

Statistical bulletin

Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality: year ending June 2021

Latest population estimates for the UK by country of birth and nationality, covering the period from 2004 to the year ending June 2021.



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Next release:
To be announced

Correction

28 October 2022 14:00

On 3 October 2022, we launched a review of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Measures of National Well-being, which includes personal well-being. You can share your feedback and contribute to the review by filling in our online survey. The survey is open until 25 November 2022.

Notice

14 February 2022

We have decided to cancel our May 2022 bulletin due to the upcoming results from the Census and reweighting the Annual Population Survey. Subject to the reweighting process our next bulletin is planned for November 2022.

28 October 2022

On 27 October 2022, we published an [update on the population of the UK by country of birth and nationality series](#).

Using Census 2021 data to measure the non-UK population (non-UK-born and non-British nationals)

On 2 November 2022, the first [migration statistics from the Census 2021 for England and Wales](#) will be published. This will be our best estimate of the population of England and Wales by country of birth and passports held.

While the census provides the best picture of society at a moment in time every ten years, there is a need for more timely and frequent statistics, that make the best use of all available data and enable us to understand our population and how it changes on an ongoing basis. We are exploring provisional measures that can roll forward the Census 2021 data to produce an even more up-to-date picture. We will provide an update on this in early 2023.

Discontinuing the population of the UK by country of birth and nationality series using the APS

Administrative data from HMRC (Migrant Worker Scan (MWS) linked to Pay As You Earn Real Time Information) recently used to weight the non-UK born population in the Annual Population Survey (APS) only provides information to June 2021 due to an [underlying data issue with the MWS](#). Therefore, population growth for non-UK-born and non-British nationals from the [APS beyond June 2021](#) will not represent real changes until the data issue with the MWS is fixed.

We are [transforming the way we produce population and migration statistics](#) to make best use of all available data. The [Labour Force Survey \(LFS\) is also undergoing a transformation](#) to make further improvements to labour market statistics to improve quality, granularity and timeliness.

As part of this transformation journey, we are reviewing the best methods to produce estimates of the UK population. Therefore, the [population of the UK by country of birth and nationality series](#) using the APS will be discontinued. This means the next release for year ending June 2022, scheduled for 24 November 2022, will not go ahead. Previous releases are not affected by this issue.

For more information on our plans for provisional measures and longer-term approaches, please see the [published statement](#).

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1 . Main points

- These estimates are based on the Labour Force Survey, which has used a new weighting methodology to reflect the change in survey operations during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic; Data below UK, EU and non-EU level should be treated with caution and not be compared with previous years.
- We will be updating our estimates to provide the best picture of the population as more information becomes available, particularly the results from the 2021 Census, which will give further insight when published next year.
- In the year ending June 2021, the non-UK-born population was an estimated 9.6 million and the non-British population was an estimated 6.0 million; both the non-UK-born population and non-British population have remained broadly stable since 2019.
- The EU-born population remained similar to the previous year; however, the non-EU born population increased from the previous year.
- Conversely, the EU national population decreased when compared to the previous year, whereas the non-EU national population remained similar to previous years.
- India continued to be the most common non-UK country of birth, and Polish remained the most common non-British nationality.
- London continued to be the region with the largest estimated proportion of non-UK-born (37%) and non-British (21%) population.
- Population estimates by country of birth and nationality in this release cannot be directly compared with the figures from the European Union Settlement Scheme because of differences in what the statistics measure and how they are compiled.

A new weighting methodology has been introduced, which calibrates to UK, EU and non-EU-born populations for periods from January 2020. Data below UK, EU and non-EU level should be treated with caution and not be compared with previous years.

2 . Impact of coronavirus on these estimates

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic introduced new challenges in how we produce our population and migration statistics. The methods used in previous versions of this publication relied on population projections to account for the size and distribution of the population. These population projections predated the coronavirus pandemic and are not able to reflect the demographic and structural impact the UK is facing.

The estimates in this release are based on data from the [Annual Population Survey \(APS\)](#), which comprises the [Labour Force Survey \(LFS\)](#) and sample boosts in England, Wales and Scotland. The coronavirus pandemic meant that all face-to-face interviewing for the LFS was suspended on 17 March 2020 and replaced with telephone interviewing. This introduced a change to the non-response bias of the survey, which meant that characteristics such as those who rent their accommodation and those with a non-UK country of birth or nationality were less well-represented in the achieved sample.

The population data used to produce the LFS was, therefore, updated to better reflect changes in international migration and other affects as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The new [weighting methodology](#) calibrates to UK, EU and non-EU-born weighting populations for periods from January 2020. However, it does not adjust for potential non-response bias for detailed breakdowns, so there remains greater uncertainty in population estimates below this level, which should not be compared with previous years.

All estimates in this release use the new LFS weighting methodology. Published tables from July 2019 to June 2020 onwards use this new methodology.

