

Statistical bulletin

Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality: 2016

The latest population estimates for the UK by country of birth and nationality, covering the period from 2004 to the year ending December 2016.



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Notice

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Please note: The bulletin below refers to data for the period January 2016 to December 2016. [Data for the period July 2016 to June 2017](#) is now available.

Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Statistician's comment](#)
3. [Things you need to know about this release](#)
4. [Of the UK population, 1 in 7 were born abroad and 1 in 11 had non-British nationality](#)
5. [What is the nationality of non-UK born residents?](#)
6. [Poland remains the most common non-UK country of birth and non-British nationality](#)
7. [London has the highest proportion of non-British nationals](#)
8. [Where can I find more information?](#)
9. [Quality and methodology](#)

1 . Main points

- Of the usually resident population in the UK, around 1 in 7 (14%) were born abroad and 1 in 11 (9%) had non-British nationality in 2016.
- Non-UK populations continued to increase between 2015 and 2016; the non-UK born population from 8.6 million to 9.2 million (up 7%) and the non-British population from 5.6 million to 6.0 million (up 8%) (both statistically significant changes).
- The increase in non-UK born residents was driven by statistically significant increases in both EU and non-EU born residents; the statistically significant increase in the non-British population was driven by EU nationals alone (the number of non-EU nationals in the population has remained stable).
- In 2016, there were 3.6 million people resident in the UK who were born abroad and held British nationality (39% of the non-UK born population – compared with 40% the previous year).
- Poland is the most common non-UK country of birth (an estimated 911,000 residents) and Polish the most common non-British nationality in the UK; in 2016 the number of Polish nationals resident in the UK reached 1 million.

2 . Statistician's comment

"In 2016 around 1 in 7 of the usually resident population in the UK were born abroad, and 1 in 11 had non-British nationality. The population of the UK continued to increase between 2015 and 2016, driven by overall significant increases in both the non-UK born and non-British national population of the UK. There were 3.6 million people resident in the UK who were born abroad and held British nationality (39% of the non-UK born population).

"The number of Polish nationals resident in the UK reached 1 million in 2016. However, this period covers just 6 months following the EU referendum."

Nicola White, Migration Statistics Unit, Office for National Statistics

3 . Things you need to know about this release

Country of birth refers to the country that a person was born in and cannot change. Nationality refers to the nationality stated by the respondent when they are interviewed and can be subject to change.

Estimates of the population of the UK by country of birth and nationality are based upon data from the Annual Population Survey (APS). The APS is a survey of households in the UK, so does not include most communal establishments. The APS, which began in 2004, is a continuous survey, comprising the Labour Force Survey (LFS), supplemented by sample boosts in England, Wales and Scotland to ensure small areas are sufficiently sampled.

Following user feedback from our [consultation](#) at the end of 2016 it was requested that we provide more timely data. Therefore, in November 2017, we will release data for the period July 2016 to June 2017, which will cover a full year's worth of data following the EU referendum.

The estimates from the APS are different from our standard [mid-year population estimates](#), which cover all usual residents. The mid-year population estimates provide a more comprehensive estimate of the UK population but do not provide further breakdown by a resident's country of birth and nationality. We are, however, also publishing a [research paper and associated statistics](#) on 25 August 2017 focusing on estimates by ethnicity, country of birth, and nationality that align with the mid-year population estimates.

This bulletin should be read alongside the published tables of [Population by country of birth and nationality, January 2016 to December 2016](#) and the [underlying datasets](#). Full details of definitions and data can be found in the accompanying [frequently asked questions](#).

