

Statistical bulletin

# Births by parents' country of birth, England and Wales: 2019

Annual statistics on live births including countries of birth for non-UK-born mothers and fathers.



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# 1 . Acknowledgement

In memory of Frankie Smith, a valued friend and colleague.

## 2 . Other pages in this release

Other commentary from the latest birth data can be found on the following pages:

- [Births in England and Wales: 2019](#)

## 3 . Main points

- In 2019, 28.7% of all live births were to women born outside the UK; the highest since records began in 1969 continuing the general long-term increase.
- The total fertility rate (TFR) decreased for UK-born women to 1.57 children and fell to 1.97 children per non-UK-born woman in 2019.
- Across all age groups fertility rates were higher among non-UK-born mothers compared with UK-born mothers in 2019; mothers born in the “Rest of Europe” (non-EU) region had the highest fertility rate for all ages (92.7 births per 1,000 women).
- The number of births to mothers born in Poland continued to fall but it remained the most common country of birth for mothers born outside the UK, while Pakistan remained the most popular country of birth to fathers born outside the UK.
- Romania was the second most common country of birth for non-UK-born fathers and the third for non-UK-born mothers, having risen over the past decade.

## 4 . Live births to non-UK-born and UK-born mothers

In 2019, 28.7% of all live births in England and Wales were to women born outside the UK, a 0.5 percentage point increase from 2018. This is the highest percentage since records began in 1969, and continues a long-term trend since 1990, where the percentage of live births to women born outside the UK has generally been increasing.

The increases in the percentage of live births to non-UK-born mothers coincides with [increases in immigration](#) since the 1990s where more international migrants have entered the UK for work and study reasons. Migration has contributed to the number of births remaining higher than the number of deaths despite [fertility rates nearing their lowest level](#) since records began.

The total fertility rate (TFR) accounts for the size of the female population of childbearing age and the number of births. TFRs provide a timely measure of fertility levels. They are sensitive to changes in the timing of births within women's lives.

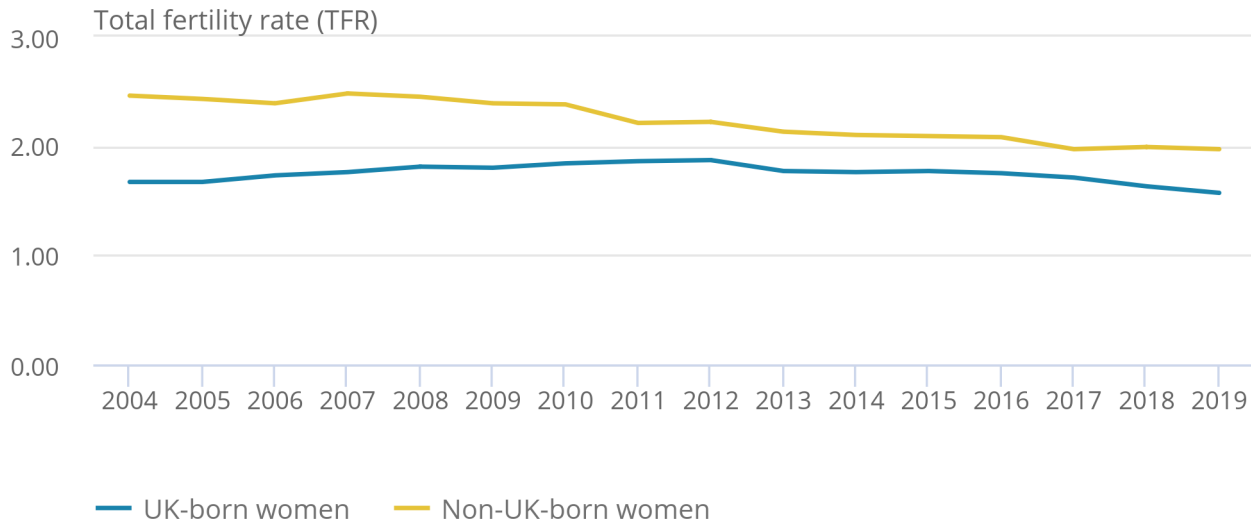
We first estimated the TFR for non-UK-born women in 2004, when it was 2.46, and higher than the rate of 1.67 seen for UK-born women that year. In 2019, the non-UK-born TFR was 1.97 children per woman while the UK-born TFR was 1.57 children per woman. The gap between UK-born and non-UK-born TFRs has been generally closing since 2004 but over the past two years has widened slightly again (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: The gap between total fertility rates for UK-born and non-UK-born women was the largest since 2010**

Estimated total fertility rate (TFR) for UK-born and non-UK-born women, England and Wales, 2004 to 2019

**Figure 1: The gap between total fertility rates for UK-born and non-UK-born women was the largest since 2010**

Estimated total fertility rate (TFR) for UK-born and non-UK-born women, England and Wales, 2004 to 2019



Source: Office for National Statistics – Births in England and Wales and the Annual Population Survey (APS)

Notes:

1. The total fertility rate (TFR) is the average number of live children that a group of women would each bear if they experienced the age-specific fertility rates of the calendar year in question throughout their childbearing lifespan.
2. The TFRs for 2019 are calculated using 2019 Annual Population Survey data.

