

Statistical bulletin

Population of the UK by Country of Birth and Nationality: 2015

The latest population estimates for the UK by country of birth and nationality, covering the period from 2004 to the year ending December 2015. The report discusses how these figures have changed over this period and highlights any statistically significant changes over the past year in the resident population of the UK.



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1. Main points

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.

Country of birth

In 2015, 1 in 8 (13.3%) of the usually resident population of the UK were born abroad, which compares with 1 in 11 (8.9%) in 2004.

There was a statistically significant increase in the non-UK born population of the UK between 2014 and 2015, increasing from 8.3 million to 8.6 million (an increase of 3.5%).

3.2 million of the non-UK born residents were born in the EU (16% of whom held British nationality, 83% held EU nationality and 1% held non-EU nationality).

5.4 million of the non-UK born residents were born outside of the EU (54% of whom held British nationality, 5% held EU nationality and 41% held non-EU nationality) – a reflection that EU nationals have the freedom of movement between EU countries, whereas for non-EU nationals there is an incentive to acquire British nationality.

The most common non-UK country of birth in 2015 was Poland, with an estimated 831,000 residents (9.7% of the total non-UK born population of the UK); compared with 795,000 residents born in India (which had been the most common non-UK country of birth since 2004).

The region with the highest proportion of non-UK born residents is London (37%).

Nationality

In 2015, 1 in 12 (8.7%) of the usual resident population of the UK had non-British nationality, which compares with 1 in 20 (5.0%) in 2004.

There was a statistically significant increase in the non-British national population of the UK between 2014 and 2015, increasing from 5.3 million to 5.6 million (an increase of 4.2%).

The most common non-British nationality in 2015 was Polish, with an estimated 916,000 residents (16.5% of the total non-British national population resident in the UK).

2. Statistician's quote

"The population of the UK continued to increase between 2014 and 2015, driven by significant increases in both the non-UK born and non-British national population of the UK. Poland is now the most common non-UK country of birth, overtaking India for the first time. The number of Polish born citizens living in the UK has continued to increase since Poland joined the EU and the number of UK residents born in Poland was eight times higher in 2015 compared with 2004."

3. Things you need to know

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, 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. The APS is a survey of households in the UK, so does not include most communal establishments.

This edition of the “Population by Country of Birth and Nationality” covers Office for National Statistics (ONS) data for the year ending December 2015. It should be noted that this release does not include data for the period including the EU referendum. Our next release, on 24 August 2017 will include data for the year ending December 2016 and will therefore cover the 6 months 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.

The report should be read alongside the published tables of [Population by Country of Birth and Nationality, January 2015 to December 2015](#) and the [underlying datasheets](#).

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.

All estimates refer to calendar year data, unless otherwise stated.

Throughout this report and within the data tables and charts, the following country groupings are referred to:

1. EU and EU27 consist of the countries in the EU14, EU8, EU2, Malta, Cyprus, and Croatia (from 1 July 2013). The UK is not included in this group.
2. EU14 consists of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Spain and Sweden.
3. EU8 consists of the eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004: Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia.
4. EU2 consists of the 2 countries that joined the EU in 2007: Bulgaria and Romania.
5. Non-EU consists of all those countries not in the UK or EU27 groups. This group excludes Croatia from 1 July 2013 when it joined the EU. Estimates for non-EU have also been split geographically to provide estimates for Asia and the rest of the world.

Please note that throughout the bulletin percentages have been calculated based on the data provided within the accompanying datasets (rounded to the nearest thousand). Therefore, figures and percentages quoted in this bulletin may not sum due to rounding.

4. 1 in 8 of the UK population was born abroad and 1 in 12 has non-British nationality

Table 1 shows estimates of UK residents' country of birth by broad country group for 2015.

Table 1: Estimates of the resident population of the UK by country of birth, 2015s

										Thousands
All Residents	UK Born	Non-UK Born	EU27	EU14	EU8	EU2	Non-EU	Asia	Rest of the World	
64,265	55,642 (86.6% of UK population)	8,569 (13.3%)	3,183 (5.0%)	1,501 (2.3%)	1,298 (2.0%)	288 (0.4%)	5,387 (8.4%)	2,743 (4.3%)	2,327 (3.6%)	

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

Table 1 shows that, in 2015, around 1 in 8 (13.3%) of the population of the UK were born abroad (8.6 million). Approximately two-thirds of the non-UK born population were born outside of the EU (5.4 million).

