

Statistical bulletin

Long-term international migration, provisional: year ending December 2022

Experimental and provisional estimates of UK international migration, 2018 to 2022.
Covers the period since coronavirus (COVID-19) travel restrictions eased.

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1 . Main points

- These estimates are provisional, experimental and have a degree of uncertainty around them; we have improved our methods – most notably the inclusion of asylum seekers – which means estimates published in November 2022 covering year ending (YE) June 2022 have been revised.
- Total long-term immigration was estimated at around 1.2 million in 2022, and emigration was 557,000, which means migration continues to add to the population with net migration at 606,000; most people arriving to the UK in 2022 were non-EU nationals (925,000), followed by EU (151,000) and British (88,000).
- People coming to the UK from non-EU countries for work, study, and for humanitarian purposes, including unique events such as those arriving from Ukraine and Hong Kong, have contributed towards relatively high levels of immigration over the past 18 months; however, growth has slowed over recent quarters, potentially demonstrating the temporary nature of these impacts.
- The composition of non-EU immigration changed in 2022, with 39% of people arriving for study related reasons, down from 47% in 2021; those arriving on humanitarian routes (including Ukrainian schemes) increased from 9% to 19% over the same period.
- Evidence suggests that students typically stay for shorter periods than other migrants and that the majority leave at the end of their study; the latest data shows that those who arrived for study reasons in 2021 are now starting to leave, driving an increase in total emigration from 454,000 in 2021 to 557,000 in 2022.
- Both a slowing of immigration and rising of emigration means that levels of net migration have levelled off in recent quarters; an estimated 606,000 more people arrived long-term to the UK than departed in YE December 2022, 118,000 higher than a year previously, but comparable to levels in YE June 2022.
- The improvement in methods means the previously published immigration estimate for YE June 2022 is revised upwards by 45,000 to 1,109,000, emigration downwards by negative 57,000 to 503,000, and net migration revised by 102,000 to 606,000.

These estimates are experimental and provisional. They are based on administrative and survey data, supported by innovative [statistical modelling](#) where these data are incomplete. There is a degree of uncertainty around them that we are unable to quantify at this time. These estimates are not comparable with those published previously, because of continued improvement in methods. See [Section 9: Revisions to migration estimates](#) for more detail.

Statistician's comment

"A series of unprecedented world events throughout 2022 and the lifting of restrictions following the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic led to record levels of international immigration to the UK.

"The main drivers of the increase were people coming to the UK from non-EU countries for work, study and for humanitarian purposes, including those arriving from Ukraine and Hong Kong. For the first time since using our new methods to measure migration, we have also included asylum seekers in our estimates, with around 1 in 12 non-EU migrants coming via this route.

"There are some signs that the underlying drivers behind these high levels of migration are changing. As lockdown restrictions were lifted in 2021, we saw a sharp increase in students arriving. Recent data suggests that those arriving in 2021 are now leaving the country, with the overall share of non-EU immigration for students falling in 2022. In contrast, those arriving on humanitarian routes increased over the 12 months. Evidence also suggests immigration has slowed in recent months, potentially demonstrating the temporary nature of these events."

Jay Lindop, Director of the Centre for International Migration, Office for National Statistics.

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2 . Immigration to the UK

The period leading up to the end of 2022 was unique, with a series of world events affecting long-term immigration. This included the continued recovery in travel following the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the ongoing support for Ukrainian nationals and others requiring protection, such as those claiming asylum and arriving for resettlement. The Home Office has recently published on the impacts on visa numbers in their [Recent changes to visa numbers in Home Office data](#) article.

In 2022, long-term immigration into the UK was an estimated 1.2 million. This is an estimated increase of 221,000 compared with 2021 (942,000). This 2021 figure has been revised upwards (from 895,000 to 942,000). This upwards revision results from methodological improvements and the inclusion of asylum seekers, who were not covered by the migration estimates published in November 2022. Please see the [Section 9: Revisions to migration estimates](#) for more information, and [Section 11: Glossary](#) for the definition of long-term immigration.

The increase in long-term immigration since 2021 was driven by non-EU nationals, accounting for an estimated 80% of total immigration. Non-EU immigration was estimated at around 925,000 for 2022, an increase of 287,000 compared with 2021. This increase in non-EU immigration is attributed to by people arriving in the UK for work related reasons, as well as on protection routes. This includes those arriving from Ukraine and British nationals (Overseas) from Hong Kong (for more information, see [Section 5: Non-EU reason for migration](#)).

Immigration of EU nationals was an estimated 151,000 for December 2022, a decrease of 45,000 compared with 2021. This group accounted for 13% of total immigration in 2022, down from the pre-pandemic levels of 52% and 42% in 2018 and 2019, respectively. From January 2021, EU nationals have required a visa to enter the UK. However, a proportion of EU migrants with settled status can continue to travel to the UK without a visa. Data on immigration of EU nationals for the last three quarters of 2022 is not yet available and instead is nowcasted using signal data applied to historical estimates. See our [methods note](#) for more detail on this, and [Section 11: Glossary](#) for the definition of EU.

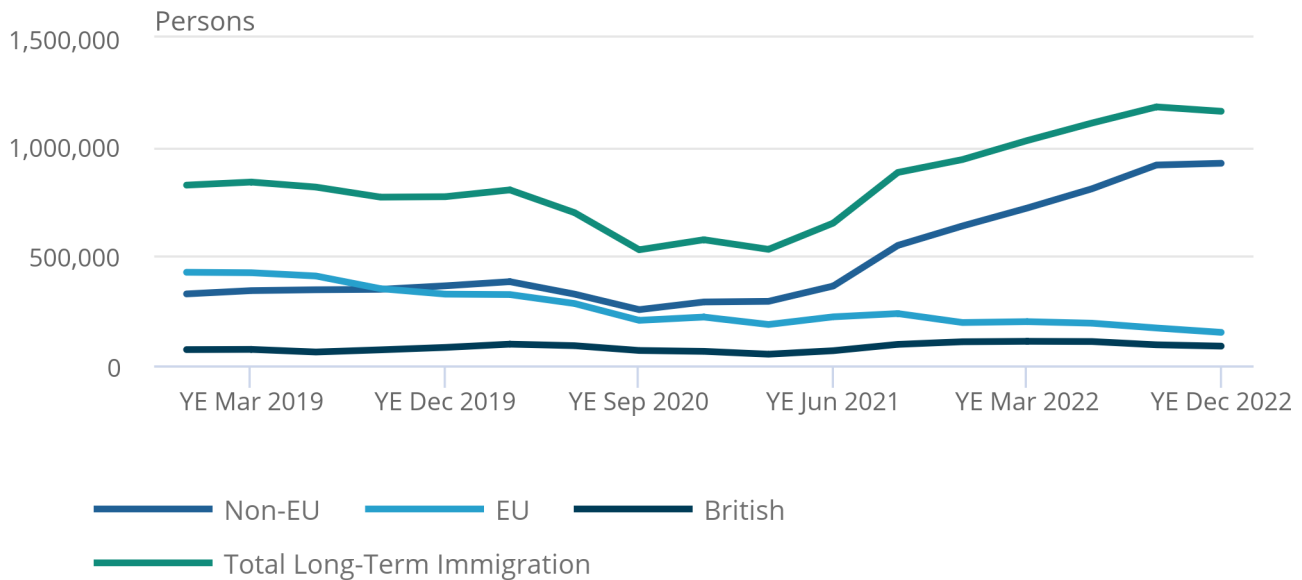
British nationals made up the remaining 8% of immigration (88,000) in 2022 and has remained broadly stable since 2018.

