

Statistical bulletin

# Long-term international migration, provisional: year ending December 2023

Estimates of UK international migration. Those for year ending (YE) March, June, September and December 2023 are provisional and will be updated when more complete data become available. Those for YE March and June 2023 have been updated and data for YE September and December 2022 are now complete. These are official statistics in development.

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# 1 . Main points

- Long-term net migration (the number of people immigrating minus the number emigrating) was provisionally estimated to be 685,000 in the year ending (YE) December 2023, compared with our updated estimate of 764,000 for the YE December 2022; while it is too early to say if this is the start of a new downward trend, emigration increased in 2023, while new Home Office data show visa applications have fallen in recent months.
- With more complete data on how long people are staying in and out of the UK, our previous provisional estimates published in November 2023 have been updated; long-term net migration for the YE December 2022 and the YE June 2023 is estimated to be 19,000 and 68,000 higher, respectively.
- Following a period of growth since 2021, the provisional estimate for total long-term immigration for the YE December 2023 (1,218,000) was broadly similar to the YE December 2022 (1,257,000), with non-EU arrivals accounting for 85% of the YE December 2023 figure; this bulletin covers a period before the implementation of changes to government policy on legal migration rules for family-, study- and work-related visas, which came into effect at varying dates from January 2024.
- Non-EU immigration for work-related reasons increased from 277,000 in the YE December 2022 to 423,000 in the YE December 2023, replacing study as the main reason for long-term migration; almost half of those immigrating for work-related reasons came from India or Nigeria, most commonly in the health and social care sector.
- The number of non-EU nationals arriving as dependants of those on long-term work visas has overtaken the number of main applicants, increasing from 125,000 to 219,000 for dependant applicants and from 152,000 to 204,000 for main applicants, in the YE December 2023.
- There are signs that emigration is starting to increase, particularly among non-EU nationals who initially arrived in the UK on study-related visas (91,000 in the YE December 2022 to 133,000 in the YE December 2023); this likely results from the previous increase in the number of students who arrived following the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and includes those who arrived as students and transitioned to another visa type at the end of their studies.

These are [official statistics in development](#), which means estimates may be revised and updated as improvements are introduced and as further and more recent data become available. Read more in [Section 9: Measuring the data](#).

## 2 . Long-term immigration

Our estimates show that there has been a marked change in long-term immigration patterns since 2021. The ending of free movement of those from the European Union coupled with the introduction of a new immigration system in January 2021, easing of restrictions after the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and external events such as the war in Ukraine have all had an impact.

Migration policies are regularly adapted to changing circumstances; recent changes include a review of the shortage occupation list, an increase in the salary threshold for a "Skilled Worker" visa, and a change to the eligibility of dependants. See the Home Office [Reducing Net Migration Factsheet – February 2024](#) article for more information. These policy changes were implemented at varying times from January 2024.

In the year ending (YE) December 2023, the provisional estimate of long-term immigration to the UK was 1,218,000, which is broadly similar to our updated estimate for the YE December 2022 (1,257,000) (Figure 1).

Looking at the historical picture, until 2019, EU nationals were the larger component of total long-term immigration, whereas since 2021, when the new immigration system was introduced and free movement ended for EU nationals, the majority of immigration now comprises non-EU nationals. In our latest estimates for the YE December 2023, non-EU nationals accounted for 85% (1,031,000) of total long-term immigration. This is similar to levels seen in the YE December 2022.

The top five non-EU nationalities for long-term immigration flows into the UK in the YE December 2023 were Indian (250,000), Nigerian (141,000), Chinese (90,000), Pakistani (83,000) and Zimbabwean (36,000) (Table 1). Since 2019, the number of Indian, Nigerian and Pakistani nationals arriving in the UK has seen the largest increase. There were approximately 62,000 more Pakistani nationals, 127,000 more Nigerian nationals and 178,000 more Indian nationals immigrating to the UK in 2023 compared with 2019.

According to Home Office figures for the YE December 2023 on [Why do people come to the UK? To work](#), those from India, Nigeria and Pakistan made up the majority of those granted visas to work in the UK. Indian, Nigerian, Chinese and Pakistani nationals were also identified as the largest contributors to non-EU immigration to the UK on study-related visas in the YE December 2022 in our [Reason for international migration, international students update: May 2024](#).

Table 1: The number of Indian, Nigerian and Pakistani nationals arriving in the UK has seen the largest increase since 2019

Number of non-EU nationals arriving in the UK long-term by nationality for the top 10 highest contributors in year ending (YE) December 2023, between YE December 2019 and YE December 2023

Nationality	YE December 2019 (count)	YE December 2020 (count)	YE December 2021 (count)	YE December 2022 (count)	YE December 2023 (count)	YE December 2023 (rank)
<b>Indian</b>	72,000	76,000	152,000	268,000	250,000	1
<b>Nigerian</b>	14,000	16,000	48,000	121,000	141,000	2
<b>Chinese</b>	51,000	28,000	87,000	97,000	90,000	3
<b>Pakistani</b>	21,000	18,000	33,000	50,000	83,000	4
<b>Zimbabwean</b>	2,000	2,000	4,000	19,000	36,000	5
<b>Ghana</b>	5,000	3,000	7,000	13,000	35,000	6
<b>Bangladesh</b>	6,000	7,000	13,000	23,000	33,000	7
<b>United States of America (USA)</b>	15,000	12,000	18,000	19,000	21,000	8
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	3,000	2,000	5,000	14,000	21,000	9
<b>British National (Overseas)</b>	1,000	2,000	25,000	32,000	19,000	10

Source: Home Office Borders and Immigration data from the Home Office

#### Notes

1. YE: year ending.
2. Non-EU figures are based on Home Office Borders and Immigration data. See Section 8: Measuring the data for more details.
3. Figures do not include those arriving via asylum and humanitarian resettlement routes, though British nationals (overseas) and Ukraine are included in the figures.
4. Estimates for non-EU nationals arriving in the UK by nationality in YE December 2023 have been adjusted to account for early leavers.
5. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand.
6. Read more on the methods, data sources and data quality in Section 9: Strengths and limitations.