Table 2 shows the estimates of residents' nationality by broad country group for 2015.

Table 2: Estimates of the resident population of the UK by nationality, 2015

										Thousands
All Residents	British	Non-British	EU27	EU14	EU8	EU2	Non-EU	Asia	Rest of the World	
64,265	58,655 (91.3% of UK population)	5,567 (8.7%)	3,159 (4.9%)	1,426 (2.2%)	1,412 (2.2%)	299 (0.5%)	2,408 (3.7%)	1,237 (1.9%)	1,003 (1.6%)	

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

Table 2 shows that, in 2015, approximately 1 in 12 (8.7%) of the population of the UK had non-British nationality (5.6 million). Of these non-British nationals, 3.2 million (56.7%) held EU nationality and 2.4 million (43.3%) held non-EU nationality.

In 2015, a total of 3.4 million people born abroad held British nationality (40.0% of the non-UK born population). Comparing with the population in 2004, in that year 2.4 million people born abroad held British nationality (46.1% of the non-UK born population).

Of the 3.2 million residents in 2015 that were born within the EU (not including UK born):

- 504,000 (15.8%) held British nationality
- 2.7 million (83.3%) held EU nationality
- 28,000 (0.9%) held non-EU nationality

Comparing the latest estimates with the population resident in the UK in 2004, in that year 33.0% of the EU born population held British nationality and 65.5% held EU nationality (1.4% held non-EU nationality).

Of the 5.4 million residents in 2015 that were born outside of the EU:

- 2.9 million (54.2%) held British nationality
- 246,000 (4.6%) held EU nationality
- 2.2 million (41.2%) hold non-EU nationality

Comparing the latest estimates with the population resident in the UK in 2004, in that year 51.3% of the non-EU born population held British nationality, 2.0% held EU nationality, and 46.7% held non-EU nationality.

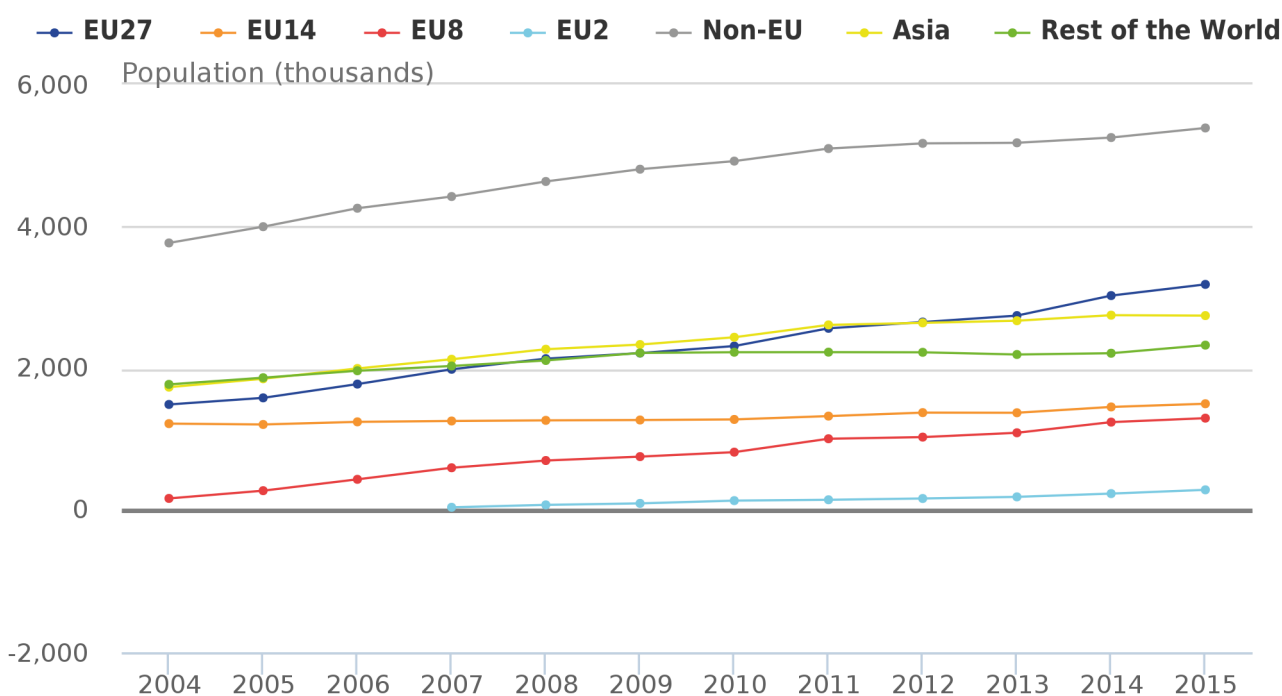
5. There has been a statistically significant increase in the population of non-UK born and non-British nationals since 2014