Figure 1: Long-term immigration in 2022 was largely driven by non-EU nationals

Number of non-EU, EU, and British nationals immigrating into the UK, between 2018 and 2022

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Number of non-EU, EU, and British nationals immigrating into the UK, between 2018 and 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics, Department for Work and Pensions, Home Office

Notes:

1. Read more on the methods, data sources and data quality in the [Strengths and limitations section](#).
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 Department for Work and Pensions and HM Revenue and Customs, and British nationals figures are based on the International Passenger Survey (IPS). See the [Measuring the data section](#) for more detail.
4. Because of the experimental and provisional nature of our statistics, numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand. Totals may not equal the sum of individual parts.

Population and migration: find the right statistics

[Government Statistical Service \(GSS\) Dashboard](#)

[International migration research, progress update: May 2023](#)

[Methods to produce provisional long-term international migration estimates](#)

[Admin-based long-term international migration QMI](#)

[Population and migration estimates - exploring alternative definitions: May 2023](#)

[Immigration system statistics, year ending March 2023](#) (Home Office)

[Irregular migration to the UK, year ending March 2023](#) (Home Office)

[Migrant journey: 2022 report](#) (Home Office)

[EU Settlement Scheme quarterly statistics, March 2023](#) (Home Office)

[Migration transparency data](#) (Home Office)

[National Insurance numbers allocated to adult overseas nationals to March 2023](#) (Department for Work and Pensions)

3 . Migration events affecting the data

This section outlines the impact of recent migration events, which includes people immigrating from Ukraine and British nationals (overseas) (BN(O)) arriving from Hong Kong.

The inclusion of different subpopulations into overall measures of migration depends partly on whether they satisfy the definition of long-term migration (arriving in, or departing from, the UK for more than 12 months). Additionally, we have been building confidence in the methods and underlying data, which has enabled us to include groups without compromising the overall quality of the long-term migration estimates.

Ukrainians (included in Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates)

From March 2022, Ukrainians could come to the UK on [Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme and Ukraine Family Scheme visas](#). We do not have enough data to say whether people who arrived will go on to stay for 12 months. Previous estimates assumed all those arriving on the Ukraine visa schemes would remain in the UK long-term. Internal Home Office analysis shows that some left the UK before reaching the 12 months period. As a result, we have revised our assumptions to account for those who may leave the UK before becoming long-term migrants. See our [International migration research, progress update](#) article for more detail. We estimate there were 114,000 long-term arrivals from Ukraine on the Ukraine Schemes in 2022 (see [Section 11: Glossary](#) for a full definition).

British nationals overseas BN(O) (included in ONS estimates)

On 31 January 2021, the UK launched a bespoke immigration route for British nationals overseas (BN(O)) status holders and their families from Hong Kong. See [Section 11: Glossary](#) for the definition of BN(O).

As with Ukrainian arrivals, we do not yet know whether people arriving on BN(O) visas will remain for 12 months. So, we have adjusted these estimates using similar assumptions to those used for Ukrainians. See our [International migration research, progress update](#) article for more detail.

We estimate that there were 52,000 long-term arrivals on BN(O) visas in 2022. Our previous estimate was based on the number of visas issued for the BN(O) route. However, not all of those with a visa will arrive in the UK or stay long-term.

In our [Long-term international migration, provisional: year ending June 2022 bulletin](#), we said that a number of BN(O)s were likely to be in our estimates of British nationals for the year ending June 2022. We have now removed these. See our [International migration research, progress update](#) article for more information, and [Section 11: Glossary](#) for the definition of British nationals.

Resettled refugees (included in ONS estimates)

Previously, we did not include this subgroup in our long-term international migration estimates. However, we have included resettlement scheme arrivals (6,000 for 2022) in our latest immigration estimate. There are no returns for resettled refugees on the basis that all resettled persons are long-term international migrants (LTIM), based on declared intent to stay in-country.

For immigration, we have included resettlement scheme arrivals in the international migration estimate using the [Home Office's Immigration System Statistics dataset \(XLSX, 8.97MB\)](#). The resettlement figures include individuals resettled under:

- "Pathway 1" and "Pathway 2" of the Afghanistan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)
- the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)
- the Community Sponsorship Scheme
- the Mandate Scheme
- the UK resettlement Scheme
- the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme
- the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme

For more information on ACRS and ARAP, see the Home Office's blog post, [FACTSHEET: ACRS and other routes](#). For further information on our methods and assumptions used to include resettlement scheme arrivals in our long-term international migration (LTIM), see our [research paper](#).

Asylum seekers (included in ONS estimates)

We have included asylum applicants (76,000 for 2022) in the immigration estimate on the basis that under the current system, they might all be expected to remain more than 12 months. We used the available returns data to remove (3,000) known emigrants.

For immigration, we have included asylum applicants in the international migration estimate using the [Home Office's Immigration System Statistics dataset \(XLSX, 8.97MB\)](#). For emigration, we used Home Office returns data to estimate the number of asylum-related voluntary and enforced returns. For further information on our methods and assumptions used to include asylum seekers in our LTIM see our [research paper](#).

Irregular migration (partially included in ONS estimates)

Although irregular migration has also been significant in the past year, we do not estimate irregular migration as such. However, people who arrive through irregular routes and then claim asylum are included in our estimates as asylum applicants. The Home Office's [How many people do we grant protection to article](#) shows that in 2022, 90% of small boat arrivals (around 40,000) claimed asylum or were recorded as a dependant on an asylum application. For further information, see our [International migration research, progress update](#) article.

4 . Emigration out of the UK

The provisional estimate of the number of people emigrating out of the UK long-term in 2022 was approximately 557,000. This is similar to pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels, with 2018 estimated to be 493,000. In 2022, non-EU nationals accounted for 263,000 (47%) of this total, EU nationals accounted for 202,000 (36%), and British nationals 92,000 (17%).