Since January 2021, EU nationals have required a visa to move to the UK. However, those with EU settled and pre-settled status can continue to travel to the UK without a visa. Long-term immigration of EU nationals was estimated at 126,000 for the YE December 2023, accounting for 10% of total immigration. This is similar to levels seen in the YE December 2022, where EU nationals arriving in the UK were estimated at 116,000.

British nationals made up the remaining 5% of total long-term immigration in the YE December 2023, with numbers estimated at 61,000. In the YE December 2022, an estimated 88,000 British nationals immigrated to the UK. Current estimates for British nationals are predominantly based on the International Passenger Survey (IPS) and should be treated with caution.

To find out more about immigration over the period from 2012 to 2021, see our article [Estimating UK international migration: 2012 to 2021](#) published on 23 November 2023. See [Section 8: Glossary for definitions of EU, non-EU and British nationals](#).

## Figure 1: Following a period of growth since 2021, the provisional estimate for total immigration for the year ending (YE) December 2023 was broadly similar to the YE December 2022

Number of non-EU, EU, and British nationals immigrating long-term to the UK, between the YE June 2012 and the YE December 2023

### Notes:

1. Read more on the methods, data sources and data quality in [Section 10: Strengths and limitations](#).
2. YE: year ending.
3. Non-EU figures are based on Home Office Borders and Immigration data, EU figures are based on Registration and Population Interaction Database (RAPID) data received from the Department for Work and Pensions and HM Revenue and Customs, and British nationals figures are based on the International Passenger Survey (IPS). See [Section 9: Measuring the data for more details](#).
4. Estimates for British nationals for YE June 2012 to YE June 2021 are based on evidence of population changes between the 2011 Census and Census 2021. Estimates for the YE September 2021 onwards remain based on IPS data.
5. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand. Totals may not equal the sum of individual parts.
6. Estimates for the YE September 2022 to the YE June 2023 have been revised. See [Section 6: Revisions to migration statistics for more information](#).

## Immigration of non-EU nationals by reasons

The provisional estimate for total long-term non-EU immigration for the YE December 2023 (1,031,000) was broadly similar to the YE December 2022 (1,053,000). When looking at non-EU immigration by reasons for immigration, there are observable changes in trends. People arriving long-term on work-related visas is now the most common reason for non-EU immigration, overtaking those arriving on study-related visas for the first time since 2019 (Figure 2). This aligns with the growth in non-EU nationals in employment in [HM Revenue and Customs' Payrolled employments by nationality](#).

Those who had initially arrived on work-related visas (main applicants and dependants) and remained in the UK long-term made up 41% of long-term immigration among non-EU nationals in the YE December 2023 (423,000), compared with 26% in the YE December 2022 (277,000). According to [Home Office Immigration Statistics](#), this growth largely comes from an increase in "Skilled Worker – Health and Care" visa grants, main applicants for which have almost doubled compared with 2022.

Alongside this growth in non-EU work-related immigration comes a shift in the balance between work main applicants and dependants. In the YE December 2022, main applicants accounted for an estimated 55% of non-EU long-term work immigration whereas dependants made up 45%. In the YE December 2023, main applicants accounted for 48% of non-EU work immigration (204,000). Around 9 in 10 (93%) of those arriving on main applicant work visas in the YE December 2023 were aged 18 to 44 years and were mainly female (57%).

Comparatively, non-EU nationals arriving as dependants of those on work visas made up just over half (52%) of non-EU work-related immigration in the YE December 2023 (219,000), an increase which Home Office Immigration Statistics attribute to a rise in the number of dependants accompanying those on "Skilled Worker – Health and Care" visas.

Preliminary analysis indicates that those most likely to bring dependants come from Nigeria, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Zimbabwe and Ghana. Dependants are a mixture of adults and children; of the top ten countries, around 50% of dependants were aged 17 years or under.

In 2021, immediately following the pandemic, levels of non-EU immigration for study saw a large increase once travel restrictions were lifted.

An estimated 379,000 non-EU nationals immigrated long-term on study-related visas (main applicants and dependants) in the YE December 2023, accounting for 37% of non-EU immigration. This is broadly similar compared with the levels seen in the YE December 2022 (419,000) but is an increase on the levels seen in the YE December 2021 (264,000).

Main applicants for study visas made up the majority (73%) of non-EU study immigration in the YE December 2023 (277,000), whilst study-dependant visas made up 27% (102,000). This aligns with figures published on study visas granted that were published in the [Home Office Immigration Statistics](#).

Humanitarian-related immigration also saw a marked change for the YE December 2023; we are now seeing fewer British nationals (overseas) (BN(O)) arriving from Hong Kong and even fewer people from Ukraine. In the YE December 2023, an estimated 50,000 people immigrated long-term on humanitarian visas, a decrease from 160,000 in the YE December 2022 when the events in Ukraine and Hong Kong were more recent. BN(O) arrivals saw a change from 56,000 in the YE December 2022 to 36,000 in the YE December 2023 and estimates for those arriving from Ukraine have declined from 98,000 in the YE December 2022 to 10,000 in the YE December 2023.

