

Article

Living abroad: dynamics of migration between the UK and Germany

This is the fifth report, in a series of six, being published in response to an increased user need for data about the people who may be most likely to be affected by the UK's decision to leave the EU.

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1 . Main points

- 107,000 UK citizens were living in Germany in 2016 (not including military personnel); this total has grown by 10% since 2011.
- In 2011, 79% of British citizens living in Germany were working. 27% of British workers in Germany (16,600 people) work in administration and support services, more than any other industry.
- 139,700 German citizens were estimated to be living in the UK between 2014 and 2016.
- Public Administration, education and health is estimated to be the biggest employer for German citizens living in the UK (employing 26,000 people, 32% of German workers in the UK) between 2014 and 2016.
- Between 2014 and 2016 of the German citizens working in the UK, 61% worked in “higher level professions”.

2 . Things you need to know about this release

This report is the fifth in a series being published to provide more information on British citizens living in the European Union (EU), and EU citizens living in the UK. This series has been created in response to an increased user need for data about the people who may be most likely to be affected by the UK's decision to leave the EU. Previous reports consider migration between the [UK and Spain](#), the [UK and EU8 countries](#), the [UK and France](#) and the [UK and Ireland](#).

We previously published an article on this topic, entitled [How many British citizens live in Europe?](#) Now, more up-to-date data about British citizens living in the EU are available and more detailed analysis has been conducted using data from the 2011 round of European censuses. In addition, we have combined the Annual Population Survey into a three-year-average dataset, allowing a robust analysis of European citizens living in the UK.

Additional analyses of short-term migration and visits of less than 28 days are included in this report. Together, these sources provide a more complete picture of how many UK and EU citizens are “living abroad”, how many are staying abroad for shorter periods of time, and what they are doing while there.

There are three “types” of migrant discussed in this report.

Long-term resident

Data collected in the UK counts a person as a long-term resident after 12 months. Most data collected in Germany is only available on three-month-and-over residence definition, and does not include military personnel or their family members. According to German law, registration is mandatory within two weeks, once a person's stay has exceeded three months. This doesn't include all migrants though, so two further “types” are considered.

Short-term migrant

Data collected in the UK counts those spending 1 to 12 months living abroad as “short-term migrants”. This can be for any reason and would include those who spend part of the year living abroad (for example, winter in Germany and summer in the UK).

Visitor

A visitor is defined as someone who spends up to 28 days abroad. This group is largely holidaymakers and includes those who repeatedly spend time in Germany.

Most of the statistics in this report use a citizenship definition to identify migrants, as this is considered to be the most useful in identifying those who may be most likely to be affected by the UK's decision to leave the EU.

This is particularly the case when compared to the use of a "country of birth" definition of a migrant, which can miss some groups of citizens. Given the number of children born to British service personnel and support staff whilst resident in Germany, and other British citizens living in Germany, this is important to consider.

Differences in the use of these two definitions are fully explained in the January 2017 report, [What information is there on British migrants living in Europe?](#)

Citizenship can change over time and multiple citizenships can be held. The way that multiple citizenships are dealt with is different between the data sources in this report. For more information, please see Appendix 1.

This report has been prepared with the support and cooperation of Destatis, the German statistics authority. It has been compiled from a range of available German sources, the 2011 German Microcensus and the German Central register for Foreigners (2011 to 2016). This can make drawing direct comparisons difficult, but every attempt has been made to use equivalent data, where possible.

3 . How many British citizens are there living in Germany?

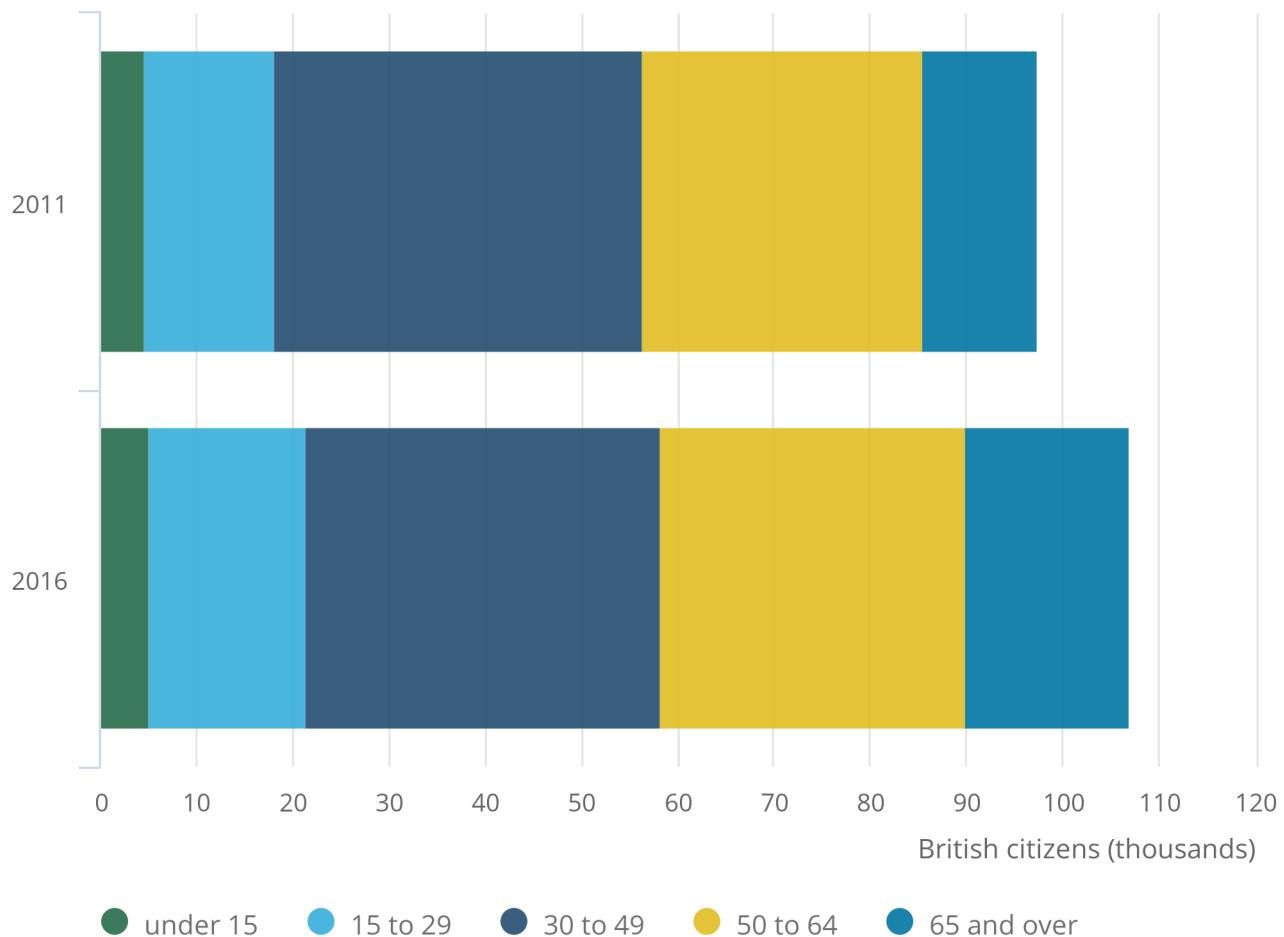
There were 107,000 British citizens estimated to be living in Germany in 2016 (the latest data available), according to the German Central Register for Foreigners (CRF), collated and published by Destatis.

This is an increase from 2011, when 97,400 British citizens were estimated to be registered as living in Germany. This increase was not uniform across ages (Figure 1). The largest increase was 65- to 70-year-olds, with an estimated additional 2,500 British citizens in this age group living in Germany in 2016. The largest decrease was age 40- to 45-year-olds, with 2,100 fewer British citizens in this age group. Ageing of the existing resident population has contributed to this, in addition to migration between 2011 and 2016.

Military personnel and their family members are not counted in these data. Hundreds of thousands of British Armed Forces personnel have completed a tour in Germany since World War 2. According to the [Ministry of Defence October 2016 Quarterly Location Statistics](#) there were 6,800 military personnel, mostly from the army, stationed in Germany in 2016. (6,800 is an average of the reporting periods 1 April, 1 July and 1 October 2016. Throughout 2016 the number of Ministry of Defence (MOD) personnel in Germany decreased because of rebasing to the UK).