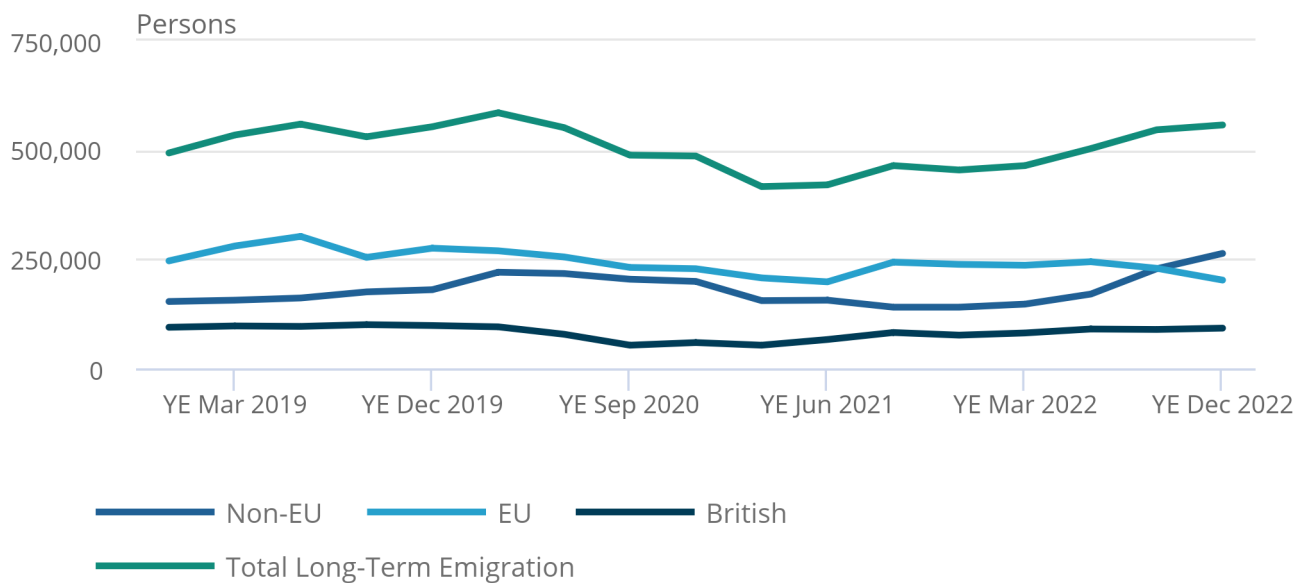
Levels of emigration have increased over the last year, driven by non-EU nationals, particularly those who initially arrived on a study visa. Evidence suggests that a significant proportion of arrivals in the UK only leave after 2 to 3 years, particularly students. Therefore, emigration may continue to rise following the increase in non-EU immigration over the past two years.

Figure 2: Emigration for non-EU increased during 2022

Number of non-EU, EU, and British nationals emigrating out of the UK, between 2018 and 2022

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Number of non-EU, EU, and British nationals emigrating out of the UK, between 2018 and 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics, Department for Work and Pensions, Home Office

Notes:

1. Read more on the methods, data sources and data quality in the [Strengths and limitations section](#).
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 Department for Work and Pensions and HM Revenue and Customs, and British nationals figures are based on the International Passenger Survey (IPS). See the [Measuring the data section](#) for more detail.
4. Because of the experimental and provisional nature of these statistics, numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand. Totals may not equal the sum of individual numbers.

5 . Non-EU reason for migration

Different methods have been used to estimate the reason for migration for British and EU nationals than those used for non-EU nationals. We use Home Office data to tell us about the types of visas granted to non-EU nationals, which gives us their reason for migration based upon their legal route granted to enter the UK. Use caution when comparing the data of non-EU nationals with British and EU nationals.

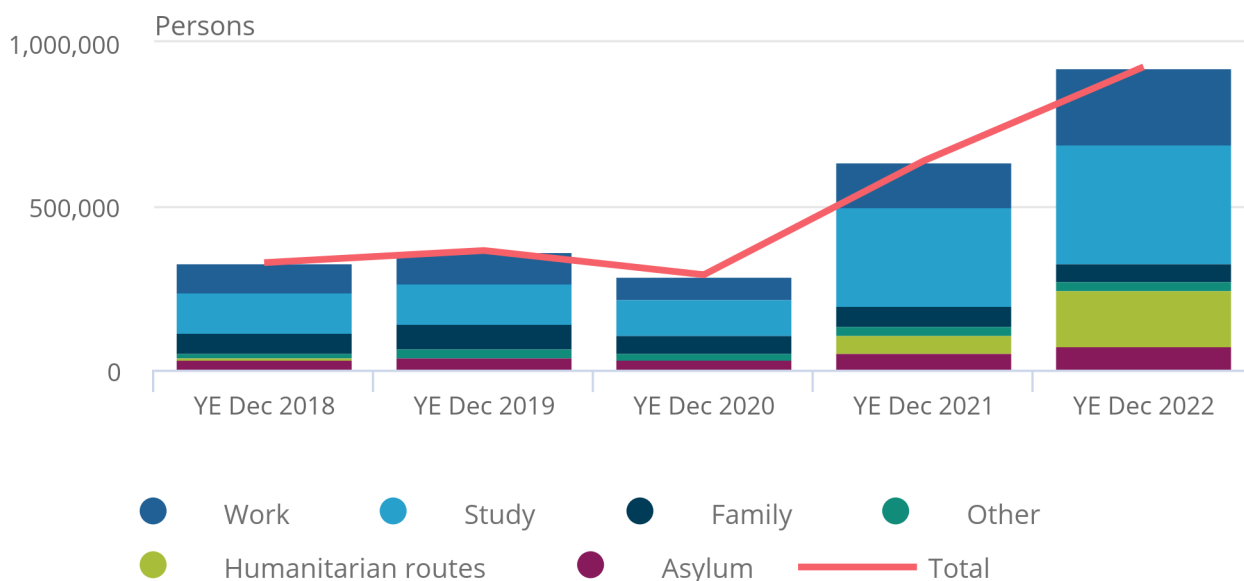
Immigration by reason

Figure 3: The increase in non-EU immigration since 2021 is attributed to people arriving in the UK for work and on humanitarian routes

Total number of non-EU nationals who immigrated long term into the UK by reason for immigration, between 2018 and 2022

Figure 3: The increase in non-EU immigration since 2021 is attributed to people arriving in the UK for work and on humanitarian routes

Total number of non-EU nationals who immigrated long term into the UK by reason for immigration, between 2018 and 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics, Home Office

Notes:

1. Read more on the methods, data sources and data quality in the [Strengths and limitations section](#).
2. YE: year ending.
3. Because of the experimental and provisional nature of these statistics, numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand. The sum of individual numbers may not equal totals seen elsewhere.

