

Statistical bulletin

Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality: 2018

Latest population estimates for the UK by country of birth and nationality, covering the period from 2004 to the year ending December 2018.



Contact:
Ann Blake
migstatsunit@ons.gov.uk
+44 (0)1329 444097

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1 . Other migration outputs in this release

As part of our ongoing work to improve bulletins, commentary on other international migration outputs released today (24 May 2019) can be found on the following pages:

- [Migration Statistics Quarterly Report: May 2019](#)
- [Short-Term International Migration for England and Wales: year ending June 2017](#)

Caution comparing migration estimates from different survey sources

The latest population of the UK by country of birth and nationality estimates are measured using the Annual Population Survey (APS). The APS is not designed to measure long-term international migration (LTIM) but does give insights into changes in our population. While for overall migration the long-term trends are similar, it has shown different patterns to LTIM for changes in EU and non-EU migration. The most recent figures for overall migration are also further apart than we have seen previously.

As we progress with our recently published [workplan](#), which also considers the Labour Force Survey (LFS), we will make more detailed comparisons between sources, and look at how survey design, sample sizes and response patterns influence the results. We will aim to complete this work as soon as we can so this can help us better understand trends in migration from all sources, feed into our reporting and our [transformation programme](#).

2 . Main points

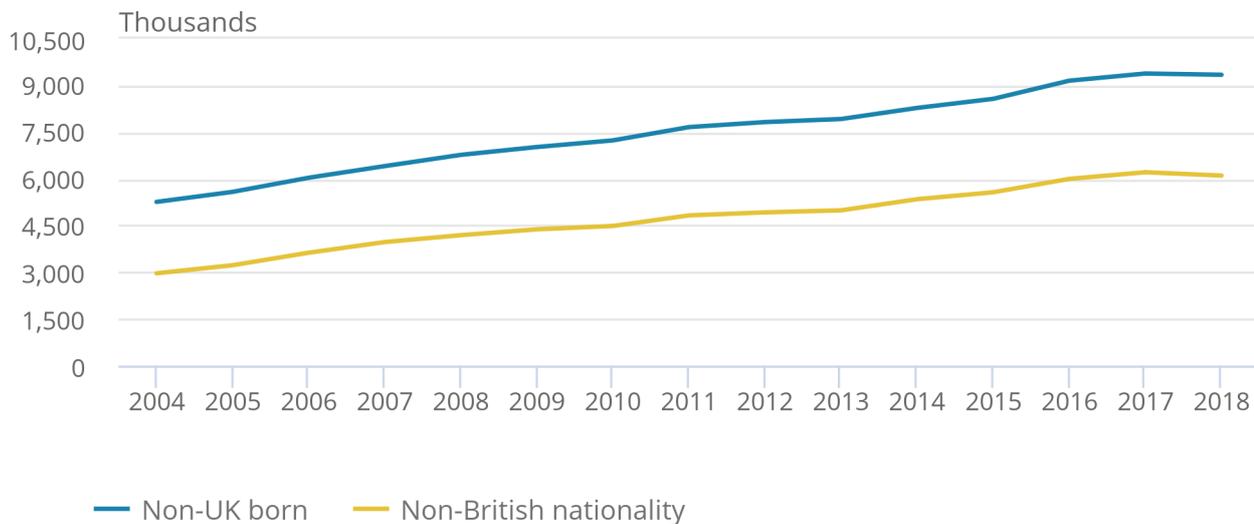
In 2018, the non-UK born population was 9.3 million and non-British was 6.1 million, which were both similar to 2017 levels, following continual increases since reporting began in 2004.

Figure 1: Non-UK born and non-British populations in 2018 were similar to 2017 levels

Estimates of the non-UK born and non-British resident population of the UK, 2004 to 2018

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Estimates of the non-UK born and non-British resident population of the UK, 2004 to 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

The number of people with an EU nationality decreased in 2018 compared with 2017, mainly accounted for by those holding EU8 nationality, particularly Polish.

Despite the recent decline, Polish has continued to be the most common non-British nationality in the UK since 2007; Poland and India are the most common non-UK countries of birth.

London remains the region with the largest proportion of non-UK born and non-British populations.