Figure 1: The number of British citizens resident in Germany for one year or more, by age, 2011 to 2016

Figure 1: The number of British citizens resident in Germany for one year or more, by age, 2011 to 2016



Source: German Central Register for Foreigners (CRF), 2011 to 2016

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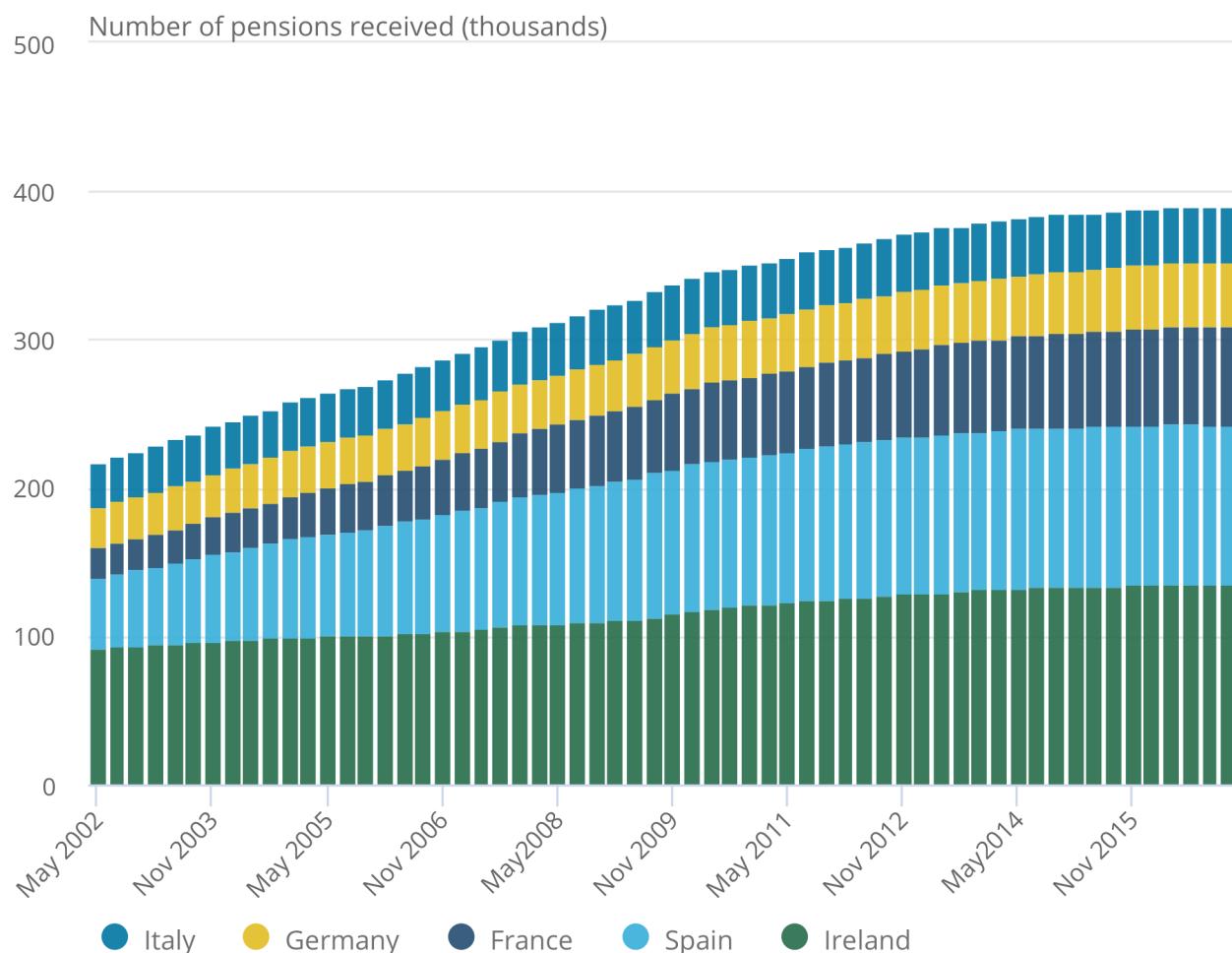
UK State Pensions

The figures for UK State Pensions received by those living in Germany (Figure 2) has increased gradually between May 2002 and February 2017; from 27,400 to 43,100, respectively (a 57% increase). This trend is also reflected in the number of UK State Pension recipients in the EU more generally.

Anybody with qualifying UK National Insurance contributions or credits can receive the State Pension, so recipients are not necessarily British. Registering a German address is also not confirmation that the recipient is a long-term resident of Germany.

Figure 2: The number of UK state pensions claimed by residents living in the European Union 2002 to 2017

Figure 2: The number of UK state pensions claimed by residents living in the European Union 2002 to 2017



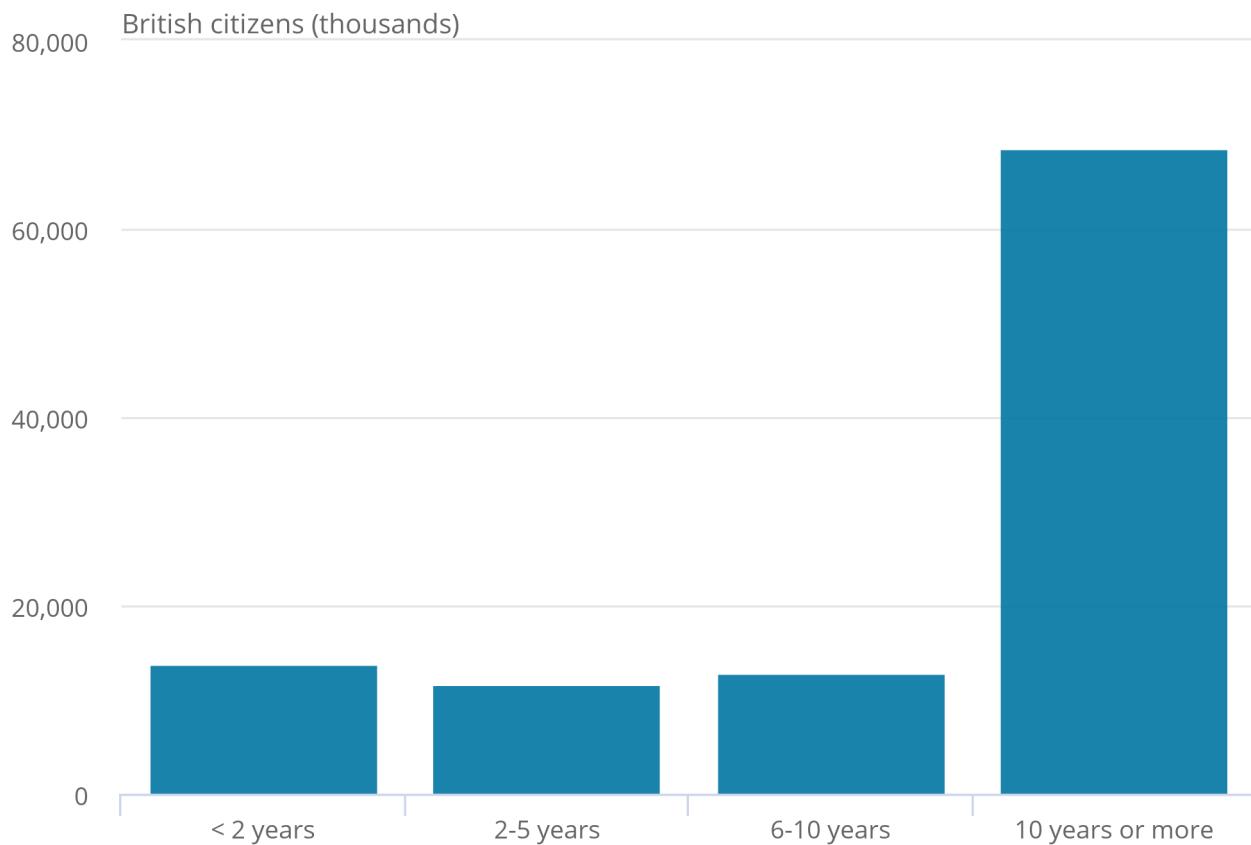
Source: Department for Work and Pensions, State Pension administrative data

Source: Department for Work and Pensions, State Pension administrative data

The 2016 German Central Register for Foreigners (CRF) estimates that the majority of British citizens (64%) have been living in Germany for at least 10 years (Figure 3).

Figure 3: The number of British citizens living in Germany by duration of stay

Figure 3: The number of British citizens living in Germany by duration of stay



Source: 2016 German Central Register for Foreigners (CRF)

Source: 2016 German Central Register for Foreigners (CRF)

There is other evidence to suggest that there is a proportion of the British population in Germany that is very settled. 52% of adult British citizens living in Germany are married, according to the latest figures provided by the German Microcensus for 2016. Of these, the majority are married to a German without a migrant background (30,000; 61%) – that is, someone who was born in Germany or whose parents were born in Germany. This pattern has remained stable since 2011.

