

Article

# Population and migration statistics system transformation – recent updates

Updates on our latest progress and links to our related statistics and research reports. You can find more background on the transformation of the population and migration statistics system and what is happening between now and 2023 in our transformation overview article.

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# 1 . Latest update on our population and migration statistics transformation programme

Today (21 May 2020), we have published an update on [how we are transforming population and migration statistics](#). This includes how we will be working across the Government Statistical Service (GSS) to deliver new measures of migration statistics based on administrative data from 2020 onwards, following the suspension of the International Passenger Survey (IPS) because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

## 2 . Our latest international migration statistics

Today (21 May 2020), we have published each of the following releases.

### **Migration Statistics Quarterly Report (MSQR): May 2020, including long-term international migration estimates for the year ending December 2019**

The [latest long-term international migration estimates](#) are based on International Passenger Survey (IPS) data for the period up to December 2019 and as such are unaffected by the recent impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on Office for National Statistics (ONS) survey data collection, including the current suspension of the IPS. As it is recognised that international travel patterns have changed significantly in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have also included in this release additional data and insights on recent travel patterns in the period up to the end of March 2020.

### **Population estimates by country of birth and nationality for the year ending December 2019**

[This release](#) uses data from the Annual Population Survey (APS) to provide estimates of the number of people resident in the UK by their country of birth and their nationality. These statistics are also unaffected by the recent impact of COVID-19.

### **A reduced set of Short-Term International Migration (STIM) estimates for the year ending June 2018**

We previously announced in February 2020 that the content of the STIM publication would be reduced to allow more focus on our transformation work and the development of these statistics. Therefore, [this release](#) now only includes high-level national estimates of STIM by length of stay, citizenship and reason for visit.

## 3 . Update on analysis to explore how the DWP's RAPID could be used to measure migration

We are continuing to work with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to explore how further analysis of their Registration and Population Interaction Database (RAPID) could support us in measuring migration. This includes reviewing whether we will make further adjustments to the International Passenger Survey (IPS) data we will report in the August Migration Statistics Quarterly Report (MSQR), alongside how we will use RAPID in our new measures of migration based on administrative data from 2020 onwards.

## Background

To produce the current preliminary adjustment for EU migrants, we commissioned the DWP to provide some aggregate analysis of their Lifetime Labour Market Database (L2) dataset. The L2 dataset is a 1% sample of HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC's) National Insurance and Pay As You Earn (PAYE) system and is supplemented with benefit data from DWP. The L2 dataset allowed the DWP to analyse data on non-UK-national adults who registered for a National Insurance number (NINo) in the UK and had interactions with National Insurance, PAYE, and DWP benefit and local authority benefit systems.

This analysis meant patterns of interaction with the tax and benefits system could be identified, and it allowed the DWP to classify records of people who could, based on prolonged interaction with these systems, be classed as long-term migrants. The DWP have since developed RAPID. One of the main benefits of RAPID, compared with L2, is that RAPID uses 100% extracts of data, meaning it contains records for everyone with a NINo. An additional benefit of RAPID is that it contains data extracts from a wider range of DWP and HMRC systems than L2, including all benefit, employments, self-employment, pensions and in-work benefit interactions, for example, tax credits and Housing Benefit.

RAPID provides a single coherent view of citizens' interactions with the DWP, HMRC's PAYE and self-assessment systems and local authorities' Housing Benefit systems within a tax year for the UK (between tax year ending 2011 and tax year ending 2019). To do this, RAPID collates 100% extracts of data and summarises the duration of individual interactions with these systems for each tax year.

As well as all people who hold a NINo, RAPID also includes information on migrants registering for a NINo along with their date of registration and self-reported date of arrival in the UK. Information on migrant arrivals and registrations, combined with the data on interactions, allows an assessment of whether the duration of the stay in the UK may classify them as long-term residents.

## Our latest progress

The assessment of arrival and interactions data over time has, up to now, supported the development of a methodology for adjusting Long-Term International Migration (LTIM) estimates. In our previous update, we outlined our plan to use RAPID to develop our preliminary adjustments to EU immigration; however, because of the suspension of the IPS, we are extending our analysis to assess whether RAPID could be used to help measure migration for both EU and non-EU nationals. As well as using RAPID to measure arrivals, it may also enable the generation of a resident stock measure. To support this work, we have commissioned the DWP to undertake research to identify if estimates of long-term departures can be made based on the absence of system interactions for 12 months or more. It should be noted that because of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19), there may be a reduction in the resource the DWP can provide to support this work.

Our research is being conducted using de-identified aggregate data supplied to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) by the DWP. This uses both DWP and HMRC data. To further understand outputs from RAPID, we will be comparing the number of long-term arrivals and long-term departures in RAPID to estimates from the IPS. Where applicable, we will also look to compare against other available data sources such as the number of visas granted by the Home Office. We will also look to compare the demographic breakdown of both arrivals and departures of both RAPID and the IPS. Understanding both arrivals and departures will enable the ONS to assess the measurement of net migration using RAPID. As we develop our research to measure long-term migration to and from the UK using RAPID, we will provide further updates on our progress.

## 4 . How to get in touch

We welcome your feedback on our latest updates and on our transformation journey. If you would like to get in touch, please contact us by email at [pop.info@ons.gov.uk](mailto:pop.info@ons.gov.uk).