Long-term non-EU immigration for family, asylum or "other" reasons have seen small changes in the YE December 2023 when compared with the YE December 2022.

For further information on our methods and assumptions used to include asylum seekers in our estimates see our [International migration research, progress update: May 2024](#).

### **Figure 2: Work is now the most common reason for non-EU immigration, overtaking study, which was the main reason in the year ending (YE) December 2022**

**Number of non-EU nationals immigrating long-term to the UK by reason for immigration, between the YE June 2019 and the YE December 2023**

Source: Home Office Borders and Immigration data from the Home Office

**Notes:**

1. Read more on the methods, data sources and data quality in [Section 10: Strengths and limitations](#).
2. YE: year ending.
3. The reasons for immigration are the initial reasons why an individual has arrived in the UK. It does not show which visa they may have transferred to in order to remain in the UK for longer (that is, 12 or more months).
4. "Other" reasons for immigration include those who arrived on administrative, settlement, visit or other visas.
5. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand. Totals may not equal the sum of individual parts.
6. Estimates for the YE September 2022 to the YE June 2023 have been revised. See [Section 6: Revisions to migration statistics](#) for more information.

### 3 . Long-term emigration

Provisional estimates for long-term emigration in the year ending (YE) December 2023 show early signs of an increase. The number of people emigrating from the UK long-term is estimated at 532,000, which is 39,000 higher than the YE December 2022 (493,000) (Figure 3). This is driven largely by increased emigration from non-EU nationals, particularly among those who initially arrived on a study visa.

For the first time since 2014, non-EU emigration is larger than EU emigration. Non-EU nationals accounted for 44% of total emigration in the YE December 2023 (233,000), compared with 33% in the YE December 2022 (162,000). The estimate for the YE December 2023 is the highest estimate for non-EU long-term emigration on record when comparing emigration for 2012 with 2022.

Meanwhile, provisional estimates for EU nationals indicate that emigration is showing early signs of a decline and is at similar levels seen at the time of the EU referendum vote in 2016. Emigration of EU nationals was estimated at 202,000 for the YE December 2023, accounting for 38% of total emigration. This is a decrease of 37,000 compared with the YE December 2022 (239,000), when EU nationals accounted for 48% of total emigration.

British nationals made up the remaining 18% of emigration in the YE December 2023, with emigration estimated at 98,000. This is broadly similar to the YE December 2022, where the emigration of British nationals was estimated to be 92,000. See [Section 9: Measuring the data](#) for more information on estimates for British nationals.

#### **Figure 3: Provisional estimates are showing early signs that long-term emigration is increasing**

**Number of non-EU, EU, and British nationals emigrating long-term from the UK, between the year ending (YE) June 2012 and the YE December 2023**

**Notes:**

1. Read more on the methods, data sources and data quality in [Section 10: Strengths and limitations](#).
2. YE: year ending.
3. Non-EU figures are based on Home Office Borders and Immigration data, EU figures are based on Registration and Population Interaction Database (RAPID) data received from the Department for Work and Pensions and HM Revenue and Customs, and British nationals figures are based on the International Passenger Survey (IPS). See [Section 9: Measuring the data](#) for more details.
4. Estimates for British nationals for the YE June 2012 to the YE June 2021 are based on evidence of population changes between the 2011 Census and Census 2021. Estimates for the YE September 2021 onwards remain based on IPS data.
5. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand. Totals may not equal the sum of individual parts.
6. Estimates for YE September 2022 to YE June 2023 have been revised. See [Section 6: Revisions to migration statistics](#) for more information.

## Emigration of non-EU nationals by reasons

Long-term emigration of non-EU nationals is showing early signs of an increase (233,000 in the YE December 2023 compared with 162,000 in the YE December 2022). This is true for all reasons for initial immigration, particularly for those emigrating who initially arrived on a study visa (Figure 4). This is expected given the larger numbers of students who have immigrated from 2021 onwards and will have now completed their studies.

In the YE December 2023, 133,000 people who initially arrived on study-related visas left (accounting for 57% of long-term emigration of non-EU nationals). This is an increase from 91,000 in the YE December 2022. This can be partially attributed to the high levels of immigration for study, which we saw post-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, that are now beginning to translate into increased emigration as some complete their studies and leave the UK.

However, our [Reason for international migration, international students update: May 2024](#) shows some long-term international students are staying in the UK longer and transitioning to other visa types rather than leaving at the end of their studies. This is a result of the introduction of the Graduate visa in July 2021, which gives students permission to stay in the UK for at least two years after successfully completing a course in the UK. For an assessment of the impact of the Graduate route, see [the Migration Advisory Committee's Rapid Review of the Graduate Route \(PDF, 1.47MB\)](#).

The levels of emigration of non-EU nationals that had originally immigrated to the UK on work or family visas increased slightly in the YE December 2023, compared with levels seen in the YE December 2022. In the YE December 2023, 49,000 non-EU nationals who initially arrived long-term on work-related visas had emigrated compared with 37,000 in the YE December 2022. For those who arrived on family visas, 38,000 emigrated in the YE December 2023 compared with 25,000 in the YE December 2022.

Non-EU nationals emigrating through asylum, humanitarian and other routes have also seen small increases between the YE December 2022 and the YE December 2023.