This is in contrast to the pattern seen amongst British citizens living in France. [Most married or cohabiting British citizens living in France \(63%\) are married to or cohabiting with other British citizens](#)

4 . Where are British citizens living in Germany?

Figure 4 shows, of the overall estimated 107,000 British citizens residing in Germany, the highest concentrations are in Berlin (12%) and the regions of Oberbayern (which includes the city of München) (11%), and Darmstadt (which includes the city of Frankfurt am Main) (9%).

Figure 4: British citizens living in Germany by NUTS2 region, 2015 to 2016

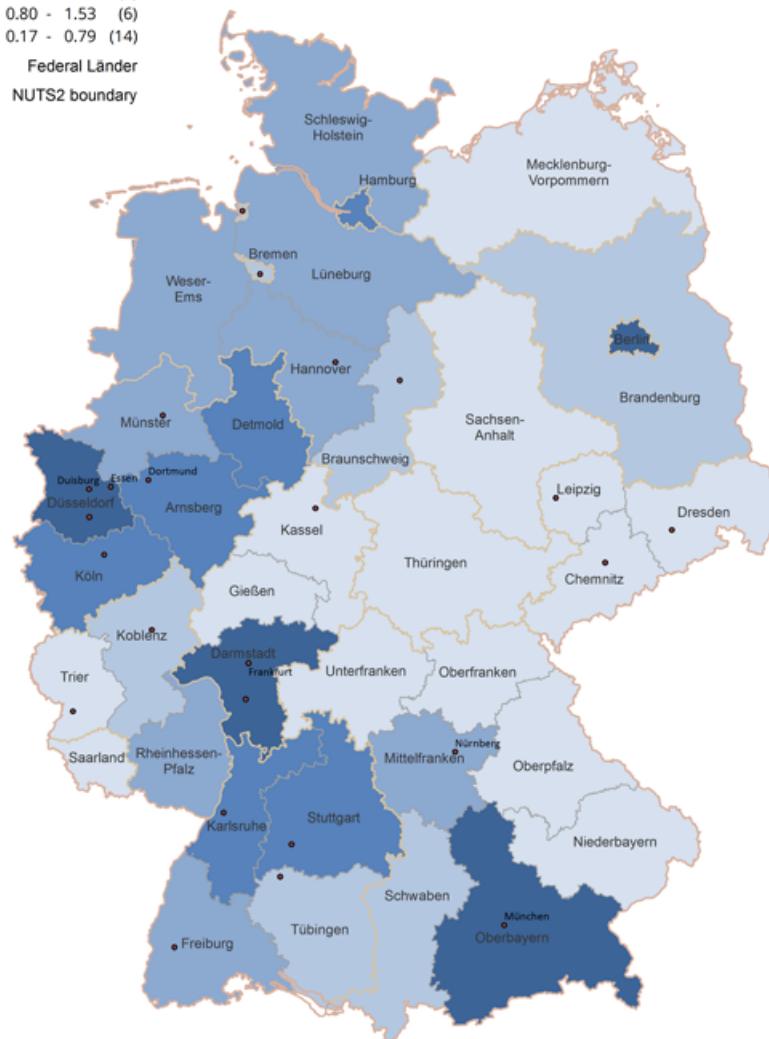
British citizens resident per NUTS2 area

As a percentage of all British citizens in Germany

Percent

| | |
|--------------|------|
| 6.09 - 11.54 | (4) |
| 3.26 - 6.08 | (6) |
| 1.54 - 3.25 | (8) |
| 0.80 - 1.53 | (6) |
| 0.17 - 0.79 | (14) |

Federal Länder
NUTS2 boundary



Note: NUTS2 is an abbreviation for 'Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics, Level 2'
Source: Boundaries and data from the German Federal Statistical Office - Destatis, 2017

There are differences in the age and sex of British citizens living in different regions of Germany which reflects the history between the two countries.

Hundreds of thousands of British Armed Forces personnel have completed a tour in Germany since World War 2 and this is shown in the demographic breakdown of British citizens in Germany. There are more British males living in Germany than British females, and this is particularly the case in the (former) British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) occupation zone (in the North-West of Germany), (Figure 5), where a larger proportion of those aged 65 and over live.

British citizens of working age are more likely to be resident in and around the Ruhrgebiet (an area known for industry), Frankfurt (known for banking) and Münich (industry and commerce) (Figure 5).

Figure 5: British citizens born before 1950, living in Germany by NUTS2 region, 2015 to 2016

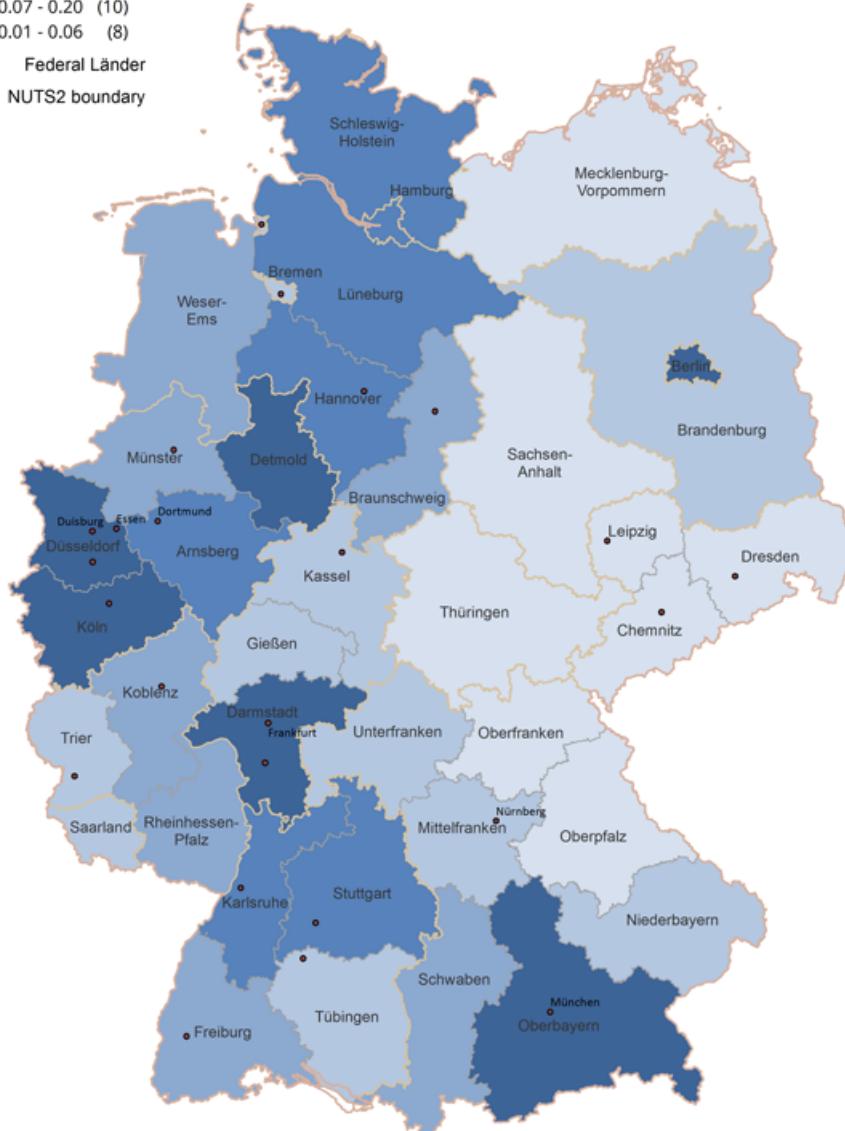
British citizens resident, born before 1950

As a percentage of all British citizens in Germany

Percent

| | |
|-------------|------|
| 0.63 - 1.21 | (6) |
| 0.39 - 0.62 | (7) |
| 0.21 - 0.38 | (7) |
| 0.07 - 0.20 | (10) |
| 0.01 - 0.06 | (8) |

Federal Ländler
NUTS2 boundary



Note: NUTS2 is an abbreviation for 'Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics, Level 2'

Source: Boundaries and data from the German Federal Statistical Office - Destatis, 2017

5 . What are British citizens living in Germany doing?