Country of birth

Figure 1 shows changes in the population of the UK by non-UK country of birth from 2004 to 2015.

Figure 1: Estimates of the resident population of the UK by non-UK country of birth

2004 to 2015



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

In 2015, approximately 1 in 8 (13.3%) of the usually resident population of the UK were born outside of the UK (8.6 million). By comparison, in 2004, approximately 1 in 11 (8.9%) of the usually resident population of the UK were born outside of the UK (5.3 million). There has been a statistically significant increase of 3.3 million non-UK born usual residents between 2004 and 2015 (an increase of 63.0%).

Comparing 2015 estimates with those for 2014, there was a statistically significant increase in the non-UK born population of the UK, increasing from 8.3 million to 8.6 million. There was a statistically significant increase in the EU born resident population of the UK (from 3.0 million to 3.2 million), including an increase in the EU2 born resident population of the UK (from 235,000 to 288,000). There was also a statistically significant increase in the resident population of those born in the rest of the world (excluding Asia): Africa, The Americas, and Oceania, from 2.2 million in 2014 to 2.3 million in 2015.

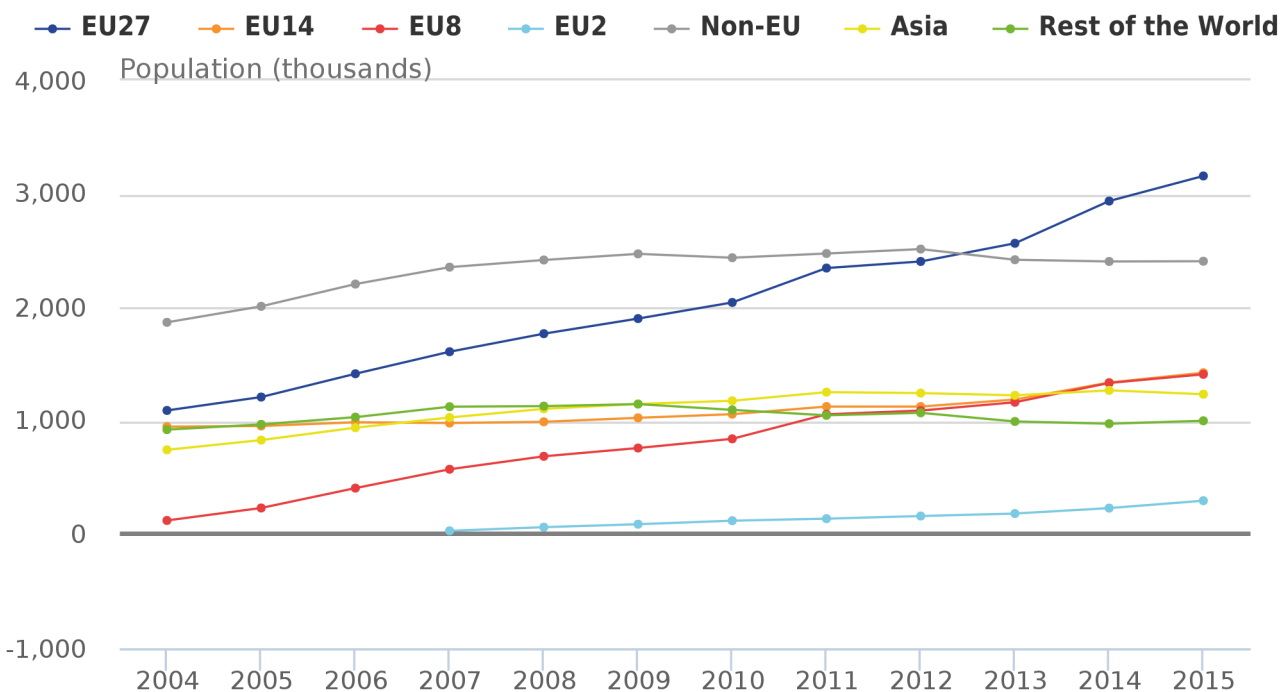
The number of non-EU born in the UK in 2015 is currently estimated to be 5.4 million.