Work visas

Work related visas made up 25% of non-EU long-term immigration in 2022, with an estimated 235,000 arrivals compared with 137,000 in 2021. This is driven by both main applicants and dependants.

People arriving on work dependant visas made up 12% of non-EU immigration, with an estimated 108,000 in 2022. This was an increase from 61,000 in 2021. The remaining 13% are those arriving as work visa main applicants (127,000 in 2022).

The Home Office's [Why do people come to the UK? To work article](#) shows growth in long-term sponsored work visas following the introduction of the "Skilled Worker" and "Skilled Worker - Health and Care" visas in 2020. The increase in visas granted to dependants was also attributed to an increase in visas granted to dependants of "Skilled Workers" and "Skilled Workers - Health and Care".

Study visas

In 2022, 361,000 people arrived on study-related visas, an increase from 301,000 in 2021. This increase is mainly attributed to dependants (from 41,000 in 2021 to 85,000 in 2022). The Home Office's [Why do people come to the UK? To study article](#) suggests this is driven by an increase in the number of visas granted to dependents from Nigeria and India.

Despite the increase in the levels of people arriving for study-related reasons, their overall share of total non-EU immigration declined from 47% to 39% between 2021 and 2022. This is because of the faster growth of other types of visa routes, including those arriving on humanitarian routes (including Ukrainian schemes), up from 9% to 19% over the same period.

With the lifting of travel restrictions in 2021, we saw a substantial increase in students arriving in the UK long-term between September and December 2021, after studying remotely during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Meanwhile, evidence suggests that students typically stay for shorter periods than other migrants and that the majority leave at the end of their study; the latest data shows that those who arrived for study reasons in 2021 are now starting to leave.

[The Why do people come to the UK? To study article](#) shows that the number of study-related visas granted in the year ending (YE) December 2022 continued to increase.

There is a range of different factors that may be influencing the increase in people arriving to study. One of these factors may be the new [Graduate visa](#) route, where students can apply to work in the UK for up to three years after completing their studies. This could be attracting international students to the UK.

Humanitarian routes

In 2022, people arriving on humanitarian routes (such as Ukrainian schemes, British nationals (overseas) (BN(O)) and resettlement schemes) accounted for 19% of non-EU long-term immigration, with an estimated 172,000 arriving on these visas. This was an increase from 57,000 in 2021, when these visa types accounted for 9% of total non-EU immigration.

Ukrainians and BN(O) are included in this group and accounted for 18% of non-EU immigration in 2022. An estimated 166,000 people arrived on these visas, of which 52,000 were BN(O) and 114,000 were Ukrainians.

Resettlement schemes made up the remaining 1% of non-EU nationals arriving for humanitarian purposes. Approximately 6,000 people arrived through resettlement schemes in 2022, compared with 18,000 in 2021. These figures are largely made up of the Afghanistan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP).

Asylum

People arriving for asylum made up 8% of non-EU immigration at an estimated 76,000 in 2022. This was an increase from 53,000 in 2021.

Family visas

Family accounted for 6% of non-EU long-term immigration in 2022, with an estimated 51,000 arriving for family compared with 62,000 in 2021.

"Other" visas

People arriving on "other" visas accounted for 3% of non-EU immigration at an estimated 29,000 in 2022. This was similar to 2021 (27,000). For more information on "other" visas, see [Section 11: Glossary](#).

Emigration by reason

The method used to calculate a person's reason for emigration is based upon their initial visas used to enter the UK. Therefore, people who entered on a study visa would be counted as student emigrants when they leave. People who entered on family visas would be counted as family emigrants, even if they have subsequently moved to another visa since first entering the UK.

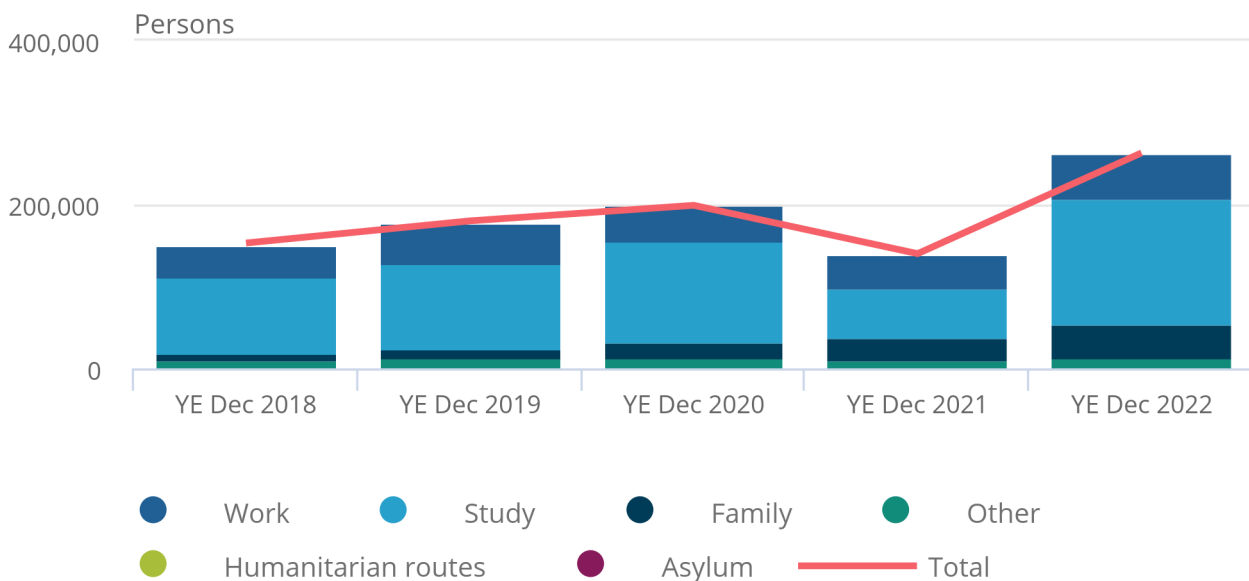
These estimates cannot currently be combined with the immigration estimates to produce a net migration estimate by visa type. This is because it does not account for people who transition from their initial visa onto another visa type. In the case of students, we know that while many do leave at the end of their studies, just over a third stay. This means that someone who arrived to study for a year, then worked for three years, would be counted out as a student and the contribution of the work element of their stay, and their contribution to population change, would be missed. To learn more of ways we could explore this further in the future, see our [Population and migration estimates - exploring alternative definitions: May 2023](#) article.