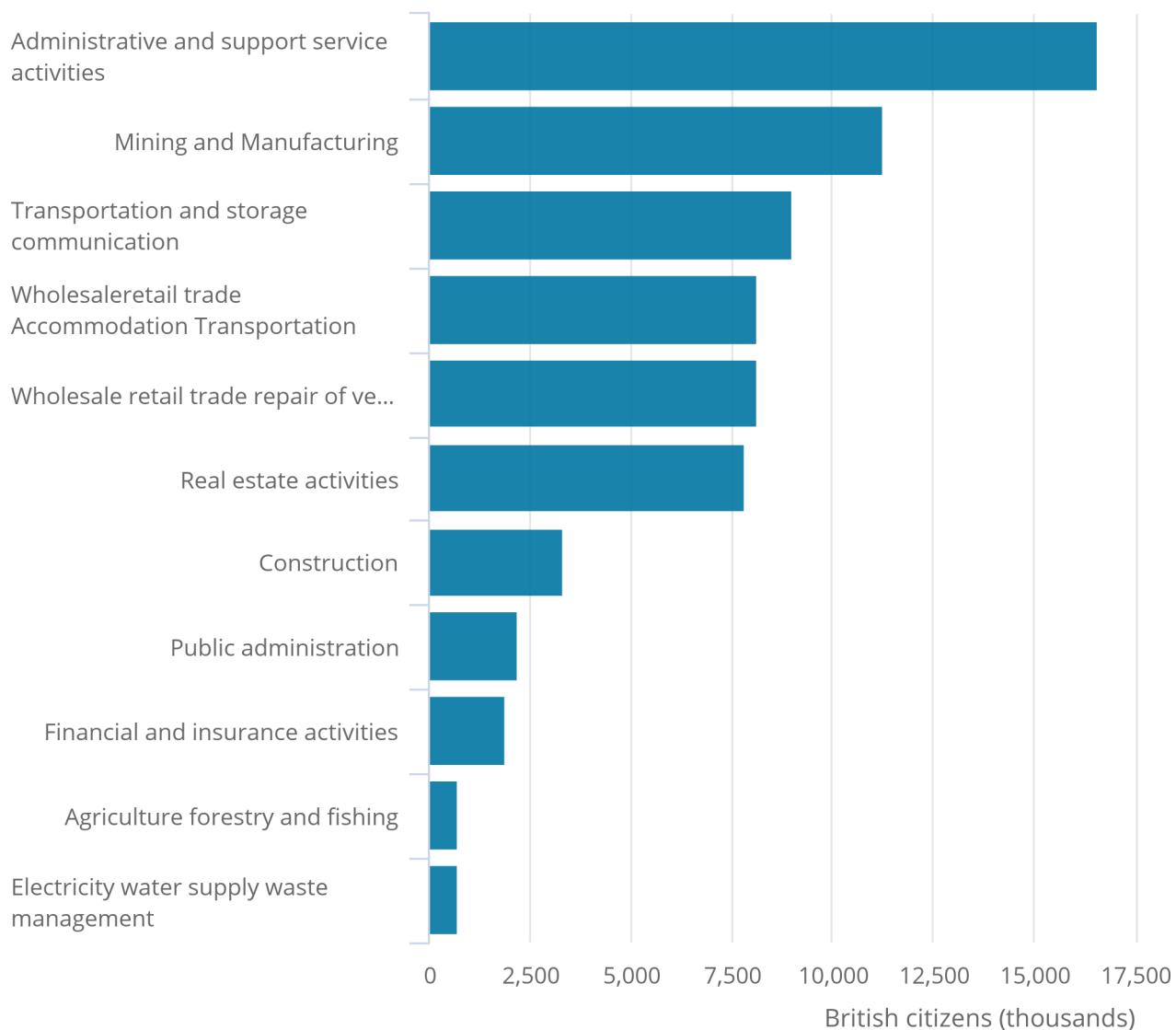
The 2011 German Census gives us the most up-to-date information on the jobs that British citizens are doing in Germany (Figure 6).

Of the 96,200 British citizens living in Germany in 2011, 78,100 were aged 15 to 64. 79% of those (61,600) were in work. Figure 6 shows that 27% (16,600) of all British workers in Germany were employed in administrative and support service activities. Mining and manufacturing is the second most common industry sector, with 11,200 employees (18%).

Note that the industry sector does not necessarily reflect job content – for example, people working in the mining and manufacturing industry occupy a variety of jobs, such as managerial, operative and cleaning.

Figure 6: British citizens in employment in Germany by industry of employment, 2011

Figure 6: British citizens in employment in Germany by industry of employment, 2011



Source: 2011 German Microcensus

Source: 2011 German Microcensus

6 . Short-term migration of British citizens to Germany, from England and Wales

British citizens made 24,000 visits of 1 to 12 months to Germany in the year ending June 2015, the latest time period for which data are available. The most common reason for visit was “other”. “Other” reasons include holidays and travelling, visiting or accompanying family and friends, working holidays, medical treatment, and religious pilgrimage.

7 . British citizens travelling to Germany for less than 28 days

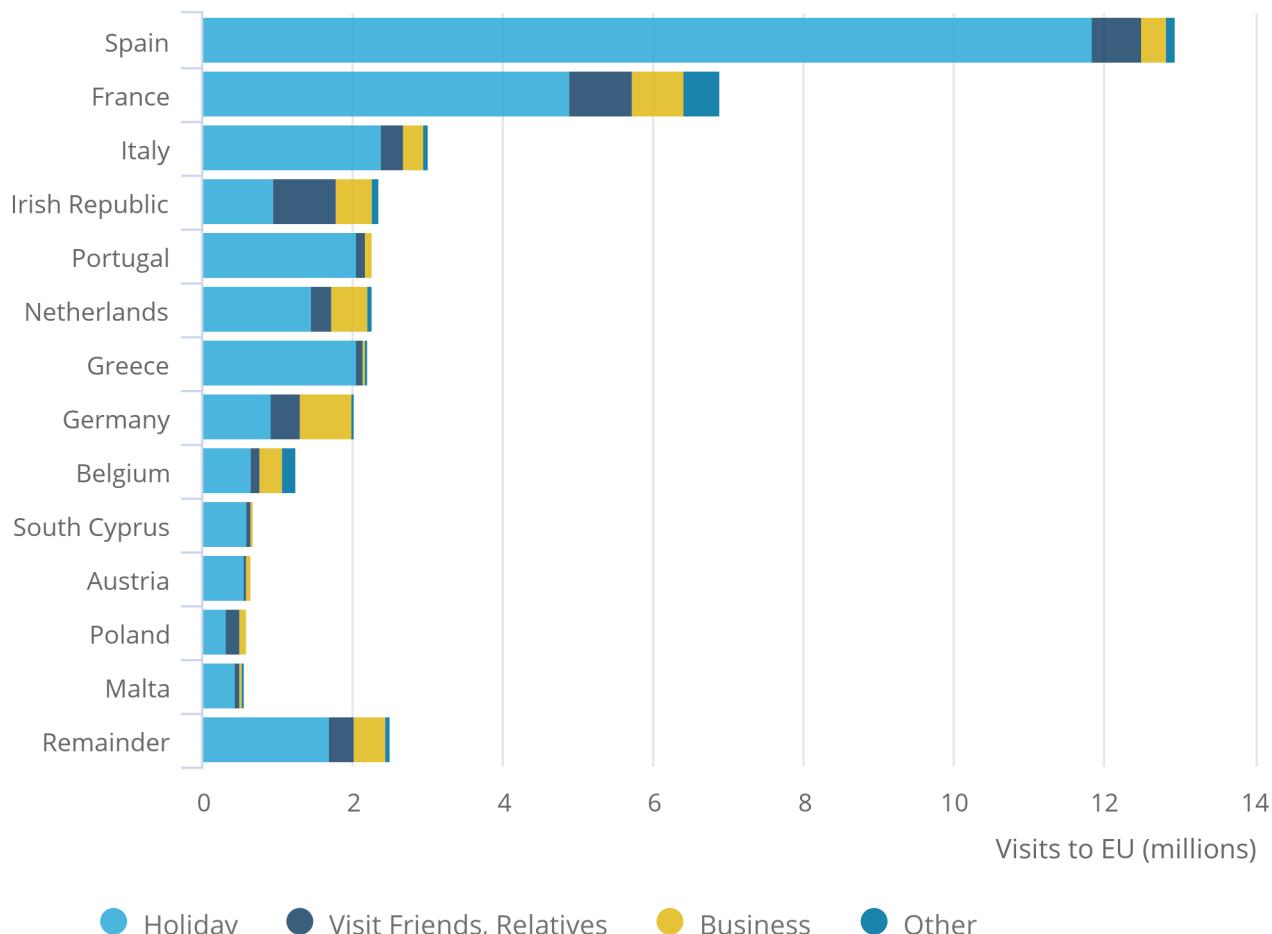
British citizens made approximately 2 million visits of less than 28 days to Germany in 2016, which represents 5% of all visits to the European Union by British citizens in 2016 (see Figure 7).

The most common reason to visit was for a holiday, with British citizens taking 943,200 holidays in Germany in 2016, (46% of all visits).

Germany is the one of the most common destinations for British citizens going on business trips in Europe (667,800 visits), alongside France (678,200 visits).

