

Date : 26 June 2014

Release: Internal Migration by Local Authorities in England and Wales,  
year ending June 2013

Theme : Population

## Q&A document

This document is intended to answer some of the key questions users may have about the release of [Internal Migration Estimates by Local Authorities in England and Wales, year ending June 2013](#).

## Definitions and methods

### What is internal migration?

Internal migration refers to residential moves between different geographic areas within the UK. This may be between local authorities, regions or countries. It does not include moves within a single geographic area (for example, a move within a single local authority). It also excludes international migration either into or out of the UK.

This release primarily concerns itself with internal migration affecting local authorities in England and Wales – this means any moves between local authorities within England and Wales, as well as moves across the border to and from Scotland and Northern Ireland. The only tables containing information on flows between Scotland and Northern Ireland are the local authority and regional matrices.

### What data were used to create these statistics?

The statistics are derived from a combination of data from main three sources:

- The NHS Patient Register
- The NHS Central Register (NHSCR)
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Data from the NHS are seen as offering the best proxy for internal migration moves because most people are registered with an NHS GP and most people will notify their GP or re-register with a new GP when they move. The two NHS sources are supplemented by data from HESA to provide better estimates of people entering or leaving higher education. More detail on each of the sources and their limitations is available in the methodology documents on the [internal migration methodology webpage](#).

A fourth data source, Northern Irish health card data, is also used, to specify the total number of moves of people from England and Wales to Northern Ireland.

### What are the limitations of these statistics?

The combination of NHS and HESA data is considered the best available source of information on internal migration. However, it is recognised that it cannot provide perfect estimates. The key limitation is that some people don't register promptly with a new GP after they move, and some people may never register with a GP at all. Although the HESA data are used to improve coverage of younger adult's moves, it is not possible to have perfect

coverage. Further information on the data sources and methods, and their limitations, is available in the methodology documents on the [internal migration methodology webpage](#).

### **Have any of the methods changed with this release?**

This release is consistent with the methods used for the release for the year ending June 2012, with the exception of a slight refinement to the method used to calculate the number of moves of people aged 0. This will have minimal effect on total levels of internal migration.

## **Revision of data for the year ending June 2012**

### **Why have you revised the data for the year ending June 2012?**

A minor error was found in the code used to produce the [estimates for the year ending June 2012](#). This did not affect the estimates included in the mid-2012 population estimates or the 2012-based subnational population projections, but does mean that the original internal migration data was not quite consistent with those publications.

Although the error was minor (change to net migration of no more than 28) in any local authority), the statistics have been corrected in order to ensure that all versions of the estimates are as intended. A full description of the changes is available via the release pages of the respective years' estimates. We have also taken the opportunity to make the range of tables available in last year's release consistent with those in this year's release.

## **Geography**

### **Why are you no longer producing internal migration estimates for the districts that were merged into new unitary authorities in 2009?**

In 2009 the number of local authorities in England and Wales was reduced from 376 to 348, when a number of non-metropolitan districts in England were merged into new unitary authorities. Although statistics for the old geography were still published at first, our entire processing has now been moved to the current geography. This means that from now on all estimates will be based on the new geography only. To enable comparison with statistics for the year ending June 2012, our revised 2012 publication also uses the current 348 local authorities (subject to the changes described in the question below).

Full information on the geographic changes occurring in 2009, as well as subsequent code changes, is available in the Annex to the June 2014 methodology document, available on the [internal migration methodology webpage](#).

### **Some of the local authorities have changed code since last year's release. Why?**

The [ONS Coding and Naming Policy for UK Statistical Geographies](#) explains that local authority codes will be changed if any boundary change occurs, however small. Minor boundary changes in April 2013 mean that there are four local authorities in England which have a different code to that used in the release for the year ending June 2012. The changes are as follows:

<b>Local authority</b>	<b>2012 code</b>	<b>2013 code</b>
Gateshead	E08000020	E08000037
Northumberland	E06000048	E06000057
East Hertfordshire	E07000097	E07000242
Stevenage	E07000101	E07000243

The minor nature of the changes means there is no meaningful impact on comparisons of the statistics between the two years.

### **Can more detailed geographical levels of data be provided (for example Super Output Areas)?**

No. The annual production process is currently designed to produce statistics at local authority level and changing this would be a major undertaking. At present there are therefore no plans to produce annual data for smaller areas.

However, the 2011 Census is a potential source of data for smaller areas, based on the 'address one year ago' question, and bespoke outputs may be feasible. [Further information on obtaining 2011 Census data.](#)

## **Other data**

### **How far do your estimates go back?**

Annual estimates of internal migration for local authorities in England and Wales are available [as far back as the year ending June 1999](#). However, users should note that there have been methods changes during that period, as detailed in the June 2014 methodology documents available on the [internal migration methodology webpage](#).

Estimates of migration between health authorities, based on NHS Central Register (NHSCR) data only, were produced every quarter from the year ending December 1975 to the year ending September 2011. These are available as follows:

[Year ending September 2011](#)  
[Year ending June 2011](#)  
[Year ending March 2011](#)  
[Estimates for 2002 to 2010](#)

Earlier tables can be provided on request.

### **Can you produce customised outputs?**

The detailed dataset and the various summary tables are published with the intention of making the maximum amount of information available to users and allowing them to do their own analysis as required. However, ONS is able to produce custom tables, subject to legal frameworks, resources and agreements of costs. Please get in touch if you have any enquiries. The [ONS charging policy](#) is available on the ONS website.

### **Where can I get data on internal migration within Scotland or Northern Ireland?**

Estimates of internal migration within Scotland are produced by National Records of Scotland (NRS). For more information please see the [NRS website](#). Estimates of internal migration within Northern Ireland are produced by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). For more information, please see the [NISRA website](#).

## **Contact details**

If you have any other queries about these estimates, contact details are as follows:

Andrew Nash  
Internal Migration Unit  
[migstatsunit@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:migstatsunit@ons.gsi.gov.uk)  
+44 (0)1329 444647