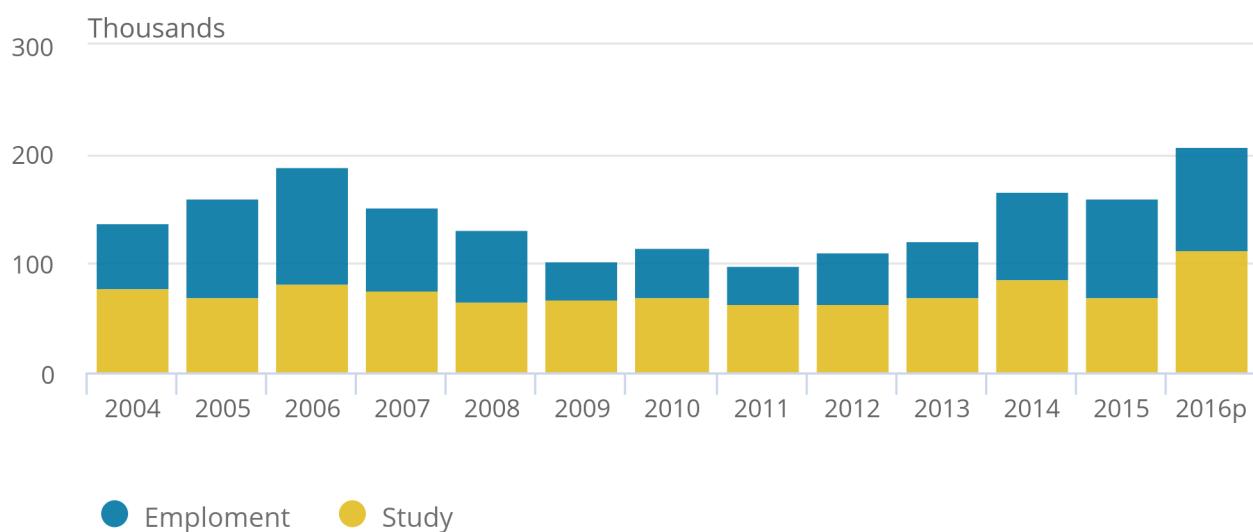
Understandably, people coming to or leaving from England and Wales for “other” reasons, stay the least amount of time on average, while people migrating for work or study stay longer. Short-Term International Migration (STIM) estimates detailing average length of stay are available in Tables STIM.03 and STIM.06 in the [accompanying datasets](#).

Study and work

In the year to June 2016, study has overtaken work to become the second most common reason for visiting England and Wales for 3 to 12 months.

Figure 5: Short-Term International immigration for 3 to 12 months (UN definition) by main reason for migration England and Wales, year ending June 2004 to 2016

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Source: Office for National Statistics - Short-Term International Migration

Notes:

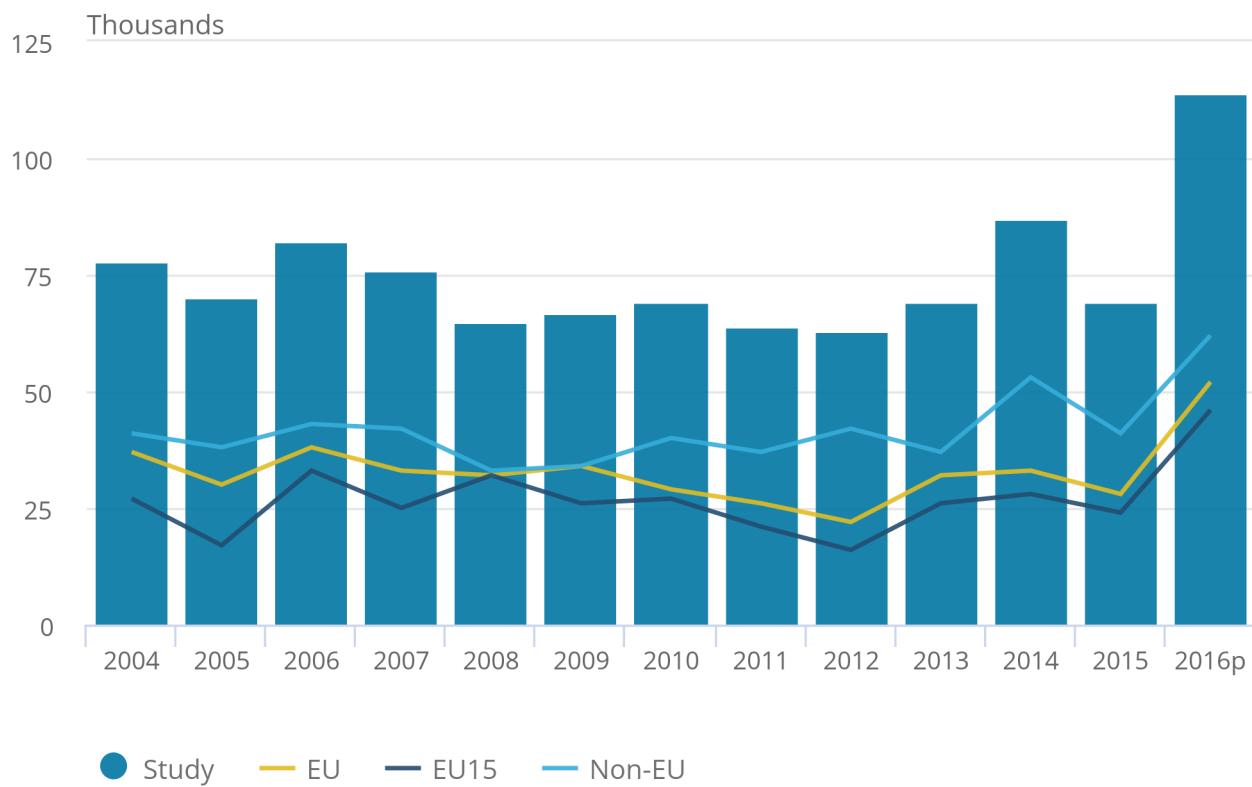
1. Figures for 2016 are provisional.