Figure 7: British citizens' visits to EU, for less than 28 days, by reason for trip, 2016

Figure 7: British citizens' visits to EU, for less than 28 days, by reason for trip, 2016



Source: Office for National Statistics, International Passenger Survey

Source: Office for National Statistics, International Passenger Survey

Notes:

1. Remainder includes (by number of visits, largest to smallest): Denmark, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Sweden, Bulgaria, Finland, Romania, Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Lithuania, and Estonia.

8 . How many German citizens are there living in the UK?

There were 144,000 German citizens¹ estimated to be resident in the UK in 2016, according to the [population by country of birth and nationality](#) estimates.

The three-year pooled APS dataset provides a larger sample size for more detailed analysis. It is an average for the years January 2014 to December 2016.

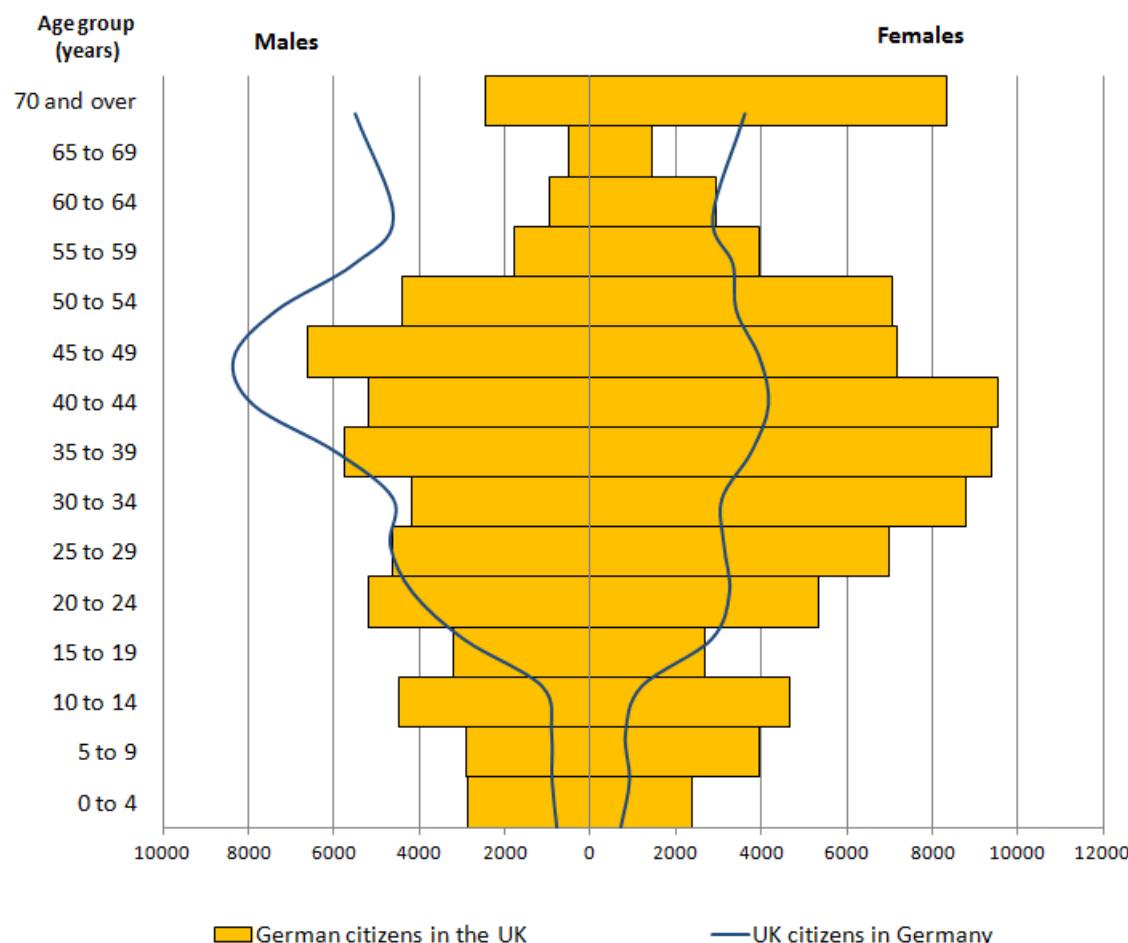
This dataset estimates that 139,700 German citizens were living in the UK between 2014 to 2016. 92% were estimated to be living in England, 5% in Scotland, with the remainder living in Wales and Northern Ireland.

A comparison of the resident population of German citizens (approx 139,700) in the UK and British citizens in Germany (107,000) in Figure 8, reveal differences in age profiles, particularly for males.

The [2016 Ministry of Defence statistics on the location of Armed Forces pension recipients](#) show that around 1,700 Armed Forces pensions were received by veterans in Germany in 2016. This includes only those who have left the Armed Forces and are already claiming pension. There are other veterans based in Germany who are not yet claiming their pension. This historic migration may help to explain the greater proportion of older UK males in Germany.

There are a large proportion of German women in the UK, who could potentially be partners of British servicemen who have returned from a posting in Germany. There is a further large group of women aged 70 or over, who would have been born before 1947 and may have come to the UK as part of the migrations of the early 20th century.

Figure 8: Population pyramid comparing British citizens living in Germany and German citizens living in the UK, APS (2014-16) and Eurostat (2016)



Notes for: How many German citizens are there living in the UK?

1. Citizenship is a better guide to Germans living in the UK. German-born includes many children, who are British citizens, born to British service personnel whilst posted in Germany.

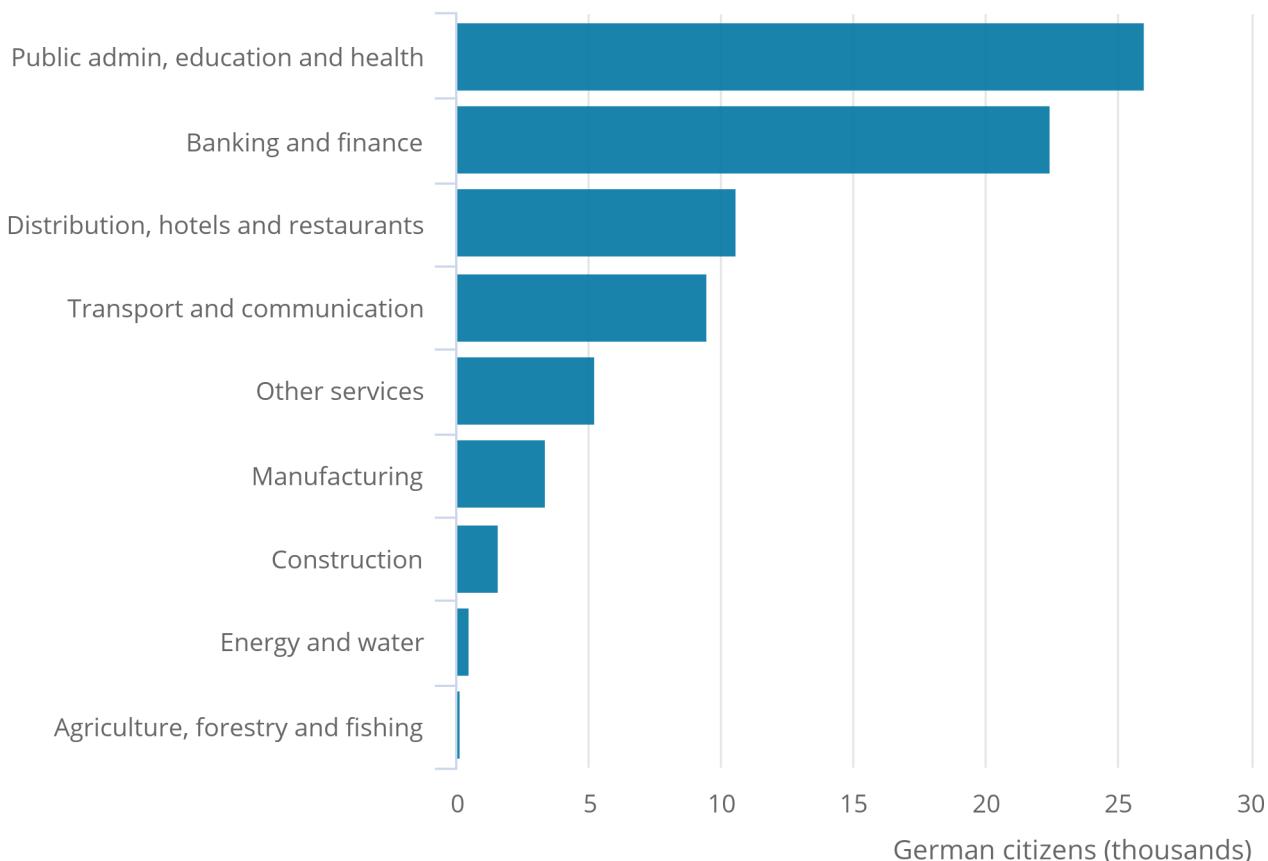
9 . What are German citizens living in the UK doing?