Figure 4: The increase in emigration of non-EU nationals since 2021 is attributed to departures of people who initially arrived on a study visa

Total number of non-EU nationals who emigrated long term out of the UK by reason for immigration between 2018 and 2022

Figure 4: The increase in emigration of non-EU nationals since 2021 is attributed to departures of people who initially arrived on a study visa

Total number of non-EU nationals who emigrated long term out of the UK by reason for immigration between 2018 and 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics, Home Office

Notes:

1. Read more on the methods, data sources and data quality in the [Strengths and limitations section](#).
2. YE: year ending.
3. Because of the experimental and provisional nature of these statistics, numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand. The sum of individual numbers may not equal totals seen elsewhere.

Work visas

Work-related visas made up 21% of non-EU long-term emigration in 2022, with an estimated 56,000 leaving compared with 39,000 in 2021. This is driven by both main applicants and dependants.

People who initially arrived on a work visa made up 11% of non-EU long-term emigration in 2022, at an estimated 29,000 compared with 23,000 in 2021.

Those arriving on work dependant visas made up 10% of non-EU emigration, at an estimated 27,000 in 2022. This was an increase from 16,000 in 2021.

Study visas

In 2022, people initially arriving on study-related visas accounted for 58% of long-term emigration of non-EU nationals at 153,000, an increase from 61,000 in 2021. This increase is mainly driven by an increase in main applicants (from 54,000 in 2021 to 136,000 in 2022).

Since 2020, the immigration of people on study-related visas has increased by 248,000, from 113,000 to 361,000. Our [Visa journeys and student outcomes article](#) highlights that 61% of non-EU students left at the end of their study visa in the academic year ending (YE) 2019. The majority of the remaining 39% obtained additional visas, or received visa extensions, and are likely to have left in subsequent years. Therefore, with the increase in immigration of those on study-related visas in the last two years, we are now seeing an increase in emigration as those students come to the end of their studies.

People arriving on study-dependant visas accounted for 7% of non-EU emigration, at an estimated 17,000 in the 2022. This was an increase from 7,000 in 2021.

Humanitarian routes

In 2022, people who arrived on humanitarian routes account for less than 1% of non-EU long-term emigration, with close to around zero estimated to have left.

Ukraine nationals were eligible to come to the UK for humanitarian purposes from March 2022. These individuals would need to stay in the UK for at least 12 months, then subsequently leave the UK for at least 12 months to be a long-term emigrant. Therefore, we would not expect to see any emigration for this group in the YE December 2022.

Asylum

People who had arrived in the UK as asylum seekers made up 1% of non-EU emigration, at an estimated 3,000 in 2022. This was an increase from 1,000 in 2021.

Family visas

Family accounted for 16% of non-EU long-term emigration in 2022, with an estimated 42,000 leaving for family, compared with 29,000 in 2021.

"Other" visas

People leaving on "other" visas accounted for 4% of non-EU emigration, at an estimated 10,000 in 2022. This was an increase from 9,000 in 2021. For the definition of "other" visas, see [Section 11: Glossary](#).

6 . EU and British reason for immigration

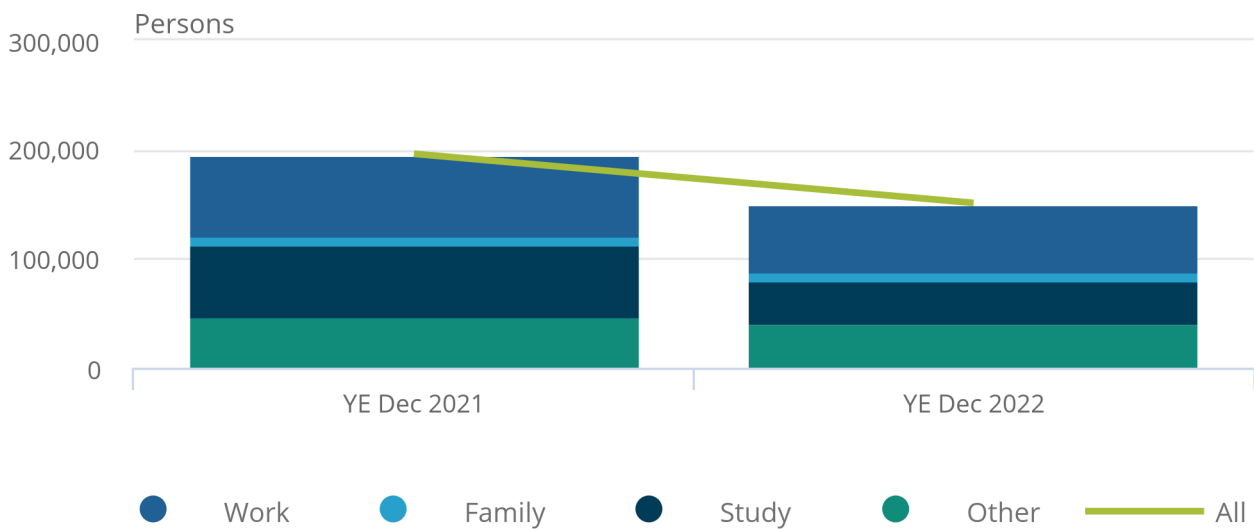
For British and EU nationals, we use their self-declared reason for coming to the UK, as reported by the International Passenger Survey (IPS). [The Economic Commission for Europe's report \(PDF, 370KB\)](#) states that the self-reported reason for migration does not always match the reason they have been granted permission to enter. Users should therefore exercise caution when comparing breakdowns of non-EU to EU and British nationals.

Figure 5: Work continued to account for the largest proportion of EU nationals immigrating to the UK in 2022

Total number of EU nationals who immigrated long-term into the UK by reason for immigration, between 2021 and 2022

Figure 5: Work continued to account for the largest proportion of EU nationals immigrating to the UK in 2022