## 5 . Mother’s country of birth by age

In 2019, fertility rates amongst non-UK-born women were higher for every age group compared with UK-born women. When broken down by world region, women of all ages born in the “Rest of Europe” (non-EU) region had the highest fertility rate at 92.7 births per 1,000 women. UK-born women had the second-lowest at 53.8 births per 1,000 women for all ages (Table 1).

For women aged under 20 years, fertility rates were highest to women born in EU countries. Women whose country of birth was in Africa had the second-lowest under-20 fertility rate but had the highest fertility rate per 1,000 African-born women aged 40 years and over (31.3) compared with women born in the other world regions.

Table 1: Age-specific fertility rates (ASFR) by mothers' country of birth and age of mother, England and Wales, 2019

Country of birth of mother	All ages	Under 20	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 and over
United Kingdom	53.8	11.0	65.2	80.7	13.9
Total outside United Kingdom	71.9	14.4	90.2	91.4	22.9
European Union (EU)	64.4	23.9	76.2	77.8	21.6
Rest of Europe (non EU)	92.7	13.8	144.0	102.6	22.6
Africa	86.3	6.2	136.0	110.9	31.3
The Americas and the Caribbean	56.4	10.0	49.7	86.0	22.2
Middle East and Asia	77.7	6.7	104.8	100.2	20.3
Antarctica and Oceania	44.5	0.5	21.2	88.2	19.8

Source: Office for National Statistics – Births in England and Wales and the Annual Population Survey (APS)

#### Notes

1. The age-specific fertility rate (ASFR) is the number of live births to mothers of a particular age per 1000 women of that age in the population. Useful for comparing fertility of women at different ages or women of the same age in different populations. [Back to table](#)
2. The ASFRs for 2019 are calculated using 2019 Annual Population Survey datasets. [Back to table](#)

## 6 . Country of birth of non-UK-born mothers and fathers

In 2019, 34.3% of all children born in England and Wales had either one or both parents born outside of the UK; up from 33.8% in 2018.

In 2019, Poland, Pakistan and Romania remained the three most common countries of birth for mothers not born in the UK (Figure 2). The number of children born in 2019 whose mother was born in Romania continued to rise (to 16,069 live births). This is a pattern seen since 2012 when Romania entered the top 10.

### Figure 2: Romania has risen 12 places to become the third most common country of birth to non-UK-born mothers in 2019

10 most common countries of birth for non-UK-born mothers, England and Wales, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2019

#### Notes:

1. Figures include mothers whose usual residence is outside England and Wales.

Pakistan and Romania remained the top two most common countries of birth of fathers born outside the UK. The number of live births to Romanian-born fathers continued to rise to 15,211 in 2019. In contrast, Poland fell to fourth position.

The number of live births to South African-born fathers has been generally decreasing since 2010 when there were 4,485 live births. In 2019, South Africa was not featured in the top 10 having dropped to the 11th most common country with 3,045 live births (Figure 3). Since 2010, Afghanistan has risen from the 12th most common country to ninth in 2019 where 3,232 births were to fathers born in Afghanistan.

### **Figure 3: Afghanistan entered the top 10 most common countries of birth for non-UK-born fathers in 2019**

10 most common countries of birth for non-UK-born fathers, England and Wales, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2019

#### **Notes:**

1. Figures include fathers whose usual residence is outside England and Wales.
2. Figures for fathers include a very small number of births to second female parents.

## **7 . Live births to non-UK-born mothers by geographic area**

The percentage of live births to non-UK-born mothers in 2019 rose slightly for both England and Wales from 2018. In England, 28.7% of babies born had a mother born outside the UK, and 12.0% of babies born in Wales had a mother born outside the UK.

In 2019, the long-standing regional trends since 2001 continued where London had the highest percentage of live births to non-UK-born mothers (57.4%) while the North East had the lowest percentage (12.2%).