### Figure 4: The increase in emigration of non-EU nationals is largest among those who originally arrived on a study-related visa

Number of non-EU nationals emigrating long-term from the UK by reason for immigration, between the year ending (YE) June 2019 and YE December 2023

Notes:



1. Read more on the methods, data sources and data quality in [Section 10: Strengths and limitations](#).
2. YE: year ending.
3. The reasons for immigration are the initial reasons why an individual has arrived in the UK. It does not show which visa they may have transferred to in order to remain in the UK for longer (that is, 12 or more months).
4. "Other" reasons for immigration include those who arrived on administrative, settlement, visit or other visas.
5. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand. Totals may not equal the sum of individual parts.
6. Estimates for the YE September 2022 to the YE June 2023 have been revised. See [Section 6: Revisions to migration statistics](#) for more information.

## 4 . Long-term net migration

Long-term net migration (the number of people immigrating minus the number emigrating) was provisionally estimated to be 685,000 in the year ending (YE) December 2023, compared with our updated estimate of 764,000 for the YE December 2022 (Figure 5). While it is too early to say if this is the start of a new downward trend, emigration increased in 2023 while new Home Office data show visa applications have fallen in recent months.

Innovative new measures of [uncertainty](#) suggest that provisional estimates of net migration have a range of 564,000 to 744,000 in the YE December 2023. This uncertainty interval is calculated so that there is a 95% probability of the true value lying in the interval. Currently, long-term international migration uncertainty intervals only quantify the doubt associated with adjustments to non-EU estimates, adjustments and temporal disaggregation to the EU estimates, as well as sampling error from IPS estimates for British nationals. For more explanation on the uncertainty measures, see [Section 8: Glossary](#). For more information on how these uncertainty ranges have been compiled and their limitations see our [progress update](#).

### Figure 5: Net migration continues to add to the population

Long-term net migration, immigration and emigration in the UK, between the YE December 2018 and the YE December 2023

#### Notes:

1. Read more on the methods, data sources and data quality in [Section 10: Strengths and limitations](#).
2. YE: year ending.
3. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand. Totals may not equal the sum of individual parts.
4. Innovative measures of uncertainty are available for the YE December 2022, YE June 2023 and YE December 2023 only.
5. The uncertainty interval is calculated so that there is a 95% probability of the true value lying in the interval (the lower and upper bounds), if our simulations accurately included all the main sources of uncertainty. A wider interval indicates more uncertainty in the estimate.
6. Estimates for the YE December 2022 and the YE June 2023 have been revised. See [Section 6: Revisions to migration statistics](#) for more information.

Since the introduction of the new immigration system in January 2021, the increase in overall net migration has been predominantly driven by the change in net migration of non-EU nationals (Figure 6). In contrast, the net migration of both EU and British nationals saw more people leave the UK than arrive.

In the latest estimates for the YE December 2023, non-EU net migration saw more people arrive in the UK than leave, with an estimated net migration of 797,000. Although lower than our updated estimate for the YE December 2022 (892,000), partly because of early signs of an increase in emigration, it is too early to say if this is a start of a new downward trend.

Up until 2021, net migration of EU nationals was positive, adding to the UK population, whereas more recently the reverse was true. In the YE December 2023, an estimated 75,000 more EU migrants left than arrived; this is slowing when compared with the YE December 2022 when 123,000 more migrants left than arrived.

Net migration of British nationals was estimated to be an outflow of around 37,000 for the YE December 2023, compared with the YE December 2022 when 4,000 more people left than arrived. See [Section 9: Measuring the data](#) for more information on estimates for British nationals.

### **Figure 6: Since the introduction of the new immigration system in January 2021, the increase in overall long-term net migration has been predominantly driven by the change in net migration of non-EU nationals**

Long-term net migration of non-EU, EU, and British nationals in the UK, between the YE June 2012 and the YE December 2023

#### **Notes:**

1. Read more on the methods, data sources and data quality in [Section 10: Strengths and limitations](#).
2. YE: year ending.
3. Non-EU figures are based on Home Office Borders and Immigration data, EU figures are based on Registration and Population Interaction Database (RAPID) data received from the Department for Work and Pensions and HM Revenue and Customs, and British nationals figures are based on the International Passenger Survey (IPS). See [Section 9: Measuring the data](#) for more details.
4. Estimates for British nationals for the YE June 2012 to the YE June 2021 are based on evidence of population changes between the 2011 Census and Census 2021. Estimates for the YE September 2021 onwards remain based on IPS data.
5. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand. Totals may not equal the sum of individual parts.
6. Estimates for the YE September 2022 to the YE June 2023 have been revised. See [Section 6: Revisions to migration statistics](#) for more information.

## Net migration of non-EU nationals by reasons

Non-EU long-term net migration was 797,000 for the YE December 2023. Although lower than our updated estimate for the YE December 2022 (892,000), it is too early to say if this is a start of a new downward trend. However, the reasons for migration have changed. An increase in those arriving to work has been balanced with decreases in those immigrating via humanitarian, study and asylum routes.

In the YE December 2023, those migrating on work-related visas (main applicants and dependants) made up the largest proportion of non-EU net migration (47%) (Figure 7). This is an increase of 20 percentage points on estimates for the YE December 2022, when study made up the majority of non-EU net migration (37%) followed by work (27%).

A slowing in immigration and a slight increase in emigration for those arriving on study-related visas (main applicants and dependants) has led to a slowing in the growth of net migration for study-related visas; net migration reduced by 80,000 between the YE December 2022, when levels were estimated at 327,000, and the YE December 2023, when levels were estimated at 247,000.