Total number of EU nationals who immigrated long-term into the UK by reason for immigration, between 2021 and 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Read more on the methods, data sources and data quality in the [Strengths and limitations section](#).
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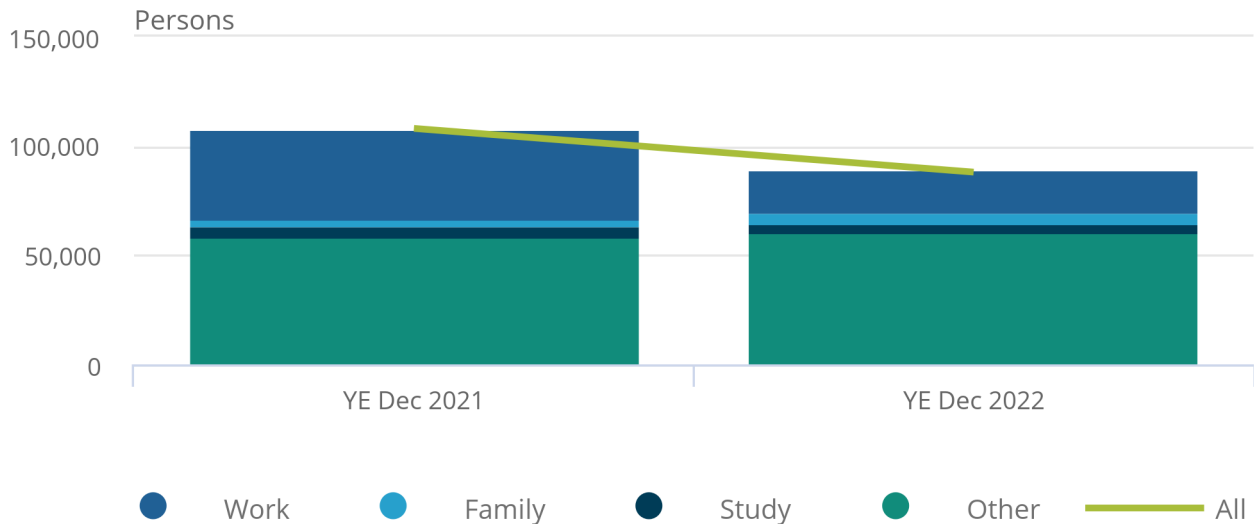
In 2022, an estimated 40.9% of EU nationals and 21.6% of British nationals immigrating to the UK came for work. EU nationals immigrating to the UK for “other” reasons accounted for 27.5%, whereas it was the most common reason for British nationals (68.9%). Study accounted for 26.2% of EU national immigration, but only 4.5% for British nationals’ immigration. Lastly, family made up 5.4% for EU nationals, and 5.4% for British nationals.

Figure 6: 'Other' continued to account for the largest proportion of British nationals immigrating to the UK in 2022

Total number of British nationals who immigrated long term into the UK by reason for immigration, between 2021 and 2022

Figure 6: 'Other' continued to account for the largest proportion of British nationals immigrating to the UK in 2022

Total number of British nationals who immigrated long term into the UK by reason for immigration, between 2021 and 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

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7 . Population change

Net migration for the UK in 2022

In 2022, net migration added to the UK population, with 606,000 more people arriving long-term than leaving. This was an increase of 118,000 compared with 2021 (488,000) and nearly double that of pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels, with net migration estimated to be 333,000 in 2018. However, net migration has levelled off in recent quarters, with estimates for year ending (YE) December 2022 broadly comparable with those for YE June 2022.

Net migration in 2022 was attributed to non-EU nationals, 662,000 in 2022, an increase of 164,000 compared with 2021. This increase was mainly driven by people arriving for humanitarian purposes from Ukraine and those arriving for work or as dependants of those on a work visa, as outlined in [Section 5: Non-EU reason for migration](#) and [Section 3: Migration events affecting the data](#).

Net migration of EU nationals was negative 51,000, a decrease of around 9,000 compared with YE December 2021 (negative 42,000). This was substantially lower than pre-pandemic levels, with YE December 2018 EU net migration estimated at 180,000.

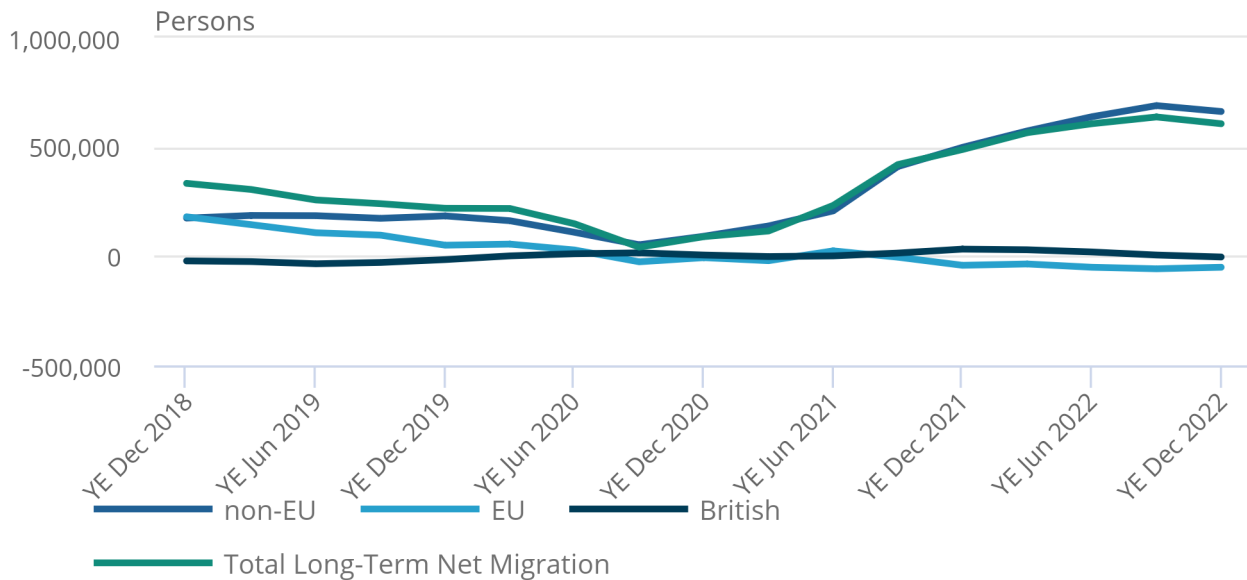
Net migration of British nationals in 2022 was estimated at around negative 4,000, a decrease compared with 2021 (32,000). When compared with pre-pandemic levels, British net migration is higher in 2022, with it being negative 22,000 and negative 16,000 for 2018 and 2019 respectively. We cannot currently measure the uncertainty around our estimates, which means that the British 2022 estimate could be positive within uncertainty bounds.

Figure 7: Long-term net migration in 2022 was largely driven by non-EU nationals

Net migration of non-EU, EU, and British nationals in the UK, between 2018 and 2022

Figure 7: Long-term net migration in 2022 was largely driven by non-EU nationals

Net migration of non-EU, EU, and British nationals in the UK, between 2018 and 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics, Department for Work and Pensions, Home Office

Notes:

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4. Because of the experimental and provisional nature of these statistics, numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand.

Non-UK born population levels

Historically, we measured non-UK born population levels using the Annual Population Survey (APS). However, as noted in our [Statement on population of the UK by country of birth and nationality series](#) in October 2022, we have discontinued this APS-based series.