4 . Of the UK population, 1 in 7 were born abroad and 1 in 11 had non-British nationality

Table 1: Estimates of the resident population of the UK by country of birth and nationality, 2016

	Country of birth		Nationality	
	Estimate	Percentage	Estimate	Percentage
All residents	64,727	100	64,727	100
UK born/British National	55,554	86	58,710	91
Non-UK born/Non-British National	9,152	14	5,998	9
EU27	3,537	5	3,572	6
EU14	1,596	2	1,563	2
EU8	1,443	2	1,569	2
EU2	395	1	413	1
Non-EU	5,616	9	2,425	4
Asia	2,923	5	1,269	2
Rest of the World	2,353	4	988	2

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS), Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Estimates in thousands
2. EU27 is the sum of EU14, EU8, and EU2, plus Malta, Cyprus, and Croatia (from 1 July 2013). These three countries are not shown in the table separately.
3. Non-EU is the sum of Asia, the Rest of the World, and the rest of Europe. The rest of Europe grouping is not shown in the table.

In 2016, around 1 in 7 of the population of the UK were born abroad (9.2 million); the majority (61%) of these were born outside of the EU (5.6 million) (Table 1).

In 2016, around 1 in 11 of the population of the UK had non-British nationality (6.0 million); the majority (60%) of these held EU nationality (3.6 million).

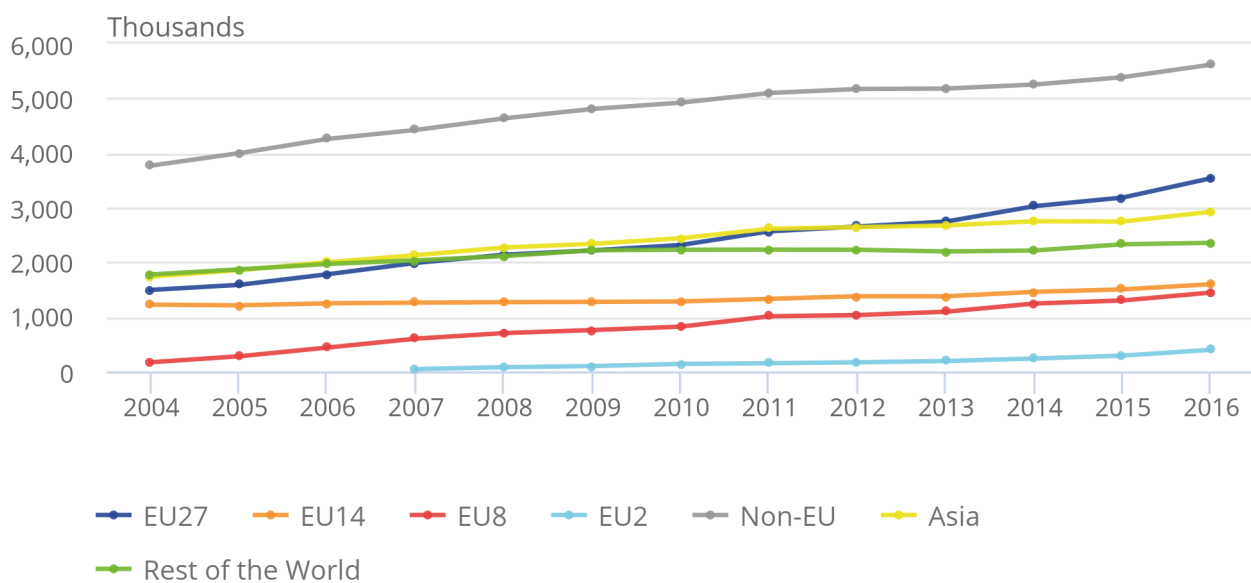
The population of non-UK born and non-British nationals continues to increase

Both the population of non-UK born and non-British nationals continue to increase and showed statistically significant changes compared with the previous year (Figure 1 and 2).

Country of birth

Figure 1: Estimates of the non-UK born resident population of the UK by country of birth, 2004 to 2016

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Source: Annual Population Survey (APS), Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. EU27 is the sum of EU14, EU8, and EU2, plus Malta, Cyprus, and Croatia (from 1 July 2013). These three countries are not shown on the chart separately.
2. Non-EU is the sum of Asia, the Rest of the World, and the rest of Europe. The rest of Europe grouping is not shown on the chart.