3 . Non-UK populations similar to 2017 levels, following previous continual increases

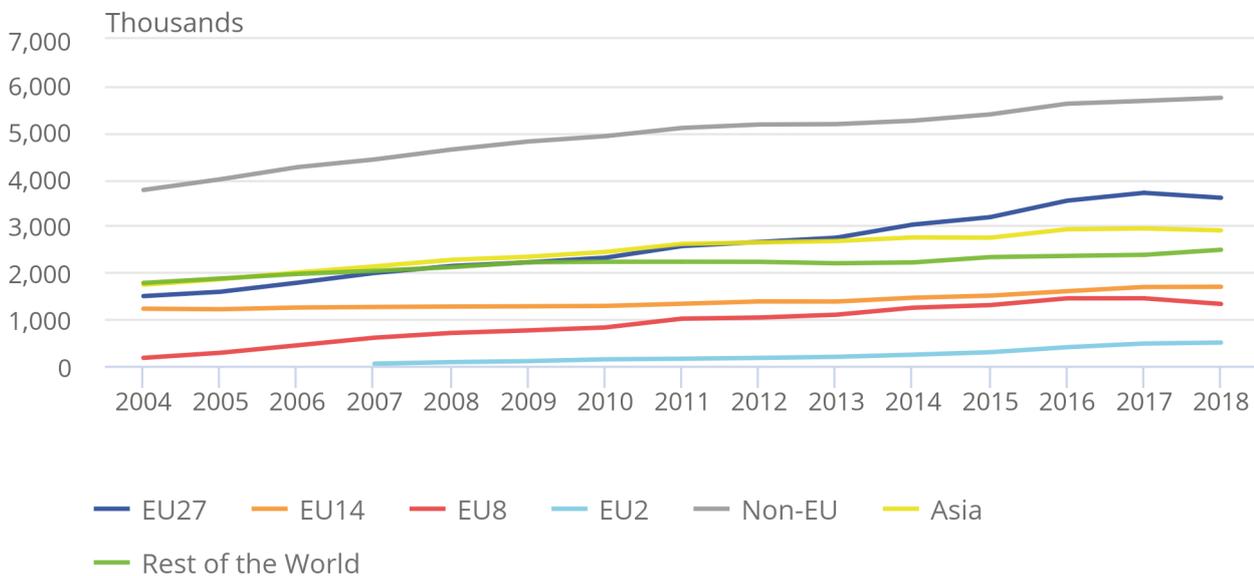
In 2018, the non-UK populations (non-UK born and non-British nationals) of the UK were similar to 2017 levels, following continual increases since reporting began in 2004 (Figure 1).

Figure 2: Non-EU born population has seen gradual increases and EU born population has stabilised over the last two years

Estimates of the non-UK born resident population of the UK by country of birth, 2004 to 2018

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Estimates of the non-UK born resident population of the UK by country of birth, 2004 to 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

Notes:

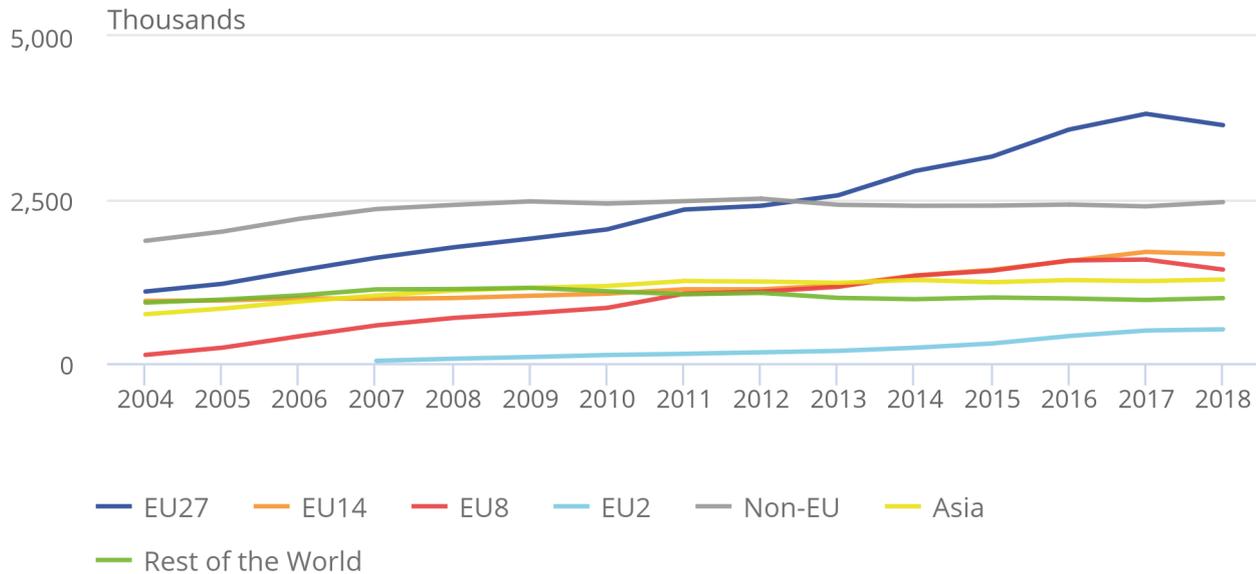
1. EU27 is the sum of EU14, EU8 and EU2, plus Malta, Cyprus and Croatia (from 1 July 2013). These three countries are not shown on the chart separately.
2. Non-EU is the sum of Asia, the Rest of the World and the rest of Europe. The rest of Europe grouping is not shown on the chart.