On 24 November 2022, we published provisional measures that roll forward the Census 2021 data in our [International migration research, progress update](#) article, this produces updated levels of non-UK born living in England and Wales in June 2022. As a result of our flows estimates being revised, the levels published in November 2022 for the non-UK born population may be lower than what today's published data series suggest.

Our focus has been on the transformation of the long-term international migration estimates. We plan to work with the devolved administrations to progress our work on non-UK born population levels, updating the estimates published in November 2022, to provide an overall UK estimate. We aim to publish this later in 2023.

8 . 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. See our [How we are improving population and migration statistics article](#) and our [Methods to produce provisional long-term international migration estimates methodology](#) for more information.

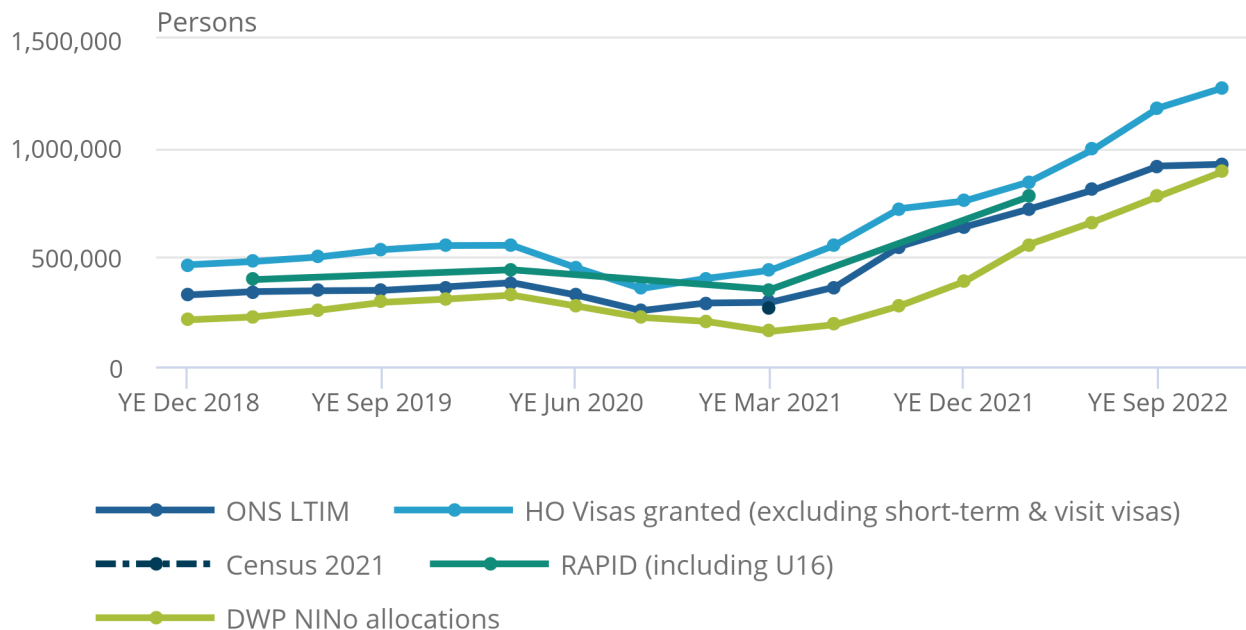
As part of the quality assurance of our new methods, this section analyses our new estimates compared with other sources that provide indicators on migration.

Figure 8: Estimates of non-EU immigration compared with other available data sources including Census 2021

Breakdown of alternative sources of non-EU immigration estimates between 2018 and 2022

Figure 8: Estimates of non-EU immigration compared with other available data sources including Census 2021

Breakdown of alternative sources of non-EU immigration estimates between 2018 and 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics, Department for Work and Pensions, Home Office

Notes:

1. Read more on the methods, data sources and data quality in the [Strengths and limitations section](#).
2. YE: year ending.
3. Because of the experimental and provisional nature of our statistics, numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand.
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. 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](#).

With Home Office Borders and Immigration data (ONS LTIM) providing estimates of migration based mainly on actual travel events, it is currently considered the best source for measuring non-EU migration.

UK non-EU immigration in the year ending (YE) March 2021, based on England and Wales Census 2021 data, is close to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) long-term international migration (LTIM) estimate (UK) (264,000 compared with 293,000), as shown in Figure 8. Registration and Population Interaction Database (RAPID) estimates for the YEs March 2021 and 2022 were more in line with Home Office Borders and Immigration data (ONS LTIM).

Visas-granted data published by the Home Office are consistently higher than other estimates of long-term immigration of non-EU nationals. However, these can be considered an upper bound, since not all who are granted a visa will have come to the UK or stayed long-term.

Given that a proportion of EU migrants with settled status can continue to travel to the UK without a visa, we still consider RAPID data to provide the best estimates for measuring EU immigration. Further research will account for those on the EU Settlement Scheme, to explore whether Home Office visa data can be used to estimate the migration of this group in the future. An estimated 187,000 EU nationals immigrated to the UK in YE March 2021. This is broadly comparable with the estimated 189,000 arrivals of EU nationals, based on Census 2021 data.

9 . Revisions to migration statistics

The figures published in this bulletin are provisional and will improve over time as more complete data are available and as methods continue to be developed. This will entail regular revisions to headline measures as, outlined in our [Population and International Migration Statistics Revisions Policy](#).

We have revised estimates from June 2020 to June 2022. The revisions to estimates of migration for YE December 2021 and YE June 2022 that were published in November 2022 are shown in Table 1. We have worked closely with a range of experts, including from the Government Statistical Service (GSS), to quality assure our latest methods and estimates. The improvements in methods mean that previously published immigration estimates for YE June 2022 are revised upwards by 45,000 to 1,109,000, emigration downwards by 57,000 to 503,000, and net migration has been revised upwards by 102,000 to 606,000. Of the 102,000 increase in net migration, around 85,000 is attributed to the inclusion of asylum applicants and resettlement schemes. The revisions are attributed to these main factors:

- inclusion of asylum applications and resettlement schemes
- refined methods for non-EU immigration and emigration, including more accurate measures of immigration for populations, such as those from Ukraine and the inclusion of a new early exits adjustment
- the use of updated Home Office Borders and Immigration data
- removing the flows of EU migrants who do not satisfy the definition of a long-term migrant
- removing the immigration of British nationals (overseas) (BN(O)) from International Passenger Survey (IPS) -based estimates of British nationals

For further information on the impact of each of these changes on YE June 2022 estimates, please see our [International migration research, progress update](#) article.