The number of visits to England and Wales under the United Nations (UN) definition was 209,000 – up 49,000 compared with the previous year and is the highest estimate recorded, but similar to the levels last seen in 2006 (Figure 5).

This increase can be accounted for by an increase of 45,000 in the number of visitors whose main reason was to study (Figure 5). Both EU and Non-EU students are contributing to this increase. (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Short-Term International immigration for 3 to 12 months: main reason for migration study by citizenship England and Wales, year ending June 2004 to 2016

Figure 6: Short-Term International immigration for 3 to 12 months: main reason for migration study by citizenship
England and Wales, year ending June 2004 to 2016



Source: Office for National Statistics - Short-Term International Migration

Notes:

1. Figures for 2016 are provisional.

This is reflected in the [top countries of last residence](#) where EU countries dominate. In the last year, EU15 countries have climbed the rankings. France, Spain and Germany together contributed 54,000 visits to England and Wales under the UN definition.

In 2017, the number of visas issued for sponsored study was 60,000 (an increase of 10% compared with 2016). Of those, 87% (52,200) were issued for 3 to 12 months.

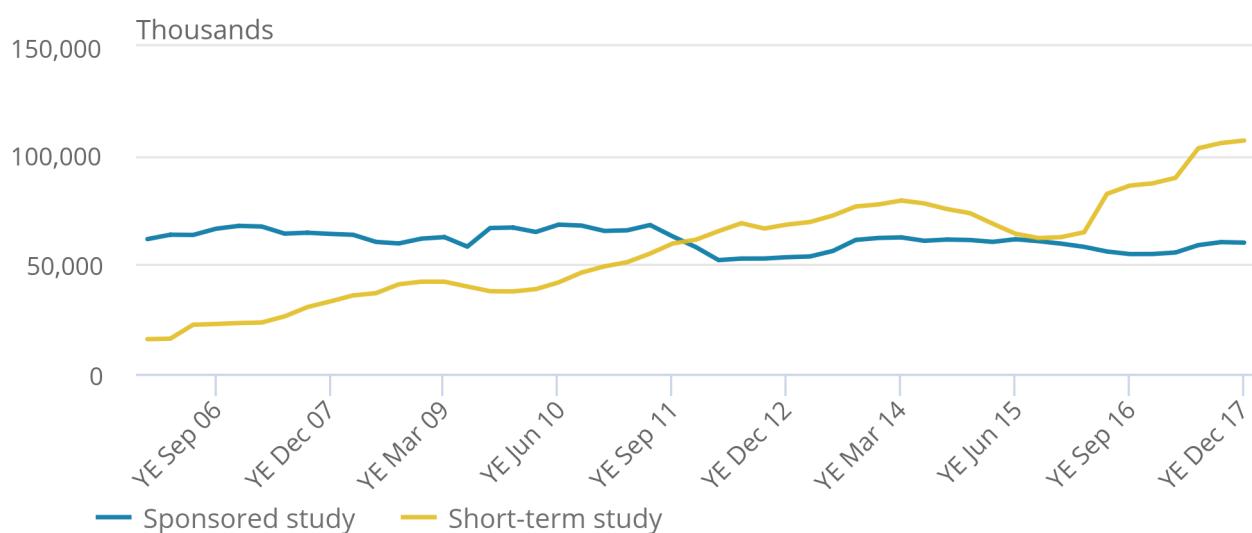
The majority of people entering the UK on the short-term study category² do not require a visa (an estimated 250,000 individuals were admitted in this category in 2016). The number of visas issued for the short-term study category was 107,000 (an increase of 23% compared with 2016). Figure 7 shows trends in short-term visas issued for study.