An estimated 76% of German citizens (80,200) aged 16 to 64-years old were in employment in 2014 to 2016, according to the three-year pooled Annual Population Survey (APS). An estimated 3% of those aged 16 to 64-years (3,300) were unemployed. A further 21% (22,100) were estimated to be economically inactive – for example; students (10,300), those staying at home with children or retired.

Figure 9 shows that German citizens living in the UK were estimated to work in largest volumes in public administration, education and health (26,000, 32% of working age German citizens in employment living in the UK, and comprising less than 1% of all employees in this sector), banking and finance (22,500, 28% of working age German citizens in the UK, and comprising less than 1% of all employees in this sector).

Figure 9: German citizens aged 16 to 64-years and in employment in the UK, by industry of employment, 2014 to 2016

Figure 9: German citizens aged 16 to 64-years and in employment in the UK, by industry of employment, 2014 to 2016



Source: Office for National Statistics, 3-year pooled Annual Population Survey, annual average from

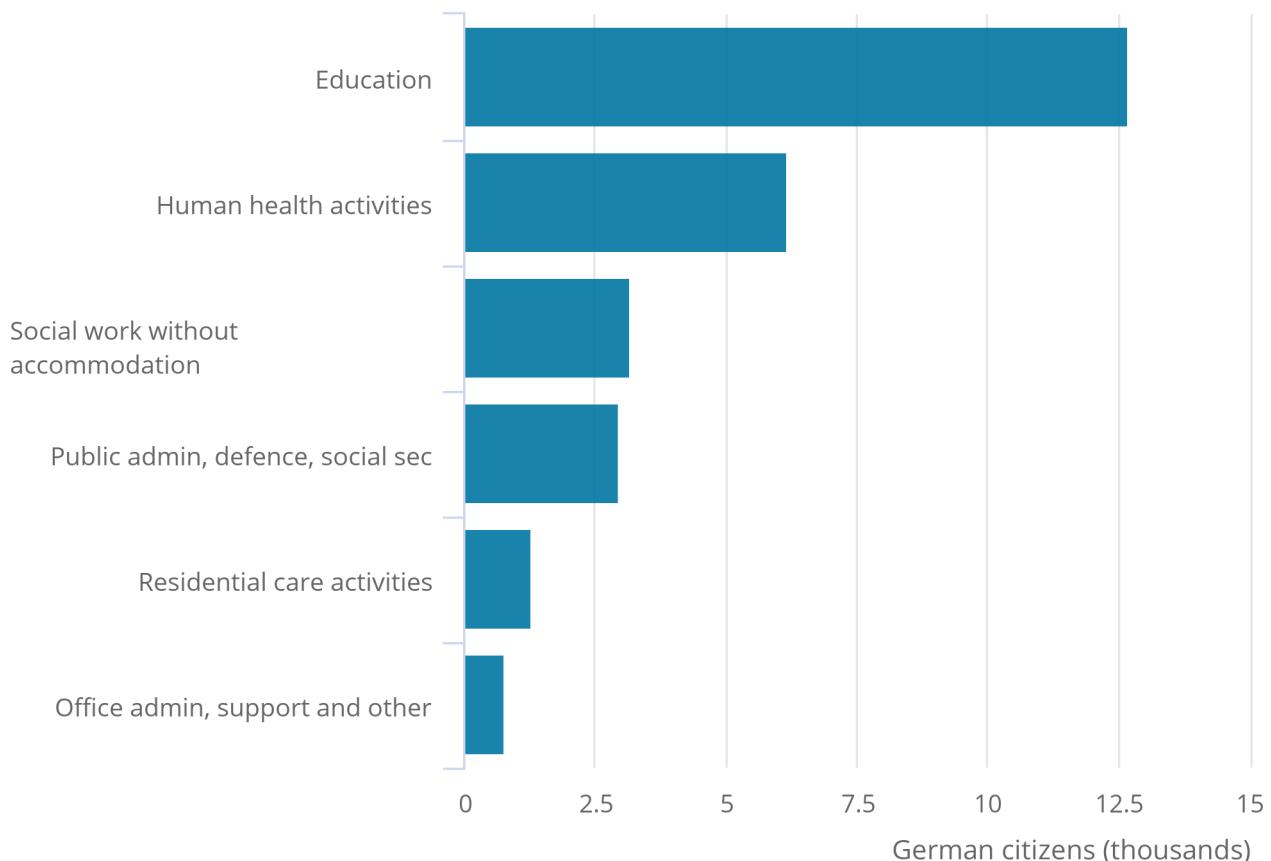
Source: Office for National Statistics, 3-year pooled Annual Population Survey, annual average from January 2014 to December 2016

A breakdown of the Public administration, education and health industry sector shows that the most common sub-sector was education. 12,600 German citizens were estimated to be working in education (most commonly in the higher education sector (7,000)). This is followed by health-related roles (6,000). (Figure 10).

Note that the industry sector does not necessarily reflect job content – for example, people working in the manufacturing industry occupy a variety of jobs, such as managerial, operative and cleaning.

Figure 10: German citizens employed in Public administration, education and health sector in the UK by sub-major industry, 2014 to 2016

Figure 10: German citizens employed in Public administration, education and health sector in the UK by sub-major industry, 2014 to 2016



Source: Office for National Statistics, 3-year pooled Annual Population Survey, annual average from

Source: Office for National Statistics, 3-year pooled Annual Population Survey, annual average from January 2014 to December 2016

It is estimated that 61% of German citizens were working in “higher level professions” (comprised of managers, directors and senior officials, professional occupations and associate professional and technical).

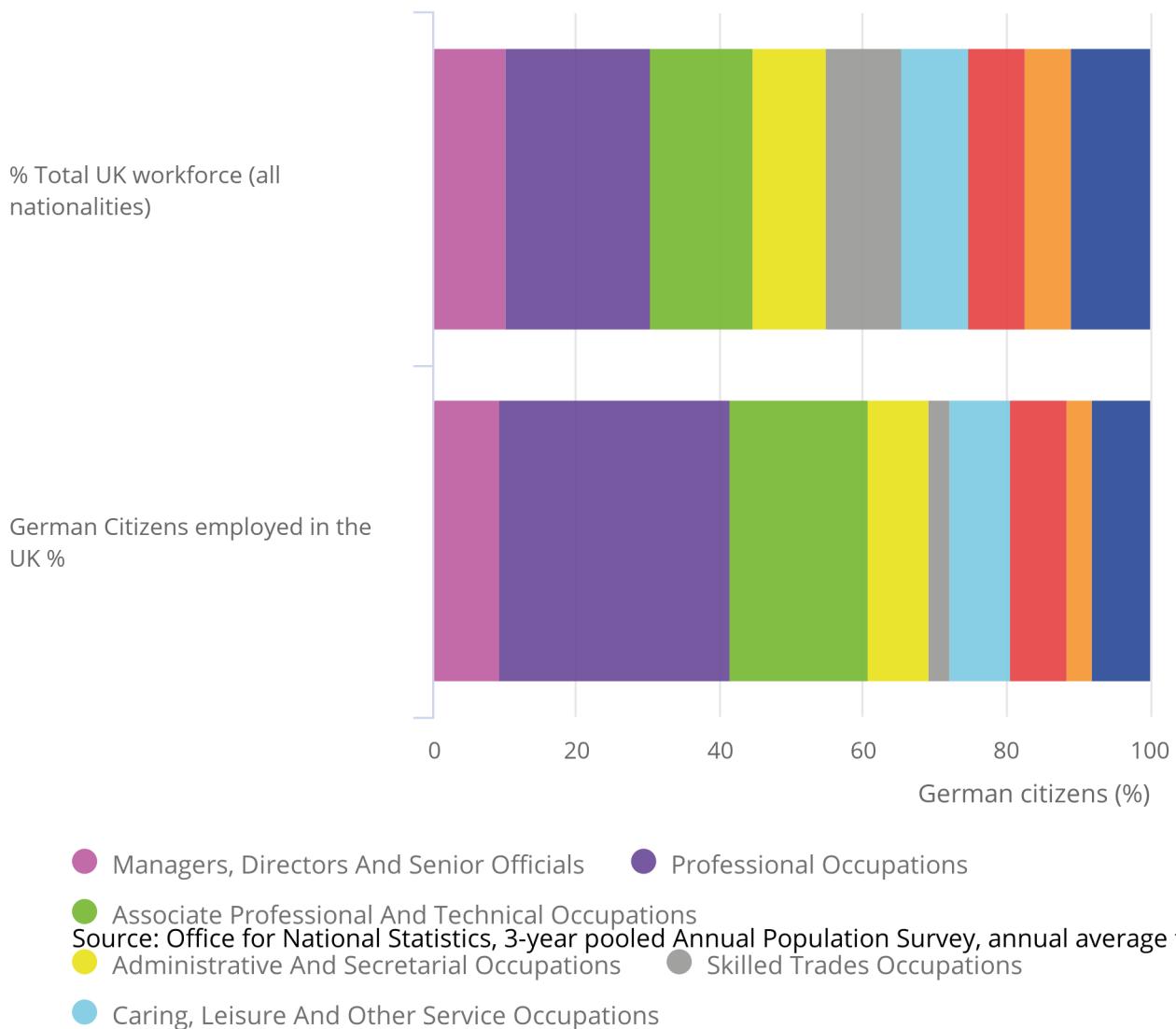
This is a similar proportion to French citizens (65%) in the UK, and compares with 44% of the UK workforce as a whole, and 48% of Spanish citizens in the UK.