There was a statistically significant increase in the non-UK born population of the UK, increasing from 8.6 million to 9.2 million between 2015 and 2016 (an increase of 7%) (Figure 1). This growth was caused by statistically significant increases in both the EU and non-EU born population (EU from 3.2 million to 3.5 million and non-EU from 5.4 million to 5.6 million).

Of the EU born population, there were also statistically significant increases in:

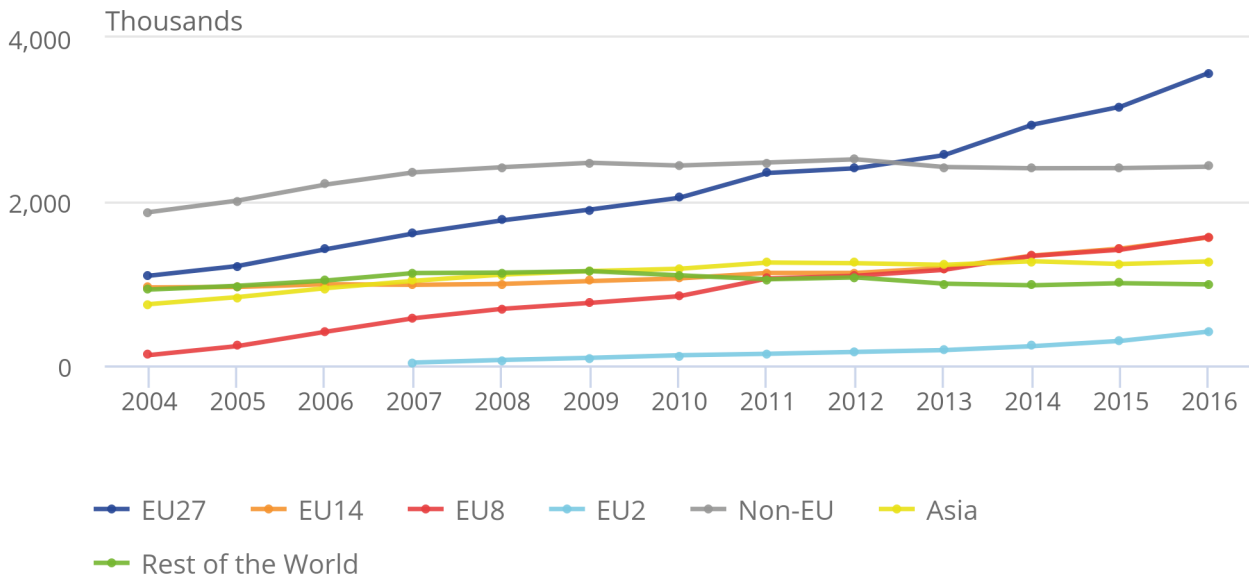
- EU14 born (from 1.5 million to 1.6 million)
- EU8 born (from 1.3 million to 1.4 million)
- EU2 born (from 288,000 to 395,000)

Of the non-EU born population, there were statistically significant increases in the resident population of those born within Asia, from 2.7 million to 2.9 million.

Nationality

Figure 2: Estimates of the non-British resident population of the UK by nationality, 2004 to 2016

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Source: Annual Population Survey (APS), Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. EU27 is the sum of EU14, EU8, and EU2, plus Malta, Cyprus, and Croatia (from 1 July 2013). These three countries are not shown on the chart separately.
2. Non-EU is the sum of Asia, the Rest of the World, and the rest of Europe. The rest of Europe grouping is not shown on the chart.

There was a statistically significant increase in the non-British national population of the UK, increasing from 5.6 million to 6.0 million between 2015 and 2016 (an increase of 8%). The increase in non-British nationals has been driven by residents holding EU nationality, from 3.2 million to 3.6 million (statistically significant increase), including statistically significant increases in the number of:

- EU14 nationals (from 1.4 million to 1.6 million)
- EU8 nationals (from 1.4 million to 1.6 million)
- EU2 nationals (from 299,000 to 413,000)

The resident population of EU nationals has risen by 1 million in the past 4 years (from 2.6 million to 3.6 million – an increase of 39%), whereas the number of non-EU nationals in the UK has remained stable (currently estimated to be 2.4 million).