Nationality

Figure 2 shows changes in the population of the UK by non-British nationality from 2004 to 2015.

Figure 2: Estimates of the resident population of the UK by non-British nationality

2004 to 2015



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

As can be seen in Figure 2, the latest year 2015 was the third year in a row that the resident population of EU nationals (3.2 million) was higher than the resident population of those with non-EU nationality (2.4 million). Prior to 2013, this had not occurred since the Annual Population Survey began in 2004.

In 2015, approximately 1 in 12 (8.7%) of the usually resident population of the UK held non-British nationality (5.6 million). By comparison, in 2004, approximately 1 in 20 (5.0%) of the usually resident population of the UK were non-British nationals (3.0 million). There has been a statistically significant increase of 2.6 million in the estimated number of non-British nationals resident in the UK between 2004 and 2015 (an increase of 87.8%), driven by the number of EU nationals, which has nearly tripled since 2004 (from 1.1 million to 3.2 million).

Comparing 2015 estimates with those for 2014, there was a statistically significant increase in the non-British national population of the UK, increasing from 5.3 million to 5.6 million. The increase in non-British nationals has been driven by residents holding EU nationality, as there was a statistically significant increase in EU nationals resident in the UK (from 2.9 million to 3.2 million), including statistically significant increases in the number of:

- EU14 nationals (from 1.3 million to 1.4 million)
- EU8 nationals (from 1.3 million to 1.4 million)
- EU2 nationals (from 234,000 to 299,000)

The number of non-EU nationals in the UK has remained stable since the previous year and is currently estimated to be 2.4 million.

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

Country of birth

In 2015, Poland was the most common non-UK country of birth. Between 2004 and 2014, India had been the most common. An estimated 831,000 residents of the UK were born in Poland (9.7% of the total number of non-UK born residents in the UK in 2015). This is more than 8 times higher than in 2004, when 94,000 residents of the UK were born in Poland. There has been a statistically significant increase of 737,000 residents in the UK who were born in Poland between 2004 and 2015.

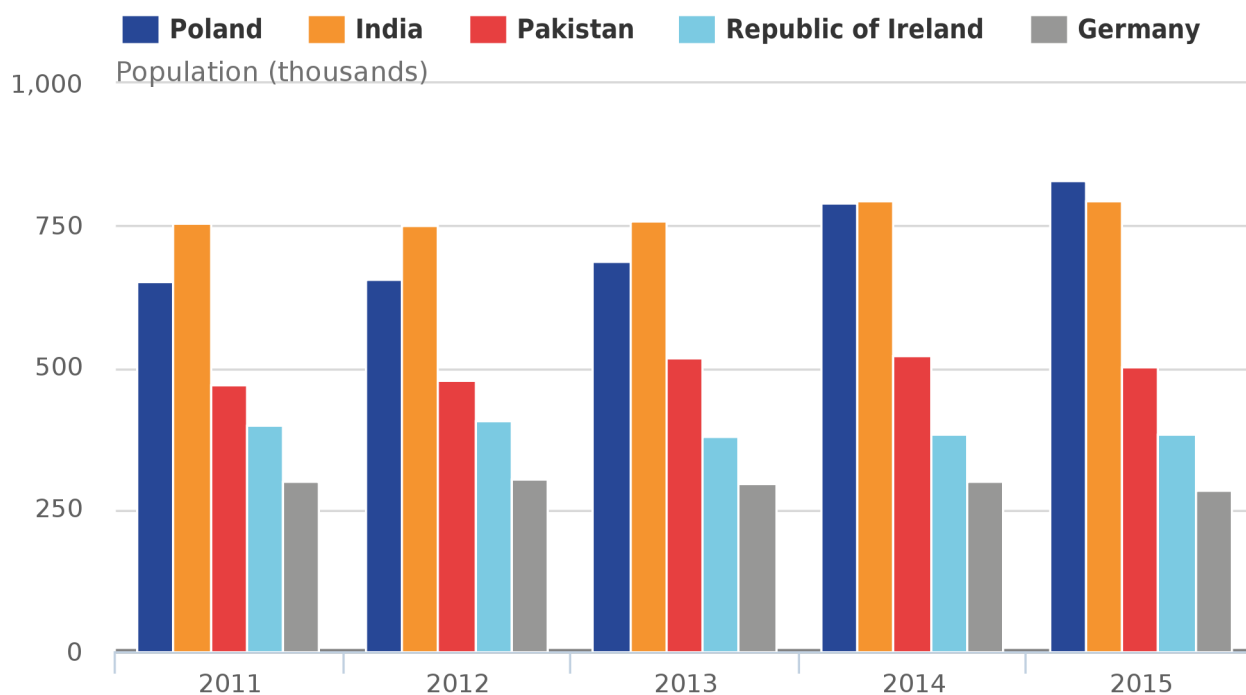
In 2015, the 5 most common countries of birth for usual residents born outside the UK were:

1. Poland (831,000)
2. India (795,000)
3. Pakistan (503,000)
4. Republic of Ireland (382,000)
5. Germany (286,000)

Figure 3 shows the usual resident population in the UK for individuals born in these countries for the years 2011 to 2015.

Figure 3: 5 most common countries of birth in the UK in 2015

2011 to 2015



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

Comparing these 5 individual country estimates for 2015 with those for the previous year, there were no statistically significant changes seen.

Nationality

In 2015, Polish was the most common non-British nationality. An estimated 916,000 residents in the UK have Polish nationality (16.5% of the total number of non-British nationals resident in the UK). This is more than 13 times higher than in 2004, when 69,000 residents of the UK had Polish nationality. There has been a statistically significant increase of 847,000 Polish nationals residing in the UK between 2004 and 2015.

In 2015, the 5 most common non-British nationalities for usual residents in the UK were for nationals of:

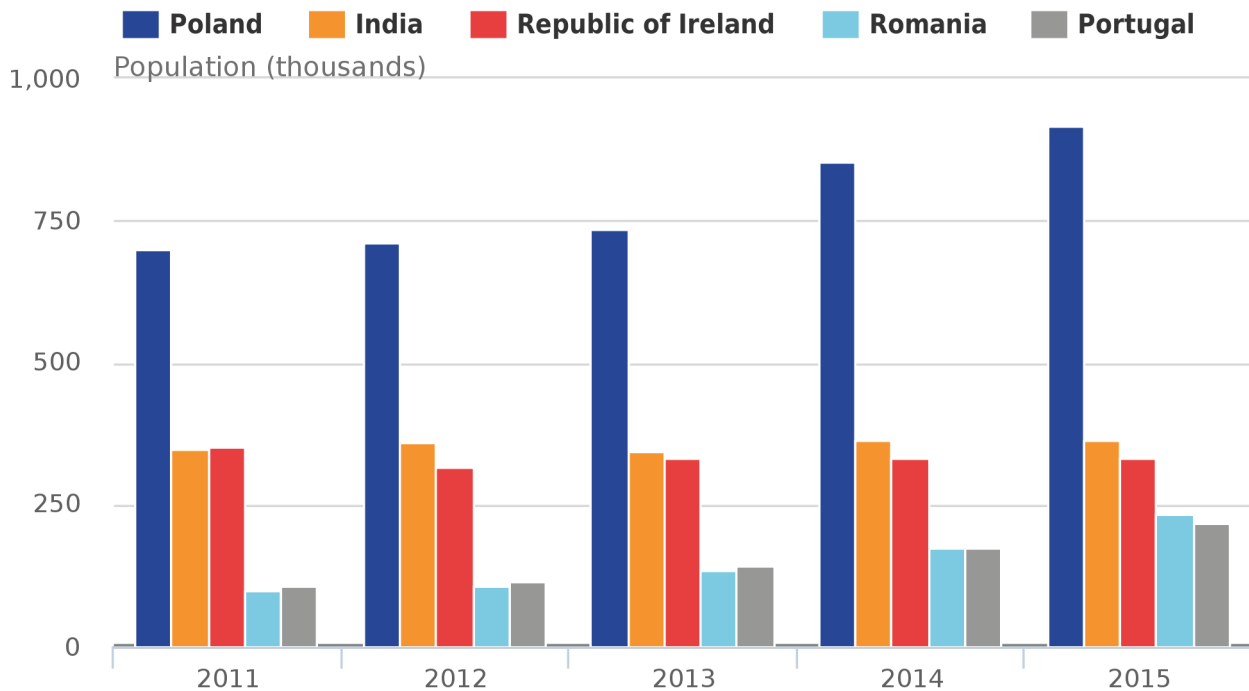
1. Poland (916,000)
2. India (362,000)
3. Republic of Ireland (332,000)
4. Romania (233,000)
5. Portugal (219,000)