The increase in British nationals (overseas) (BN(O)) arriving from Hong Kong and those arriving on Ukraine visa support schemes that we saw in previous years is now falling. The number of non-EU nationals immigrating for humanitarian reasons saw the largest decrease in net migration, with a decrease of 111,000 between the YE December 2022 and the YE December 2023 (160,000 and 49,000, respectively).

### Figure 7: Those migrating for work-related reasons made up the largest proportion of non-EU net migration in the year ending (YE) December 2023

Long-term net migration in the UK of non-EU nationals by reason for immigration, between the YE June 2019 and the YE December 2023

#### Notes:

1. Read more on the methods, data sources and data quality in [Section 10: Strengths and limitations](#).
2. YE: year ending.
3. The reasons for immigration are the initial reasons why an individual has arrived in the UK. It does not show which visa they may have transferred to in order to remain in the UK for longer (that is, 12 or more months).
4. "Other" reasons for immigration include those who arrived on administrative, settlement, visit or other visas.
5. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand. Totals may not equal the sum of individual parts.
6. Estimates for the YE September 2022 to the YE June 2023 have been revised. See [Section 6: Revisions to migration statistics](#) for more information.

## 5 . Consistency across data sources

We are [transforming](#) population and migration statistics, developing [methods](#) that make more use of administrative data. Understanding the strengths and limitations of each data source is an important part of this transformed system, which you can read about in our [Long-term international migration: quality assuring administrative data](#) article. See our [progress update](#) for more information.

In this bulletin, we have included data up to the year ending (YE) December 2023 to show comparisons with the most recent time points. The YE December 2023 estimates are provisional and provide an early indication of migration at this point in time, however, in comparing with other sources of information on migration trends we can have confidence in these initial estimates of immigration (Figure 8).

## Figure 8: Estimates of non-EU immigration compared with other available data sources

### Breakdown of alternative sources of non-EU immigration estimates between 2018 and 2023

#### Notes:

1. Read more on the methods, data sources and data quality in [Section 10: Strengths and limitations](#).
2. YE: year ending.
3. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand. Totals may not equal the sum of individual parts.
4. Census 2021 non-EU immigration estimation is based on non-UK-born residents who arrived in the last 12 months (from March 2020) in England or Wales and intend to stay for 12 months or more, and the passport they hold.
5. Census is England and Wales only. The other data sources are UK flows.
6. National Insurance numbers (NINOs) registrations are generally required for any adult overseas national looking to claim work or benefits, so will include short-term migrants and people who may have been in the country for a while before registering. We have previously published a note on the difference between NINO registrations explaining the differences between NINO registrations and our long-term international migration estimates. NINO Registration National Statistics are published by the DWP in their NINO allocations to adult overseas nationals entering the UK collection.

## 6 . Revisions to migration statistics

These estimates covering the periods year ending (YE) December 2023 and the YE June 2023 are provisional and give an early indicator of international migration during this time.

These provisional estimates are released with the expectation that they may be revised and updated as further and more complete data become available. This is particularly relevant for long-term international migration statistics, where actual behaviours observed in administrative data may not initially identify someone as a long-term migrant (as defined by the United Nations) until a period of 12 months has passed. This enables us to meet a broader set of user needs. Further details on revisions can be found in our [Revisions policy](#).

In [our datasets](#), we have revised estimates for the YE September 2022 to the YE June 2023. The revisions to estimates of migration for the YE December 2022 and the YE June 2023, which were published in November 2023, are shown in Table 2.

These improvements mean that previously published total net migration estimates for the YE December 2022 have been revised upwards by 2%. In the YE June 2023, net migration has been revised upwards by 10%, with immigration increasing by 5% and emigration decreasing by 2%. For a more detailed explanation of the drivers of revisions, the effects of complete data and planned improvements to our systems for estimating EU and non-EU migration, see our [International Migration Research, progress update: May 2024 article](#).

To provide early indicators of migration, we use assumptions about whether someone will stay or leave for 12 months, informed by past behaviour. Before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, international migration was relatively stable, but there have been changes to the nationalities and behaviours in the population of migrants, impacted by world events and government policy. We are exploring improvements for setting assumptions, including making assumptions at a nationality level and accounting for those who transition onto another visa.

We currently publish international migration estimates twice per year, at the end of May and at the end of November. We anticipate revisions to the YE March, June, September and December 2023 estimates to be published in November 2024. This will be driven by having completed travel information for non-EU nationals arriving up to June 2023, and further travel information for those arriving up to December 2023.

Table 2: Revisions to official migration estimates in development  
 Total estimated changes in immigration, emigration and net migration estimates, UK, year ending (YE) December 2022 and YE June 2023

	YE December 2022			YE June 2023		
	Previous estimate (published November 2023)	Revised estimate (published May 2024)	Difference	Previous estimate (published November 2023)	Revised estimate (published May 2024)	Difference
<b>Immigration</b>						
<b>Non-EU</b>	1,030,000	1,053,000	23,000	968,000	1,025,000	58,000
<b>EU</b>	116,000	116,000	0	129,000	129,000	0
<b>British</b>	88,000	88,000	0	84,000	84,000	0
<b>Total</b>	1,234,000	1,257,000	23,000	1,180,000	1,238,000	58,000
<b>Emigration</b>						
<b>Non-EU</b>	157,000	162,000	4,000	200,000	189,000	-10,000
<b>EU</b>	239,000	239,000	0	215,000	215,000	0
<b>British</b>	92,000	92,000	0	93,000	93,000	0
<b>Total</b>	489,000	493,000	4,000	508,000	498,000	-10,000
<b>Net migration</b>						
<b>Non-EU</b>	873,000	892,000	19,000	768,000	836,000	68,000
<b>EU</b>	-123,000	-123,000	0	-86,000	-86,000	0
<b>British</b>	-4,000	-4,000	0	-10,000	-10,000	0
<b>Total</b>	745,000	764,000	19,000	672,000	740,000	68,000