Figure 3: EU national population decreased in 2018 compared with 2017 and non-EU national population remained broadly stable

Estimates of the non-British resident population of the UK by nationality, 2004 to 2018

Figure 3: EU national population decreased in 2018 compared with 2017 and non-EU national population remained broadly stable

Estimates of the non-British resident population of the UK by nationality, 2004 to 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

Notes:

1. EU27 is the sum of EU14, EU8, and EU2, plus Malta, Cyprus, and Croatia (from 1 July 2013). These three countries are not shown on the chart separately.
2. Non-EU is the sum of Asia, the Rest of the World, and the rest of Europe. The rest of Europe grouping is not shown on the chart.

In 2018, the non-UK born population was 9.3 million, with around 1 in 7 of the UK population born abroad and the majority (61%) of these were born outside of the EU (5.7 million).

The non-British population was 6.1 million in 2018, where around 1 in 11 of the UK population had a non-British nationality and the majority (60%) of these held an EU nationality (3.6 million) (Table 1).

In 2018, there were 3.7 million people resident in the UK who were born abroad and held British nationality. Non-EU born were more likely to hold British nationality (54%) than those born in the EU (16%).

Table 1: Estimates of the resident population of the UK by country of birth and nationality, 2018

	Country of birth		Nationality	
	Estimate	Percentage	Estimate	Percentage
All residents	65,611	100	65,611	100
UK born/British national	56,245	86	59,481	91
Non-UK born/Non-British national	9,342	14	6,103	9
EU27	3,599	5	3,640	6
EU14	1,691	3	1,666	3
EU8	1,323	2	1,430	2
EU2	495	1	516	1
Non-EU	5,743	9	2,462	4
Asia	2,900	4	1,278	2
Rest of the World	2,484	4	993	2

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes

1. Estimates are in thousands. [Back to table](#)
2. EU27 is the sum of EU14, EU8 and EU2, plus Malta, Cyprus and Croatia (from 1 July 2013). These three countries are not shown in the table separately. [Back to table](#)
3. Non-EU is the sum of Asia, the rest of the World and the rest of Europe. The rest of Europe grouping is not shown in the table. [Back to table](#)

In 2018, the number of people with an EU nationality (3.6 million) decreased compared with 2017 (3.8 million). This decrease follows continual increases since 2004. The decrease can mainly be accounted for by those with EU8 nationalities (down 153,000). Of these EU8 nationalities, the largest decrease was for Polish nationals (down 116,000). For EU8 born a similar pattern was seen.

Despite the recent decline, Polish has been the most common non-British nationality (905,000) in the UK since 2007. Polish nationals accounted for 15% of the total non-British residents in the UK in 2018. The Poland-born population also remained the most common non-UK country of birth, along with India (both estimated at 832,000).

In 2018, the non-EU born population was 5.7 million and has seen gradual increases since 2004; non-EU nationals was 2.5 million and has remained relatively stable since 2008.

Prior to this latest year, the increase in non-UK populations has been largely accounted for by EU populations, particularly the EU2, with those born in Romania, or with Romanian nationality, seeing the largest increases. The Romania-born population more than doubled between 2014 and 2018, from 170,000 to 392,000, and a similar pattern was seen for Romanian nationals.

Annual Population Survey data from the ONS are based on a survey. It is not possible to survey all people resident in the UK, so these statistics are estimates based on a sample, not precise figures.

4 . Non-UK populations vary across the UK

The proportion of the population in local authorities who were born outside the UK, or who held non-British nationality, varied across the UK. The interactive maps (Figure 4) allow you to explore these patterns in more detail.