Combining the short-term sponsored study visas and short-term study visas gives 128,000 visas that were issued for less than six months (76%) and 39,000 (24%) for more than six months but less than a year.

Home Office data on the number of entry clearance visas issued show that of the 165,000 work related visas issued in 2017, 52,000 (32%) were short-term. Short-term visas issued for work fell to 52,000 (down 10% compared with 2016) and of those, 87% (45,240) were issued for 3 to 12 months.

Figure 7: Short-term entry clearance visas issued for sponsored study and short-term study, UK, 2005 to 2017

Figure 7: Short-term entry clearance visas issued for sponsored study and short-term study, UK, 2005 to 2017



Source: Home Office

Notes:

1. Short-term study visas (formerly known as student visitors) allow an individual to come to the UK for 6 months (or 11 months if they will be studying an English Language course) - they cannot extend their stay. These are not included in the 'sponsored study' category.
2. Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU at the start of 2007, meaning that Bulgarian and Romanian nationals no longer required visas to enter the UK, though they have been subject to transitional controls that ended on 31 December 2013.
3. Figures for 2017 are provisional.

Notes for: Why do people make short-term visits?

1. Entry clearance visas are issued for a range of categories including as visitors, work, study, family reasons and other reasons. For further details see the [Home Office User Guide to Immigration Statistics](#).

6 . Where attracts the most short-term students and workers?

Visits to England and Wales using the United Nations (UN) definition can be distributed to local authority level using a range of administrative data sources. For further details of how these estimates are produced, please refer to the [Short-Term International Migration methodology – local authority estimates](#).

Of those visits made to England and Wales in the year to June 2016, just 3% spent most of their time in Wales. The majority (97%) of visits were to England, and of those 1 in 3 were to London. The most popular region outside of London was the South East (30,364 or 15%) and the least popular the North East (7,724 or 4%). However, variation at a local level exists.

Of those visits made for work, 35,092 (38%) visited London. In comparison, only 24,078 (21%) of visits made for study chose London as their destination.

Use our interactive map to see how many short-term visits have been made to your local authority by people coming to work or study:

Figure 8: Local authority district visits of 3 to 12 months for workers and students as a proportion of the total visits for work and study for England and Wales in the year to June 2016

Differences can be seen in the chosen destinations of those visiting for work and study. This is reflected in the 10 most common local authorities that students and workers reside in (Table 1). Eight of the 10 most common destinations for workers are in London, in comparison to just two London local authorities for students.

Table 1: Most common local authority districts for students and workers visiting England and Wales for 3 to 12 months, year ending June 2016

Students		Workers	
Birmingham	4,354	Newham	3,007
Nottingham	3,898	Brent	2,616
Newcastle upon Tyne	3,652	Birmingham	2,112
Manchester	3,640	Waltham Forest	1,946
Oxford	3,049	Tower Hamlets	1,824
Sheffield	3,004	Haringey	1,812
Coventry	2,971	Ealing	1,692
Westminster	2,903	Manchester	1,499
Cambridge	2,731	Barnet	1,499
Camden	2,507	Westminster	1,411

Source: Short-Term International Migration (STIM.07) - Office for National Statistics

1. Estimates for 2016 are provisional.

2. Local authority level estimates are provided unrounded to the nearest unit - this is to enable and encourage further calculations and analysis; the estimates must not be assumed to be as exact as the level of detail implied by unit level data.

7 . Links to related Statistics

Today (24 May 2018) the regular quarterly outputs are released across the Government Statistical Service:

- Home Office [Immigration Statistics](#), January to March 2018
- Department for Work and Pensions [National Insurance Number allocations to adult overseas nationals](#) to March 2018

Today ONS also releases:

- [the Migration Statistics Transformation update paper](#)
- [Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality](#) for the year ending December 2017

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8 . Quality and methodology

The Short-term International Migration (STIM) Quality and Methodology reports for [England and Wales](#) and [Local Authorities](#) contain important information on:

- the strengths and limitations of the data and how it compares with related data
- uses and users 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](#).