Source: International Passenger Survey from the Office for National Statistics, Registration and Population Interactions Database from the Department for Work and Pensions, and Borders and Immigration data from the Home Office

#### Notes

1. Non-EU figures are based on Home Office Borders and Immigration data.
2. EU figures are based on Registration and Population Interaction Database (RAPID) data received from the Department for Work and Pensions and HM Revenue and Customs. These are updated annually, so revisions only occur in our November publication.
3. British nationals figures are based on the International Passenger Survey (IPS). See Section 9: Measuring the data section for more details.
4. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand. Totals may not equal the sum of individual parts.

## 7 . Long-term international migration, provisional, data

[Long-term international immigration, emigration and net migration flows, provisional](#)

Dataset | Released 23 May 2024

Estimates for UK immigration, emigration and net migration, year ending June 2012 to year ending December 2023. These are official statistics in development.

## 8 . Glossary

### Administrative data

Collections of data maintained for administrative reasons, for example, registrations, transactions, or record keeping. They are used for operational purposes and their statistical use is secondary. These sources are typically managed by other government bodies.

### Asylum applicants

Asylum applicant (also referred to as "asylum seeker") is someone who makes a claim to be recognised as a refugee under the Refugee Convention.

"Asylum" estimates in this bulletin refer to the long-term international migration of people who have applied (that is, made a claim) for asylum in the UK.

An asylum-related return is one where there has been an asylum claim at some stage prior to the return. For more information on this, see the [User Guide to Home Office Immigration Statistics](#).

### British national

A British national is a person who holds a type of British (English, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish) nationality. There are six different types of British nationality:

- British citizenship
- British Overseas Territories citizen
- British overseas citizen
- British subject
- British national (overseas)
- British protected person

For the purposes of our estimates, we have treated British national (overseas) (BN(O)) as a separate category.

### British national (overseas) (BN(O))

Someone who was a British Overseas Territories citizen by connection with Hong Kong lost that citizenship on 30 June 1997, when sovereignty returned to China. However, such a person was able to register as a British national (overseas) (BN(O)) before 1 July 1997. For more information, see the [Types of British nationality guide on GOV.UK](#).

On 31 January 2021, the UK launched a bespoke immigration route for BN(O) status holders and their families from Hong Kong.

## Citizenship

Citizenship is a status that identifies a person's formal membership of a state, entitling them to hold a country's passport.

The measures, nationality and citizenship, are often used interchangeably. The measures can differ across countries. To use British citizenship and nationality as an example: British citizenship is a type of British nationality. This means that someone can have a British nationality without being a British citizen.

## Dependant visas

International migrants that have entered the UK on a visa may be eligible to bring their dependant partner or child with them through a dependant visa, depending on the type of visa the main applicant holds. A dependant partner or child is any of the following:

- your husband, wife, civil partner or unmarried partner
- your child under 18 years, including if they were born in the UK during your stay
- your child over 18 years if they are currently in the UK as your dependant

## Designated visa classifications

The grouping of people who immigrated to the UK under visas classified as:

- work
- study
- family
- other
- humanitarian routes
- asylum

## EU

EU is the sum of EU14, EU8, and EU2, plus Malta, Cyprus and Croatia (from 1 July 2013). British nationals are not included in these numbers.

- EU2 is Romania and Bulgaria.
- EU8 is Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.
- EU14 is Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.
- Other EU is Malta, Cyprus and Croatia (from 2013).

## Home Office Borders and Immigration data

Combines data from different administrative sources to link an individual's travel in or out of the UK with their immigration history. This system has data for all non-European Economic Area (non-EEA) visa holders.



## International Passenger Survey (IPS)

Our International Passenger Survey (IPS) collects information about passengers entering and leaving the UK and has been running continuously since 1961. The IPS was resumed in January 2021, after being suspended since March 2020 because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Currently, we use it for our British national estimates and for providing information on reason for migration.

### Long-term international migration

Long-term international migration (LTIM) statistics estimate the flow (or movement) of migrants to and from the UK. This bulletin uses the UN-recommended definition of a long-term international migrant, as explained in the [Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration](#) paper (PDF, 5MB). It is defined as "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".

A "long-term international immigrant" in this bulletin refers to a person who has moved to the UK from abroad for a period of at least a year.

A "long-term international emigrant" in this bulletin refers to a person who has left the UK to go to another country for a period of at least a year.

### Main applicant

A main applicant is an individual who has been granted leave to enter or to remain in the UK on a visa, for example, a work or study visa. Main applicants may be eligible to bring their dependant family member with them on a dependant visa.

### Nationality

Nationality of a country is a legal status that usually gives a person a particular set of rights relating to that country.

### Net migration

Net migration is the difference between the number of people coming to live in the UK (immigration) and the number of people leaving to live elsewhere (emigration). When more people are arriving in the UK than leaving, net migration is above zero and so adds to the non-UK population.

### Non-EU

Non-EU is the sum of the rest of the world, including the rest of Europe. British nationals are excluded from these numbers.