Figure 4: Population of non-UK born and non-British nationals varies across the UK

Percentage of non-UK born and non-British national populations in Great Britain, by local authority, 2018

[Download the data](#)

London has the highest proportion of non-UK populations

In 2018, the largest proportion of non-UK populations were in London. The region saw the highest proportion of non-UK born residents, at 36%, and non-British residents, at 22%, as seen in Figure 4.

There was one local authority where just over half of the population were born outside of the UK – Brent, at 52%. Both Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster, have just under half (49%) of the population not born in the UK.

Full details of definitions can be found in [International Migration – terms, definitions and frequently asked questions](#).

5 . Measuring these data

Estimates of the population of the UK by country of birth and nationality are based upon data from the Annual Population Survey (APS). The APS is a survey of households in the UK, so does not include most communal establishments, so will exclude non-UK students in halls of residence.

The APS, which began in 2004, is a continuous survey, comprising the Labour Force Survey (LFS), supplemented by sample boosts in England, Wales and Scotland to ensure small areas are sufficiently sampled.

More information on the methodology can be found in the [Population by country of birth and nationality Quality and Methodology Information report](#).

The Government Statistical Service Migration Statistics Transformation Plan is working towards putting administrative data at the core of international migration statistics. On 30 January 2019, Office for National Statistics (ONS) published their latest [update report](#) on our population and migration statistics transformation using administrative data.

As part of the transformation programme a number of differences have been identified when making comparisons between migration data from the Annual Population Survey (APS), Labour Force Survey (LFS) and International Passenger Survey (IPS). We have recently published a [workplan](#) which once complete will help us to better understand the reasons for those differences in the survey sources in the wider context of our transformation work. An update on this work will be published in June.

6 . Strengths and limitations

The Annual Population Survey (APS) is a household survey and so does not cover most people living in communal establishments, some NHS accommodation, or students living in halls of residence who have non-UK resident parents. As a result, the population totals used in APS estimates are not directly comparable with mid-year population estimates, which refer to the entire UK population.

All estimates produced are subject to sampling variability – confidence intervals are used as a measure of the precision of the estimate.

The APS is weighted to be representative by age, sex and region and as such has no control totals for country of birth and nationality.

Estimates are not directly [comparable](#) with estimates of long-term international migration (measured using the International Passenger Survey (IPS)). The APS measures non-UK populations in the UK and is a stock of the population. The IPS measures the numbers of long-term migrants arriving in or leaving the UK, so is a population flow. In addition, the coverage of the two surveys is different.

The [Population by country of birth and nationality Quality and Methodology Information report](#) contains 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

7 . More about migration

[International migration and the education sector – what does the current evidence show?](#)

Article | Released 8 May 2019

An exploration of what the current evidence can tell us about the impact and contribution of international migration on the education sector.

[Update on our population and migration statistics transformation journey: a research engagement report](#)

Article | Released 30 January 2019

An update on our population and migration statistics transformation using administrative data.

[Building our understanding of the migration evidence](#)

Bulletin section 9 | Released 23 August 2018

An update of the Migration Statistics Transformation Programme for August 2018.

[Report on international migration data sources: July 2018](#)

Article | Released 16 July 2018

An update on our migration statistics transformation plans, our recent analysis of Home Office administrative data, in collaboration with Home Office experts, and our International Passenger Survey (IPS) data assurance review.

[Migration statistics transformation update: May 2018](#)

Article | Released 24 May 2018

An update of the Migration Statistics Transformation Programme for May 2018.

[What's happening with international student migration?](#)

Article | Released 24 August 2017

An update on our progress towards developing a better understanding on student migration to and from the UK since the April 2017 update.

8 . You may also be interested in

[ONS international migration articles](#)

All Office for National Statistics (ONS) articles relating to international migration.

[International migration – table of contents](#)

Dataset | Released 28 February 2019

Tool to locate the reference tables for all ONS international migration outputs.

[Local area migration indicators, UK](#)

Dataset | Released 23 August 2018

Spreadsheet bringing together different migration-related data sources at local authority level.

[Home Office migration research and analysis](#)

Research and statistics on migration to support Home Office policy development and operational activity.

[Home Office developments in migration statistics](#)

Article | Released 28 February 2019

Recent changes introduced by Home Office statisticians to a wide range of UK migration statistics.

[Migration Advisory Committee \(MAC\)](#)

The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) is an independent, non-statutory, non-time limited, non-departmental public body that advises the government on migration issues.