Table 1: Revisions to official experimental migration estimates
 Total estimated changes in immigration, emigration and net migration estimates, UK, year ending December 2021 and year ending June 2022

	Year ending December 2021			Year ending June 2022		
	Previous estimate (published November 2022)	Revised estimate (published May 2023)	Difference	Previous estimate (published November 2022)	Revised estimate (published May 2023)	Difference
Immigration						
Non-EU	542,000	638,000	96,000	704,000	808,000	104,000
EU	221,000	196,000	-25,000	224,000	193,000	-31,000
British	131,000	108,000	-23,000	135,000	109,000	-26,000
Total	895,000	942,000	47,000	1,064,000	1,109,000	45,000
Emigration						
Non-EU	154,000	140,000	-14,000	195,000	170,000	-25,000
EU	268,000	238,000	-30,000	275,000	244,000	-31,000
British	76,000	76,000	0	90,000	90,000	0
Total	498,000	454,000	-44,000	560,000	503,000	-57,000
Net migration						
Non-EU	388,000	498,000	110,000	509,000	638,000	129,000
EU	-47,000	-42,000	5,000	-51,000	-51,000	0
British	56,000	32,000	-24,000	45,000	19,000	-26,000
Total	397,000	488,000	91,000	504,000	606,000	102,000

Source: Office for National Statistics, Department for Work and Pensions, 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 Department for Work and Pensions and His Majesty's Revenue and Customs. British nationals figures are based on the International Passenger Survey (IPS). See the Measuring the data section for more detail., Because of the experimental and provisional nature of these statistics, numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand. Totals may not equal the sum of individual numbers.

We currently publish international migration estimates twice per year, at the end of May and at the end of November. We anticipate revisions to both YE June 2022 and YE December 2022 estimates to be published in November 2023, when we have completed travel information for those arriving up to June 2022, and further travel information for those arriving up to December 2022.

10 . UK international migration data

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

Dataset | Released 25 May 2023

Experimental and provisional estimates for UK immigration, emigration and net migration, year ending December 2018 to year ending December 2022.

11 . 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.

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. See our [Types of British nationality publication](#) for more information.

On 31 January 2021, the UK launched a bespoke immigration route for British nationals overseas (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.

Designated visa classifications

The grouping of people who immigrated into 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 excluded from these numbers.

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.

Nationality

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

A [British national](#) is 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.

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 into 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 IPS survey. 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

12 . Measuring the data

Data sources and methods

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). These estimates are produced using methods that are based predominantly on administrative data. Building on methods introduced in our [Long-term international migration, provisional: year ending June 2022](#) bulletin, we have implemented a number of improvements.

Current and previous methods are described in our updated [Methods to produce provisional long-term international migration estimates methodology](#), published 25 May 2023.

Further details on our progress were published in July 2022 in our [International migration statistical design: progress report article](#).

Reference period

Estimates published today cover the period the year ending (YE) December 2020 to the YE December 2022. Information from Census 2021, alongside available administrative data, will provide the clearest possible picture of international migration flows over the last decade.

Following the rebasing of the mid-year population estimates that are due for release in September 2023, we aim to use all the available information to publish a revised data back series of long-term international migration flows over the course of the last decade. For more information, please see our [Provisional plans for publishing the latest population and migration estimates statement](#), released 18 May 2023.

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 combines 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 statistics on exit checks: user guide](#).

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. More detailed information can be found in our [Methods to produce provisional long-term international migration estimates](#) article.

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 the 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](#) article.

British nationals

Our research into this subset of the population is ongoing. Identifying British migrants in administrative data is complex. Consequently, we continue to base our estimates on data from the IPS, using State Space Modelling (SSM) data time series analysis to estimate their migration during the period when the IPS was suspended (March to December 2020). The IPS was reinstated in January 2021, and is currently the best insight into the migration activity of British nationals.

Further details on our current and previous methods are available in our [Methods to produce provisional long-term international migration estimates](#), that we have also published today.

13 . Strengths and limitations

Because of the nature of the current methods, these estimates provide headline estimates only and cannot provide further breakdowns or insights.

Estimates published today (25 May 2023) are experimental, and the underlying methods are still in development. In addition, the estimates for the most recent time period in our data series (year ending (YE) December 2022) 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 the availability of more data.

Our release coincides with the publication of the latest [immigration system statistics](#) from the Home Office for the period to the end of March 2023. Numbers of visas granted may indicate trends in the arrivals of non-EU long-term migrants but cannot indicate the net effect, once further stays and emigration are taken into account. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Home Office continue to work closely together to produce a consistent insight into UK international migration.

We cannot currently measure the uncertainty around our estimates. We will be publishing a working series paper on 1 June 2023 to share our research progress. This will outline the main sources of uncertainty in international migration estimates and will focus on quantifying uncertainty specifically associated with adjustments, modelling, and survey-based estimates. It will not provide measures of uncertainty for the headline migration estimate. We plan to produce this late in 2023.

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

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 [National Insurance numbers allocated to adult overseas nationals to March 2023](#).

Use of Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Customer Information System (CIS)

Estimates of EU nationals have temporarily used data in RAPID that has been derived from the DWP's CIS because of an issue with data from the HM Revenue and Customs Migrant Workers Scan (MWS). While the CIS provides an alternative measure of migrant registrations, the information is more limited than the data in the MWS, but is suitable for use in these experimental statistics.

Inclusion and exclusion of subpopulations

As explained in [Section 3: Migration events affecting the data](#), in the year to December 2022, there are different subpopulations that are included and excluded from headline estimates of international migration.

14 . Related links

[The international student population in England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

Article | Released 17 April 2023

Country of birth, age, sex, employment status, industry, housing type and language spoken for the international student population of England Wales.

[Statistics relating to passenger arrivals since the COVID-19 outbreak, August 2022](#)

Report | Released 25 August 2022

A statistical report showing the impact of COVID-19 on the immigration system, up to June 2022.

[International migration hits new high in 2022 but there are signs of change](#)

Blog | Released 25 May 2023

Jay Lindop, Deputy Director of the Centre for International Migration, provides context to the migration numbers released today, including key drivers and improvements to methods.

[Irregular migration to the UK, year ending March 2023](#)

Web page | Released 25 May 2023

Statistics on irregular migration to the UK, including small boats.

[Immigration System Statistics, year ending March 2023](#)

Web page | Released 25 May 2023

Quarterly and annual statistics relating to those: coming to the UK, extending their stay, gaining citizenship, applying for asylum, and being detained or removed, as well as immigration for work, study and family reasons, including new visa routes where these are operational.

[National Insurance numbers allocated to adult overseas nationals to March 2023](#)

Web page | Released 25 May 2023

Quarterly publication of National Insurance number allocations to adult overseas nationals entering the UK, data to March 2023

15 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 25 May 2023, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Long-term international migration, provisional: year ending December 2022](#)