The most common occupation types for German citizens were estimated to be professional (25,700; 32%) and associate professional and technical occupations (15,300; 19%) (see Figure 11).

Professional occupations are those that require a degree or equivalent qualification, postgraduate qualifications and/or a formal period of experience-related training. Elementary occupations require a minimum general level of education (that is, that which is acquired by the end of the period of compulsory education).

Figure 11: German citizens in employment in the UK by level of occupation, 2014 to 2016

Figure 11: German citizens in employment in the UK by level of occupation, 2014 to 2016



Source: Office for National Statistics, 3-year pooled Annual Population Survey, annual average from January 2014 to December 2016

The Office for National Statistics report [International Migration in the Labour Market](#) provides information on the number and characteristics of migrants in the labour market.

10 . 1 to 12-month short-term migration of German citizens to England and Wales

In the latest period, for the year ending June 2015, there were 43,000 short-term visits by German citizens to England and Wales.

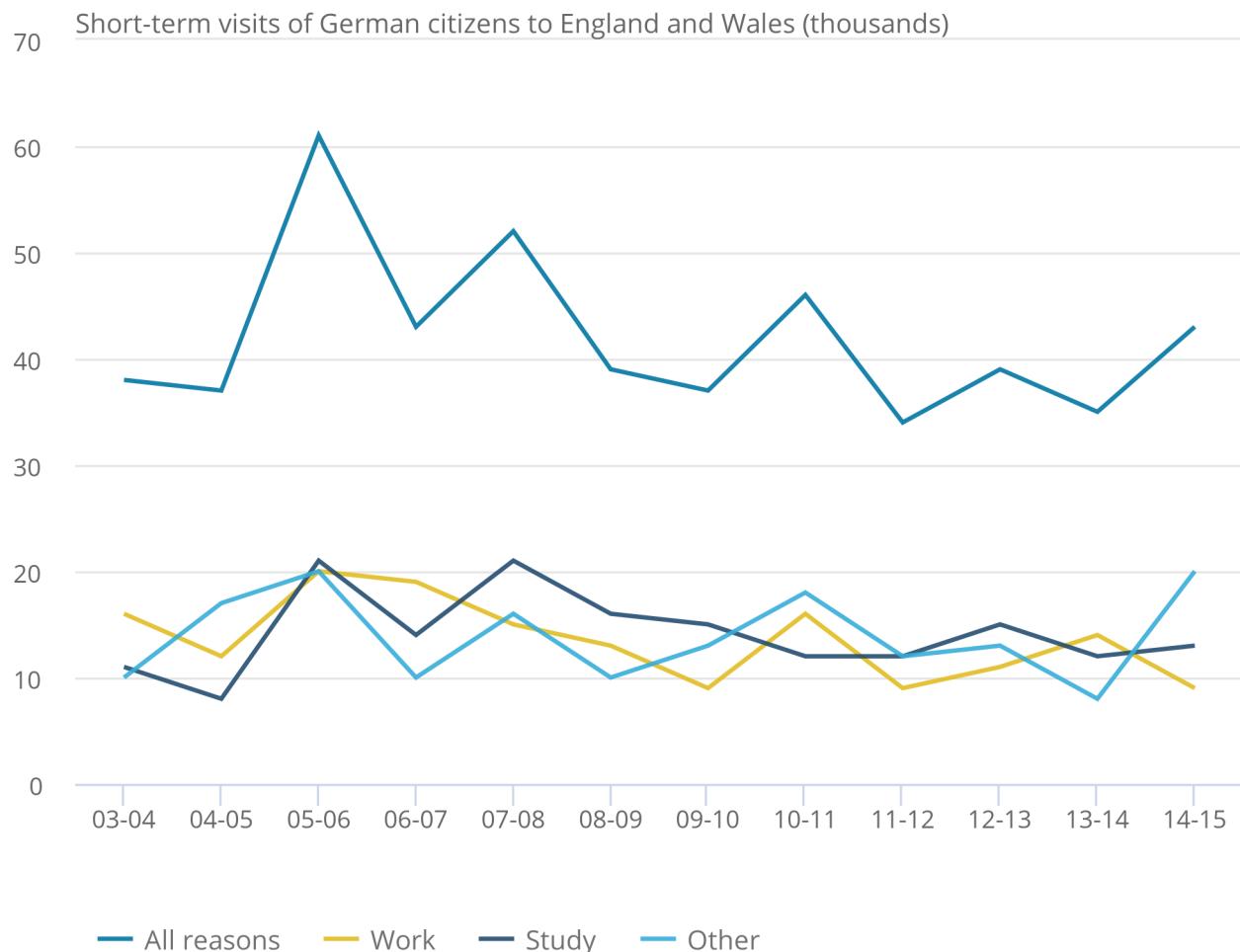
Figure 12 shows that the most common reason to visit was “Other” reasons (20,000), with an additional 9,000 visits for work, and 13,000 visits for study in 2015.

The “work” grouping consists of, “employment” (migration to work, paid in the new country in which the migrant works) and “work (other)” (self-employment and visiting on business for their existing employer).

The “study” grouping includes all formal higher and further education but excludes evening and informal tuition. “Other” reasons include holidays and travelling; visiting or accompanying family and friends; working holidays; medical treatment; and religious pilgrimage.

Figure 12: Short-term migration of German citizens to England and Wales (2003 to 2015)

Figure 12: Short-term migration of German citizens to England and Wales (2003 to 2015)



Source: Office for National Statistics International Passenger Survey, Short-Term International Migration Estimates

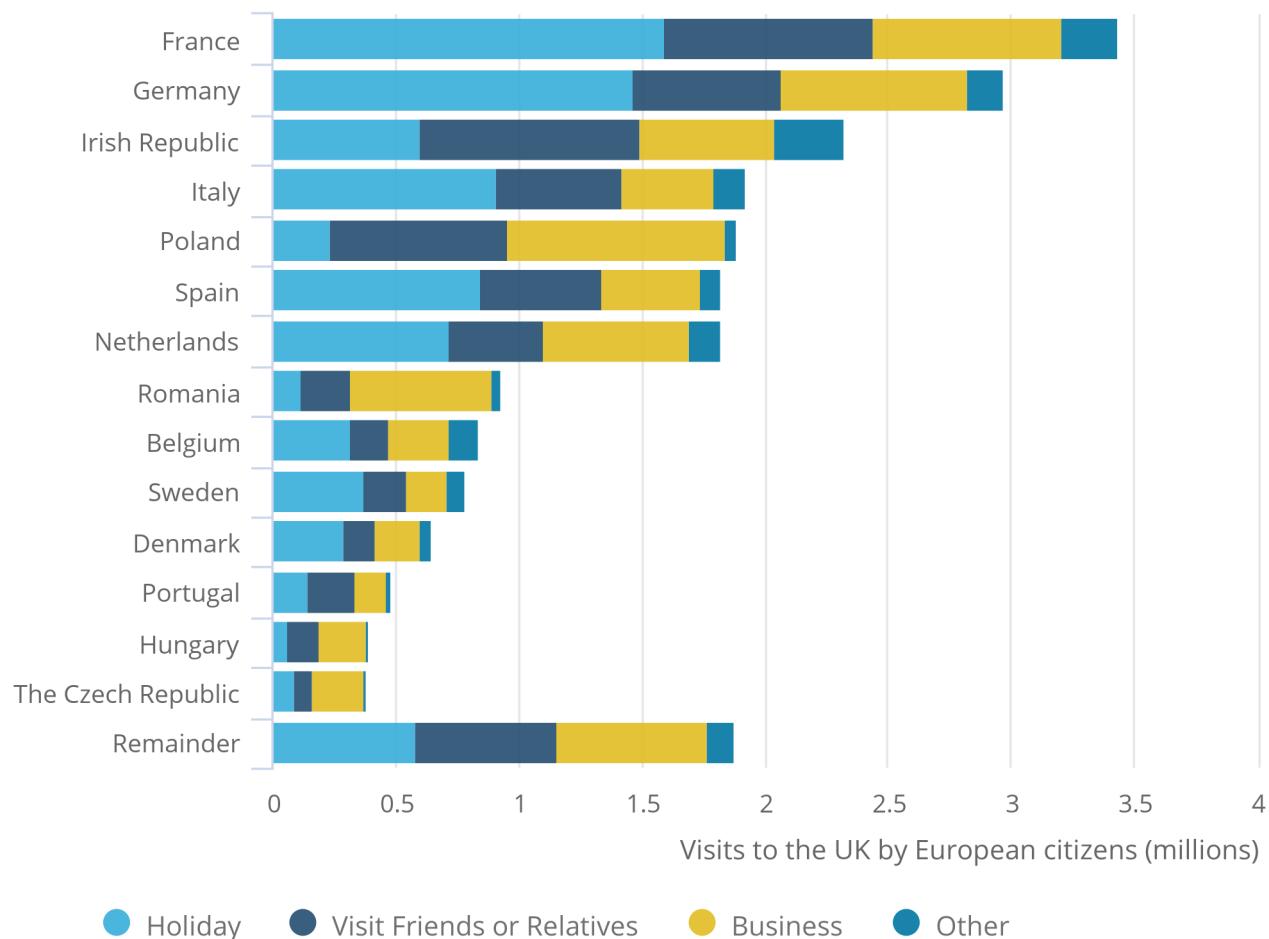
Source: Office for National Statistics International Passenger Survey, Short-Term International Migration Estimates