### "Other" reason for migration

#### Non-EU

For non-EU migrants, the reason for migration is based on their visa type. "Other" reason includes people who immigrated to the UK under visas classified as:

- admin
- visit
- other
- settlement
- protection
- those that did not fit into any of our designated classifications

## EU and British

For EU and British migrants, the reason for migration is based on responses to the International Passenger Survey (IPS). The IPS asks migrants to identify their main reason for migration. "Other" reason includes:

- going home to live
- other
- no reason stated, including non-responses and the non-specific response "emigrating or immigrating"

## Registration and Population Interaction Database (RAPID)

Registration and Population Interaction Database (RAPID) is a database created by the Department for Work and Pensions. It provides a single coherent view of interactions across the breadth of benefits and earnings datasets for anyone with a National Insurance number (NINo).

## Ukraine visa support schemes

The Ukraine Family Scheme allows applicants to join family members or extend their stay in the UK. The Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme allows Ukrainian nationals and their family members to come to the UK if they have a named sponsor under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. The Ukraine Extension Scheme allows Ukrainian nationals and their immediate family members to apply for permission to stay in the UK. The reason for migration will predominantly only show the out-of-country routes, as opposed to the extension routes.

## Uncertainty estimates

Uncertainty intervals are provided for statistics created using admin data. The uncertainty intervals have been constructed using simulation studies such that 95% of those simulated intervals should contain the true value under the assumption that our simulations accurately include all the main sources of uncertainty. A wider interval indicates more uncertainty in the estimate. The assumptions in this bulletin do not currently account for all sources of potential error in estimates of net migration.

Uncertainty intervals differ from confidence intervals, which are applicable to estimates derived from sample surveys, in which the intervals derived from 95% of all possible random samples should contain the true value.

# 9 . Measuring the data

## Exceptional pre-release access to ONS migration statistics

The National Statistician has granted exceptional pre-release access to the publications 'Long-term international migration, provisional: year ending December 2023' and 'Reason for international migration, international students update: May 2024' for two representatives of PA Media (formerly Press Association). The publications were made available at 8:45am on 23 May 2024, ahead of publication on the ONS website at 9:30am on 23 May 2024. In the opinion of the National Statistician the access is necessary to facilitate well-informed debate and support better public understanding of the statistics, in line with the rules and principles on pre-release access set out in the relevant UK legislation.

## Data sources and methods

Current and previous methods are described in our updated [Methods to produce provisional long-term international migration estimates](#) methodology. A more detailed account of the methods are provided within our [Provisional long-term international migration estimates: technical user guide](#).

We announced in our [August 2020 Migration Statistics Quarterly Report \(MSQR\)](#) that we would continue to develop methods using administrative data, given the known limitations of the International Passenger Survey (IPS). The estimates in this bulletin are produced using methods that are based predominantly on administrative data and will be used to inform our mid-year population estimates and our [Dynamic Population Model \(DPM\)](#). Building on methods used in our [Long-term international migration, provisional: year ending June 2023 bulletin](#), we have implemented a number of improvements.

Further details on our progress were published in our [International migration research, progress update: May 2024 article](#).

The approaches for quality assuring the methods and resulting outputs are routinely assessed via various groups. This includes the Migration Statistics Expert Group who provide advice and assurance on methodological questions. Members of this group have also supported a review of the assumptions used for this round of estimation. Additionally, the ONS's Quality and Improvement team provide periodic reviews of approaches to managing, undertaking and documenting quality assurance processes.

## Reference period

These estimates cover the period of the year ending (YE) June 2012 to the YE December 2023. Information from Census 2021, alongside available administrative data, provide the clearest picture of international migration flows over the last decade.

## Non-EU nationals

Non-EU migration refers to estimates of migration for people who do not hold British or EU nationality. We use Home Office Borders and Immigration data that combine visa and travel information to link an individual's travel movements into and out of the country. More information is provided within the Home Office [User Guide to: Immigration system statistics on GOV.UK](#).

To estimate non-EU immigration, we have developed a method that uses an individual's first arrival and last departure dates to approximate their length of stay in the UK within the period for which they have a valid visa. Individuals whose stay lasts 12 months or more are classified as long-term immigrants. For emigration, we identify previous long-term immigrants with a last departure from the UK during the reference period and record them as long-term emigrants if they do not return to the UK within 12 months, or if they only return for a short-term stay. The method used to calculate a person's reason for emigration is based upon their initial visa used to enter the UK. More detailed information can be found in our [Provisional long-term international migration estimates: technical user guide](#).

## EU nationals

The latest methodology to estimate the migration of EU nationals is based on our [Methods for measuring international migration using RAPID administrative data methodology](#). The Registration and Population Interaction Database (RAPID) currently provides the best insight into the migration of EU nationals.

To provide the best estimates for EU immigration, we continue to use a methodology based on RAPID. We apply two adjustments to the estimates to account for those populations who have fewer or no interactions with the earnings and benefits systems. These adjustments are for student migration and people under the age of 16 years, both of which the RAPID data alone would not fully capture. A more detailed explanation of the adjustments applied to the RAPID data can be found in our [Methods to produce provisional long-term international migration estimates methodology](#).

## British nationals

While the most recent long-term international migration estimates for non-UK nationals are based on administrative data, there is currently no comparable administrative source available that measures the international migration movements of British nationals. However, census data provide an alternative source for estimating international migration of British nationals over the decade from the YE June 2012 to the YE June 2021, by looking at changes in the UK-born population and adjusting this to estimate migration of British nationals. We have therefore updated the back series of estimates of British nationals for this period using this approach. See our article [Estimating UK international migration: 2012 to 2021](#) for more information.