For the fourth year in a row, Brent was the local authority in England with the highest percentage of live births to non-UK-born mothers (75.2%), while Staffordshire Moorlands had the lowest (3.4%). The local authority outside of London with the highest proportion of non-UK-born mothers was Slough with 62.2% (Figure 4).

Variations in the percentage of births to women born outside the UK reflect differences in the percentage of resident women born outside the UK, and their different fertility levels.

### **Figure 4: Hackney has had the largest decrease in the percentage of live births to non-UK-born mothers since 2007**

Percentage of live births born to non-UK-born mothers by local authority district, England and Wales 2007 to 2019

## **8 . Births data**

[Births by parents' country of birth, England and Wales](#)

Dataset | Released 22 July 2020

Annual data on live births in England and Wales by parents' country of birth.

**Filter these data**

- [Live births in England and Wales: birth rates down to local authority areas \(2013 to 2019\)](#)
- [Live births in England and Wales by sex and characteristics of mother: national and regional \(2013 to 2019\)](#)
- [Live births in England and Wales by characteristics of mother and father \(2013 to 2019\)](#)
- [Live births in England and Wales down to local authority local area \(2013 to 2019\)](#)
- [Live births in England and Wales for small geographic areas \(2013 to 2019\)](#)

## 9 . Glossary

### Age-specific fertility rate (ASFR)

The age-specific fertility rate (ASFR) is the number of live births to mothers of a particular age per 1,000 women of that age in the population. This is useful for comparing fertility of women at different ages or women of the same age in different populations.

### Live birth

A baby showing signs of life at birth is a live birth.

### Total fertility rate (TFR)

The total fertility rate (TFR) is the average number of live children a group of women would have if they experienced the age-specific fertility rates for the calendar year in question throughout their childbearing lifespan. This is useful as it accounts for size and age structure of the female population of childbearing age.

A [more complete glossary](#) is available from our User guide to birth statistics.

## 10 . Measuring the data

Birth statistics represent births that occur and are then registered in England and Wales. Figures are derived from information recorded when live births and stillbirths are registered as part of civil registration, a legal requirement; these data represent the most complete data source available.

In England and Wales, the registration of births is a service carried out by the Local Registration Service in partnership with the General Register Office (GRO).

Birth registration data are then supplemented to obtain birthweight data by linking the birth registration to the NHS birth notification when a birth is registered.

Further linkage of the birth registration to the NHS birth notification is conducted within the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to obtain the age of the mother where this was missing on the birth registration and to enable the analysis of further characteristics such as ethnicity of the baby and gestation of live births.

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in the [Births QMI](#).

# 11 . Strengths and limitations

Our [User guide to birth statistics](#) provides further information on data quality, legislation and procedures relating to conceptions, and it includes a [glossary of terms](#).

## National Statistics status for Births in England and Wales

[National Statistics](#) status means that our statistics meet the highest standard of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

Date of most recent full assessment: [September 2011](#).

Most recent compliance check that confirms National Statistics status: [September 2011](#).

The improvements we have made since the last review include:

- revisions to the way statistics are produced are explained in the [User guide](#), detailing the year the change took place and reason why
- in cases where corrections were implemented, they were accompanied by explanations of the change and the reasons why
- where applicable, we added background information into our [User guide](#) and [QMI](#) to inform the user of the differences in methods between the UK countries and the reasons underlying these differences
- [following a consultation on proposed changes to statistics](#), we made changes in 2018 to the way that birth statistics are published; five [explorable datasets](#) are now released in July alongside the first release of annual births data, which means more detailed birth data (including small area geographies) are now available in a timelier manner

## 12 . Related links

### [Baby names in England and Wales: 2018](#)

Bulletin | Released 29 August 2019

Most popular first names for baby boys and girls in 2018 using birth registration data.

### [Birth characteristics in England and Wales: 2018](#)

Bulletin | Released 6 December 2019

Annual live births by sex, ethnicity and month, maternities by place of birth and with multiple births, and stillbirths by age of parents and calendar quarter.

### [Explorable datasets for births in England and Wales](#)

Datasets | Updated as new data become available

Datasets on life events in England and Wales.

### [Births in Scotland](#)

Web page | Updated as new data become available

National Records of Scotland's (NRS's) statistics on births.

### [Births in Northern Ireland](#)

Web page | Updated as new data become available

Births statistics from 1887 onwards and Baby Names statistics from 1997 onwards for Northern Ireland.

### [User guide to birth statistics](#)

Article | Released 6 December 2019

Supporting information for birth statistics, which present figures on births that occur and are then registered in England and Wales. Figures are based on information collected at birth registration.