11 . German citizens travelling to the UK for less than 28 days

In 2016, there were approximately three million visits to the UK by German citizens; almost 1 million more than the number of visits to Germany by UK citizens in the same year. The most common reason for travel was holidays (49%), followed by business (26%), and visiting friends (20%) (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Number of visits to the UK by citizens of European countries, for less than 28 days, by reason for visit, 2016

Figure 13: Number of visits to the UK by citizens of European countries, for less than 28 days, by reason for visit, 2016



Source: Office for National Statistics, International Passenger Survey

Source: Office for National Statistics, International Passenger Survey

Notes:

1. Remainder includes (by number of trips, most to fewest): Austria, Finland, Bulgaria, Greece, Lithuania, Slovakia, Latvia, Malta, Croatia, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Estonia).

12 . Next steps

We are in the process of [improving the evidence on migrants in the UK](#), aiming to make better use of data sources and offer more evidence on migrants living in the UK. Improvements to international data sources on migration could add to the body of evidence on British citizens living in the EU, which will continue to be monitored by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). In addition, it is possible that access to data sources, such as the Department of Health European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), may contain useful detailed information.

13 . Quality and methodology

More information on how the data were compiled

This report provides updated figures to those previously published in January 2017, in the report [What information is there on British migrants living in Europe?](#)

The January 2017 report established the resident population of citizens as the most useful statistics for identifying who may be affected by the UK's decision to leave the EU. This is particularly the case when compared to the use of a "country of birth" definition of a migrant, which can miss some groups of citizens. It should be noted that people can change their citizenship and some people hold multiple citizenships.

This report has been compiled by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) from a variety of data sources, using a range of data sources, to provide more up-to-date data on the resident populations and the number of short-term migration events and visits by British citizens to the EU (and by EU citizens to the UK), which may be affected by the UK's decision to leave the EU.

These data sources are not always comparable (see table below for the differences between definitions used). For example, the sources used to identify British citizens in Germany are on a different basis to the sources used to identify German citizens in the UK. However, they have been selected as the best available data to indicate the number of citizens in the UK and Germany.

Table 1: Comparison of definitions between the data sources used in this report

| Type of migrant | Source | Citizenship | Migrant definition |
|---|---|---|--|
| Long-term resident (to and from UK) | British citizens in Germany | Census 2011, Destatis | Yes, estimates are by citizenship. Those who have lived abroad for three months or longer. |
| | Central Register for Foreigners, Destatis | Those with multiple citizenships have one citizenship selected for reporting. This is determined in the following order: German, other EU citizenship, non-EU citizenship | Those who have lived abroad for three months or longer. |
| | UK State pensions claimed abroad, DWP | Yes, estimates are by citizenship. Those with multiple citizenships (i.e., German and another citizenship) are not counted, as the CRF only counts foreign persons. | Those who have lived abroad for three months or longer. |
| German citizens in UK | Annual Population Survey, ONS | Does not provide estimates by citizenship Yes, estimates are by citizenship. Citizenship is a response to 'What nationality do you hold?' | No definition is applied, although it is assumed that those claiming pension in another country will be a long-term resident The APS will include long-term migrants and some short-term migrants although it is unlikely to include short-term migrants living in the UK for very short periods of time. |
| Short-term migrants (to and from England and Wales) | British citizens in Germany | Short-Term International Migration estimates, ONS | Yes, estimates are by citizenship. Those that migrate between 1 to 12 months for all reasons |
| Visitors (to and from UK) | British citizens in Germany | Visitor estimates, ONS | Citizenship is collected as 'passport held' and migrant usually shows passport to the interviewer. |
| | German citizens in UK | Yes, estimates are by citizenship. | Visits abroad. For the purposes of this report, data is provided for only those visits of 28 days or less, so that there is no overlap with short-term migration estimates. |
| | German citizens in UK | Citizenship is collected as 'passport held' and migrant usually shows passport to the interviewer. | |

Source: Office for National Statistics

More information on the data sources used in this report

German Central Register for Foreigners (CRF) (Destatis)

German Central Register for Foreigners (CRF) data do not estimate military personnel or their family members. The CRF defines a citizen as resident after three months. CRF defines a person has a migrant background if they or at least one of their parents did not acquire a German citizenship by birth

German Microcensus 2016 (Destatis)

Based on a sample of 1% of the German population and households, the German microcensus is an official statistical survey carried out annually since 1957. In total, about 380,000 households and 820,000 household members participate in the survey. The majority of questions on the survey are mandatory.

The estimate of British citizens for this survey is 94,000 in 2016.

UK state pensions claimed in EU (Department for Work and Pensions)

Department for Work and Pensions ([DWP administrative data on UK State Pension recipients](#)) is available online. These data on pension recipients include both British citizens and non-British citizens who qualify for a UK state pension.

The data are for people who have notified DWP that they are overseas, addresses are checked annually by DWP, and those not responding to communications have their pension paused, thus giving significant incentive to provide correct address information.

Those living between Germany and the UK might register to live in Germany and thus be counted in the German population estimates, but register their pension to a home they maintain in the UK.

Short-term international migration estimates (ONS)

Data for 2015 are provisional.

[Short-term international migration estimates](#) are derived from the International Passenger Survey (IPS) which is a sample survey and therefore subject to some uncertainty. When data are disaggregated to a country level confidence intervals will be larger, but the data are useful as a broad indication of trends. These data only include those travelling to and from England and Wales.

This data source estimates the number of journeys, rather than the number of people visiting. There is evidence to suggest that due to the sampling design and coverage of the International Passenger Survey (IPS) between 2004 and 2008, coverage of some routes may have caused some short-term migrants to be missed. For more information, please refer to our [Quality of Long-Term International Migration estimates from 2001 to 2011 full report](#).

International Passenger Survey Travel and Tourism visitor data (ONS)

Estimates reflect only the number of visits made – there may be multiple visits by one person. These data include British citizens who are resident in the UK, but doesn't include British citizens resident in other countries.

These data might also include (but not identify) those who travel to and from Germany or UK regularly. For the purposes of this report, data are provided for only those visits of 28 days or less, so that there is no overlap with short-term migration estimates. Regular [Overseas Travel and Tourism](#) reports do not make this distinction.

Three-year pooled Annual Population Survey, annual average from January 2014 to December 2016 (ONS)

Data are collected from individuals in households, but do not include most communal establishments (managed accommodation such as halls of residence, hostels and care homes); this means that students living in communal establishments will only be included in Annual Population Survey (APS) estimates if their parents (resident in a household) are sampled and include the absent student.

Students living in non-communal establishments will be captured in APS sampling.

The APS will include long-term migrants and some short-term migrants although it is unlikely to include short-term migrants living in the UK for very short periods of time.

The APS three-year pooled dataset Jan 2014 to Dec 2016 is less sensitive to more volatile trends than one-year datasets as this dataset encompasses three years.

Further information on the [quality of the Annual Population Survey](#) is available.