5 . What is the nationality of non-UK born residents?

In 2016, there were 3.6 million people resident in the UK who were born abroad and held British nationality (39% of the non-UK born population – compared with 40% the previous year).

Of the 3.5 million residents in 2016 that were born within the EU (not including UK born):

- 525,000 (15%) held British nationality
- 3.0 million (84%) held EU nationality
- 25,000 (1%) held non-EU nationality

Of the 5.6 million residents in 2016 that were born outside of the EU:

- 3.1 million (55%) held British nationality
- 290,000 (5%) held EU nationality
- 2.3 million (40%) held non-EU nationality

Table 2: Estimates of the resident population of the UK, country of birth by nationality held, 2016

	All residents	British	EU	Non-EU
All residents	64,727	58,710	3,572	2,425
UK Born	55,554	55,115	295	139
Non-UK Born	9,152	3,586	3,277	2,287
EU	3,537	525	2,987	25
Non-EU	5,616	3,062	290	2,262

Source: Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Estimates in thousands
2. EU27 is the sum of EU14, EU8, and EU2, plus Malta, Cyprus, and Croatia (from 1 July 2013)
3. Non-EU is the sum of Asia, the Rest of the World, and the rest of Europe

Since 2004, when the Annual Population Survey (APS) began, EU born residents have become less likely to report British nationality – 67% were non-British in 2004 compared with 85% in 2016. This is likely to be partly due to EU citizens from the EU8 and EU2 countries who no longer required British nationality in order to reside in the UK.

Non-EU born residents, however, were slightly more likely to report British nationality in 2016 (55% British) than in 2004 (51% British).

6 . Poland remains the most common non-UK country of birth and non-British nationality

Poland is the most common non-UK country of birth and non-British nationality in the UK. In 2016, the number of Polish nationals resident in the UK reached 1 million (Table 3).

Table 3: Five most common non-UK countries of birth and non-British nationalities for usual residents of the UK, 2016

Country of Birth	Nationality
1. Poland (911,000)	1. Poland (1 million)
2. India (833,000)	2. India (362,000)
3. Pakistan (534,000)	3. Republic of Ireland (335,000)
4. Republic of Ireland (389,000)	4. Romania (328,000)
5. Romania (310,000)	5. Italy (233,000)

Source: Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics

In 2016, Poland born residents accounted for 10% of the total non-UK born residents in the UK; resident Polish nationals accounted for 17% of the total non-British nationals resident in the UK.

The population of Polish born and Polish nationals resident in the UK has increased since 2004 (when the Annual Population Survey (APS) began). In 2016, the number of:

- Polish born residents in the UK was nine times higher than in 2004 (94,000)
- Polish nationals resident in the UK was more than 14 times higher than in 2004 (69,000)

Comparing the five individual country estimates in Table 3 for 2016 with those for the previous year, there were statistically significant increases in Poland born (from 831,000 to 911,000) and Romania born (from 220,000 to 310,000).

Further analysis of the two most common countries of birth shows that, of the 833,000 India born residing in the UK in 2016, just over half (471,000 or 57%) are British nationals, compared with just 32,000 (4%) of the 911,000 Poland born residing in the UK. This reflects that EU nationals currently have the freedom of movement between EU countries, whereas for non-EU nationals there is an incentive to acquire British nationality. This may also reflect the length of time that individuals have lived in the UK and the numbers born to UK nationals living abroad.

Comparing estimates for 2016 with those for the previous year, there were statistically significant increases in the UK populations of:

- Polish nationals (increased by 86,000)
- Romanian nationals (increased by 95,000)
- Italian nationals (increased by 41,000)

India and the Republic of Ireland nationals have remained stable over the past few years.