Portugal has appeared in the 5 most common non-British national countries for the first time since the Annual Population Survey (APS) began in 2004, replacing Pakistan. Whilst 132,000 of the 219,000 were born in Portugal, 26,000 were born in India and 20,000 were born in the UK (the rest were born in various other countries).

Figure 4 shows the usual resident population in the UK for individuals with these nationalities for the years 2011 to 2015.

Figure 4: 5 most common nationalities in the UK in 2015

2011 to 2015



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

Comparing estimates for 2015 with those for the previous year, there were statistically significant increases in the UK populations of:

1. Polish (increased by 63,000)
2. Romanian (increased by 58,000)
3. Portuguese (increased by 44,000)

It should be noted that the 3 nationalities listed above have also seen statistically significant increases since the start of the APS in 2004, plus India. The number of residents with Republic of Ireland nationality, however, has seen a statistically significant decrease since 2004, decreasing from 379,000 to 332,000.

Focus on non-UK born residents

Further analysis of the 2 most common countries of birth shows that, of the 795,000 India born residing in the UK in 2015, just over half (436,000 or 54.8%) are British nationals, compared with just 27,000 (2.9%) of the 916,000 Poland born residing in the UK. This reflects that EU nationals 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.

Estimates of the UK population by country of birth and nationality are available at local authority level. The interactive map shows that the largest non-UK born populations are in London (which is the region with the highest proportion of non-UK born residents, 37%):

- Brent (54% non-UK born)
- Newham (54%)
- Kensington and Chelsea (52%)
- Harrow (50%)
- Westminster (50%)

How much does the non-UK born population vary across the UK?

7. Where can I find more information?

Accompanying the “Population by Country of Birth and Nationality” publication is the report and tables on the [Migration Statistics Quarterly Report](#), providing information on Long-Term International Migration, visas, and National Insurance Number allocations.

Today the Office for National Statistics (ONS) also publishes [The Local Area Migration Indicators \(LAMI\) suite](#) presenting indicators of migration at local authority level. This annual output has been updated with the latest available estimates. The MSQR does not provide commentary on the LAMI. An [interactive quiz](#) providing an introduction to the LAMI and data on population by country of birth will supplement the LAMI suite. The quiz will be available on the Visual.ONS website.

We have also published the following:

1. [Population by Country of Birth and Nationality Tables](#)
2. [Underlying Datasheets to Accompany Population by Country of Birth and Nationality Tables](#)
3. [Population by Country of Birth and Nationality Frequently Asked Questions](#)
4. [Population by Country of Birth and Nationality Quality and Methodology Information](#)
5. [Local Area Migration Indicators Suite](#)
6. [Births in England and Wales by Parents' Country of Birth, August 2016](#)
7. [2011 Census webpage](#)
8. [2011 Census data section](#)
9. [Detailed country of birth and nationality analysis from the 2011 Census of England and Wales](#)
10. If you are new to migration statistics, you might find it helpful to read our “[International Migration Statistics First Time User Guide](#)”.
11. There are also links to several other relevant publications and articles, as well as a glossary of the terms used in this report, in the [List of Products and Glossary section of the First Time User Guide](#).
12. If you would like to subscribe to our newsletter, please send an email to population.statistics@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.

8. Quality and methodology

The [Population by country of birth and nationality Quality and Methodology Information document](#) 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