International migration estimates of British nationals for the YE September 2021 onwards remain based on the IPS, while we undertake further research to provide an administrative data-based alternative. As such, these estimates should be treated with caution.

Further details on our current and previous methods are available in our [Methods to produce provisional long-term international migration estimates methodology](#).

## Official statistics in development

These statistics are labelled as "official statistics in development". Until September 2023, these were called "experimental statistics". Read more about the change in our [Guide to official statistics in development \(opens in a new tab\)](#).

We are developing how we collect and produce the data to improve the quality of these statistics. Once the developments are complete, we will review the statistics with the Statistics Head of Profession. We will decide whether the statistics are of sufficient quality and value to be published as official statistics, or whether further development is needed. Production may be stopped if they are not of sufficient quality or value. Users will be informed of the outcome and any changes.

We value your feedback on these statistics. Contact us at [pop.info@ons.gov.uk](mailto:pop.info@ons.gov.uk).

## 10 . Strengths and limitations

The estimates are classified as [official statistics in development](#). In addition, the estimates for the most recent time periods in our data series (year ending (YE) March, June, September and December 2023) are provisional and provide users with an early indication of migration during this period.

Migration patterns have been changing since the end of the coronavirus (COVID 19) pandemic and with the introduction of the new immigration system in January 2021. Therefore, we have had to update the assumptions that feed into our provisional estimates to reflect this changing behaviour. For more information, see our [International migration research, progress update: May 2024 article](#). Therefore, these estimates will be subject to a range of factors, which make any estimates of net migration more uncertain at present. As outlined in our [Population and International Migration Statistics Revisions Policy methodology](#), these estimates are subject to change, both because of methods refinement as well as scheduled revisions when more data become available.

We have included innovative methods to quantify non-sampling error associated with several components of the admin-based migration estimates (ABME) process. This has focused on the uncertainty introduced by the assumptions used to produce timely provisional estimates of migration, including the adjustments made to estimates of non-EU migration and EU migration.

In addition, we have included uncertainty for survey-based estimates for British nationals using the International Passenger Survey (IPS) data. These define a plausible range, including associated probabilities, where the true value of international migration is likely to lie, if our simulations accurately included all the main sources of uncertainty. As we have not yet included all sources of uncertainty, these intervals should be interpreted with caution and only represent a partial measure of uncertainty with ABME. For more information see our [International migration research, progress update: November 2023 article](#).

Our release coincides with the publication of the [Home Office's latest immigration system statistics on GOV.UK](#) and [National Insurance numbers \(NINOs\) allocated to adult overseas nationals entering the UK](#), both for the period to the end of March 2024. Numbers of visas granted may indicate trends in the arrivals of non-EU long-term migrants but cannot indicate the net effect after further stays and emigration as they are not taken into account. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Home Office continue to work together closely to produce a consistent insight into UK international migration.

Further information on strengths and limitations of the data sources are included in our methodology article [Methods to produce provisional long-term international migration estimates](#).

### Impact of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Operational processes were affected during the coronavirus pandemic, which influenced the collection of some administrative data.

The National Insurance number (NINo) registration service was partially suspended in March 2020 for certain customers, with a phased return to normal operations completed by April 2021.

Some of the trends seen in EU migration from the Registration and Population Interaction Database (RAPID) may have been affected by these restrictions, where some migrants may have arrived in the UK, but were unable to register for their NINo. Therefore, they may not have been included in the estimates from RAPID.

For more information on the suspension of the NINo application process, see the [Department for Work and Pensions' National Insurance numbers allocated to adult overseas nationals to December 2023 publication on GOV.UK](#).

## 11 . Related links

[Reason for international migration, international students update: May 2024](#)

Article | Released 23 May 2024

An update on research work to understand the contribution of international students to net migration figures.

[International migration research, progress update: May 2024](#)

Article | Released 23 May 2024

An update on international migration methods and research.

[Understanding international migration statistics](#)

Methodology | Updated 23 May 2024

This article brings together important information to inform users and explain any misunderstandings around our migration statistics.

[Provisional long-term international migration estimates: technical user guide](#) Methodology | Updated 3 May 2024 A comprehensive guide providing methodological information used to produce our provisional long-term international migration estimates.

[Methods to produce provisional long-term international migration estimates](#) Methodology | Updated 23 November 2023 An explanation of the methods used to produce the latest provisional statistics on migration flows into and out of the UK.

[Long-term international migration: quality assuring administrative data](#) Methodology | Updated 16 November 2023 Administrative data sources and quality assurance in the production of admin-based long-term international migration estimates published in bi-annual releases.

[Improving international migration statistics using administrative data](#) Methodology | Released 23 November 2023 Describes how we estimate international migration and the data we use. Includes an explanation of our research, the improvements we have made and future developments.

[Population and International Migration Statistics Revisions Policy](#) Methodology | 19 April 2022 Population and international migration statistics revisions policy.

[Immigration system statistics, year ending December 2023 \(Home Office\)](#) Web Page | Published 29 February 2024 Quarterly statistics on people coming to the UK, extensions of stay, citizenship, asylum, detentions, and returns.

[National Insurance numbers allocated to adult overseas nationals to December 2023 \(Department for Work and Pensions\)](#) Web Page | Updated 26 April 2024 Quarterly publication of National Insurance number allocations to adult overseas nationals entering the UK, data to December 2023.

[Rapid Review of the Graduate Route](#) Web Page | Updated 16 May 2024 The Migration Advisory Committee's report on the Graduate route, with a letter to the Home Secretary.

## 12 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 23 May 2024, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Long-term international migration, provisional: year ending December 2023](#)