7 . London has the highest proportion of non-British nationals

[Estimates of the UK population by country of birth and nationality are available at local authority level](#) in the accompanying tables. The interactive map in this section shows that the largest non-British national populations are in London (which is the region with the highest proportion of non-British residents, 23%):

- Kensington and Chelsea (37% non-British)
- Brent (34%)
- Westminster (34%)
- Newham (33%)
- Ealing (32%)

How much does the non-British national population vary across the UK?

If you are also interested in other indicators of migration at local authority area we have up-dated our [Local Area Migration Indicator Suite](#) for mid-2016 and provided an interactive tool.

How does your local area compare with the rest of the UK in terms of indicators of migration?

Use our interactive tool to find out¹. Type in your postcode in the box provided to easily access the data for:

- the estimate of the net² number of long-term international migrants (those who intended to stay 1 year or more) who have entered or left your local area in the year ending June 2016
- the estimate of the number of short-term international migrants³ (those who intended to stay for less than 1 year) who have entered your local area in the year ending June 2015
- the estimate of the number of non-British nationals living in your local area in 2016
- the estimate of the number of non-UK born living in your local area in 2016
- the number of live births to non-UK born mothers in your local area in 2016
- the number of non-UK nationals registered with a GP⁴ in your local area in the year ending June 2016
- the number of adult (16 to 64 year old) non-UK nationals in your local area registered for a National Insurance number in order to work or claim a benefit or tax credit in the year ending June 2016

Notes for: London has the highest proportion of non-British nationals

1. It is important to understand that these data sources measure different things; some measure flows and some measure stocks. There are definitional and coverage differences between the data sources and as such they are not directly comparable. More information is provided in the [Comparing sources of international migration statistics note](#).
2. Net migration is the balance between immigration (those entering the UK for a year or more) and emigration (those leaving the UK for a year or more).
3. The Short-Term International Migration (STIM) data in this release is based on the United Nations (UN) definition of a short-term migrant – “a person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least 3 months but less than a year (12 months), except in cases where the movement to that country is for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends or relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage”.
4. GP registration data excludes those migrants who move to a different local authority and register with a GP there, as they will only be registered as a migrant upon initial arrival to the UK, not when they subsequently move within the UK.

8 . Where can I find more information?

There is a lot more detail within the tables found in the [accompanying datasets](#) and [underlying tables](#) alongside this report, including breakdowns of the statistics by main reason for migration and for individual countries.

If you are new to migration statistics, you might find it helpful to read our [migration statistics first time user guide, glossary and list of products](#).

Today (24 August 2017) we also publish:

- [Migration Statistics Quarterly Report](#), providing information on Long-Term International Migration, visas and National Insurance number allocations
- [The Local Area Migration Indicators Suite \(LAMIS\)](#) presenting indicators of migration at local authority level; this annual output has been updated with the latest available estimates; an interactive chart and a quiz providing an introduction to the LAMIS and data by local authority will supplement the LAMIS, the quiz will be available on the [Visual.ONS website](#)
- A technical paper with the latest [International student migration research update - August 2017](#) accompanied by a key messages paper describing [What's happening with international student migration?](#)
- [Parents' country of birth, England and Wales: 2016](#) presents statistics on live births, including countries of birth for non-UK born mothers and fathers

If you would like to subscribe to our newsletter, please send an email to pop.info@ons.gsi.gov.uk with the subject title "Subscribe to ONS Population Statistics Newsletter", or you can also follow our statistician [@PaulVickers_ONS](#) on Twitter for the latest population statistics news and updates and join in the conversation.

9 . Quality and methodology

The [Population by country of birth and nationality Quality and Methodology Information](#) report contains important information on:

- the strengths and limitations of the data and how it compares with related data
- users and uses of the data
- how the output was created
- the quality of the output including the accuracy of the data

For more information on our population statistics by country of birth and nationality, please see our [frequently asked questions](#).