3 . Non-UK populations analysis

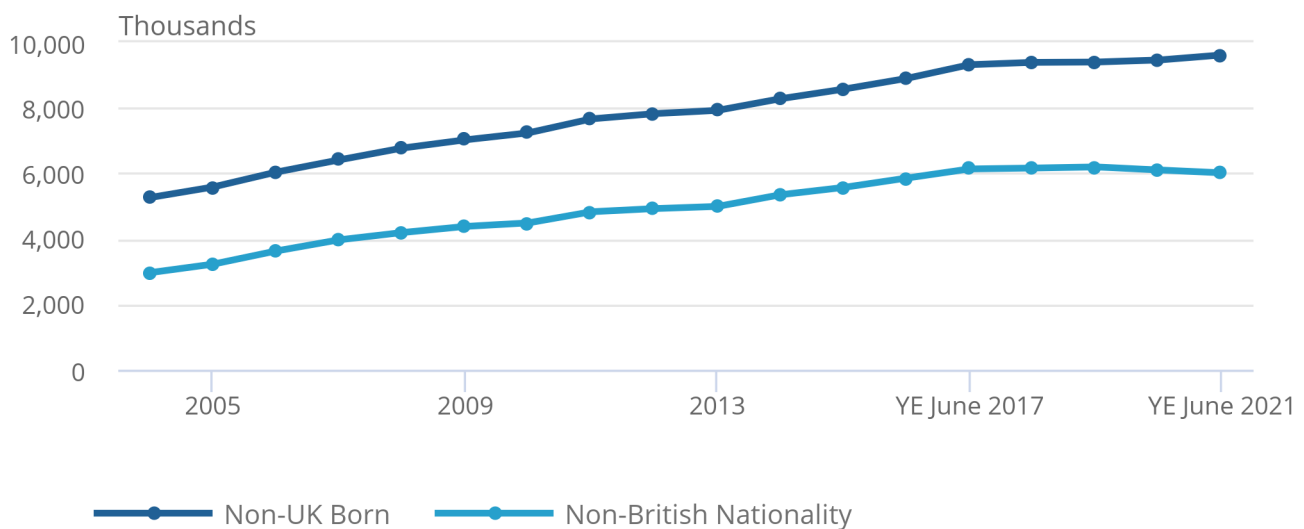
Non-UK populations (non-UK-born and non-British nationals) remained broadly stable in the year ending June 2021. From 2004 to year ending June 2017, a general upward trend in population size is seen; since then the populations have stabilised.

Figure 1: Non-UK-born and non-British populations remain broadly stable

Estimates of the non-UK-born and non-British resident population of the UK, 2004 to year ending June 2021

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Estimates of the non-UK-born and non-British resident population of the UK, 2004 to year ending June 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

Notes:

1. Estimates are in thousands.
2. Estimates use Labour Force Survey responses that have been reweighted to new population counts.
3. For comparability of trends mid-year estimates have been used where available. Prior to year ending June 2016 calendar year data has been used.

The EU-born population in the year ending June 2021 was an estimated 3.5 million, which is similar to levels seen in the previous year. The non-EU-born population, however, saw an increase from an estimated 5.9 million to 6.1 million between the year ending June 2020 and the year ending June 2021 (Figure 2).

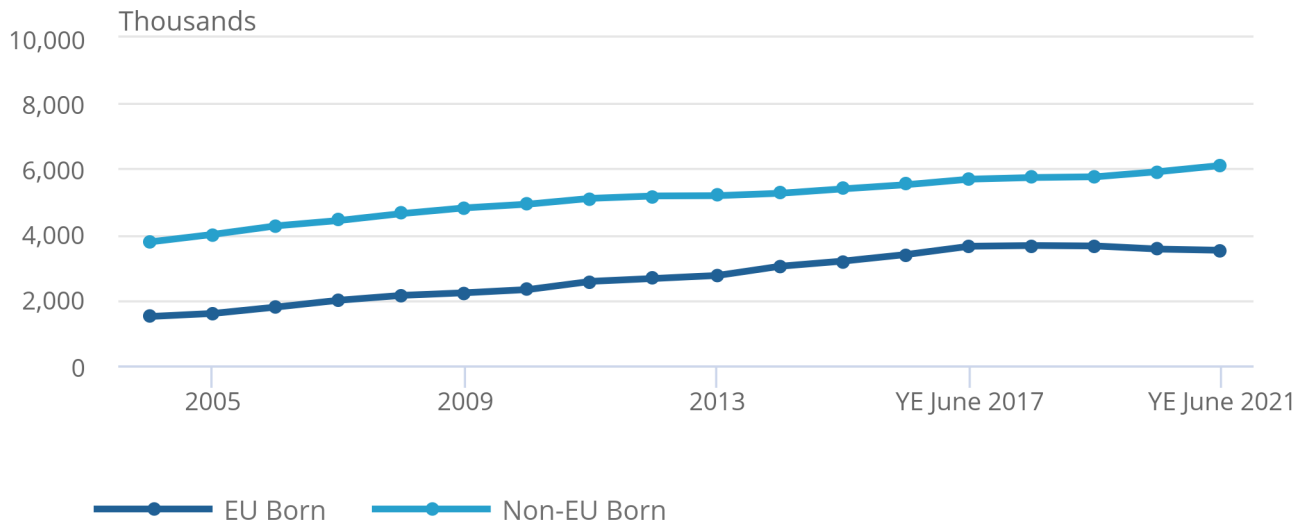
Caution should be taken when comparing these population measures with estimates of [migration flows](#) because of measurement and definitional differences between the two sets of statistics.

Figure 2: EU-born population remained broadly stable, and non-EU-born population increased

Estimates of the EU- and non-EU-born resident population of the UK by country of birth, 2004 to year ending June 2021

Figure 2: EU-born population remained broadly stable, and non-EU-born population increased

Estimates of the EU- and non-EU-born resident population of the UK by country of birth, 2004 to year ending June 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

Notes:

1. Estimates are in thousands.
2. Estimates use Labour Force Survey responses that have been reweighted to new population counts.
3. For comparability of trends mid-year estimates have been used where available. Prior to year ending June 2016 calendar year data has been used.

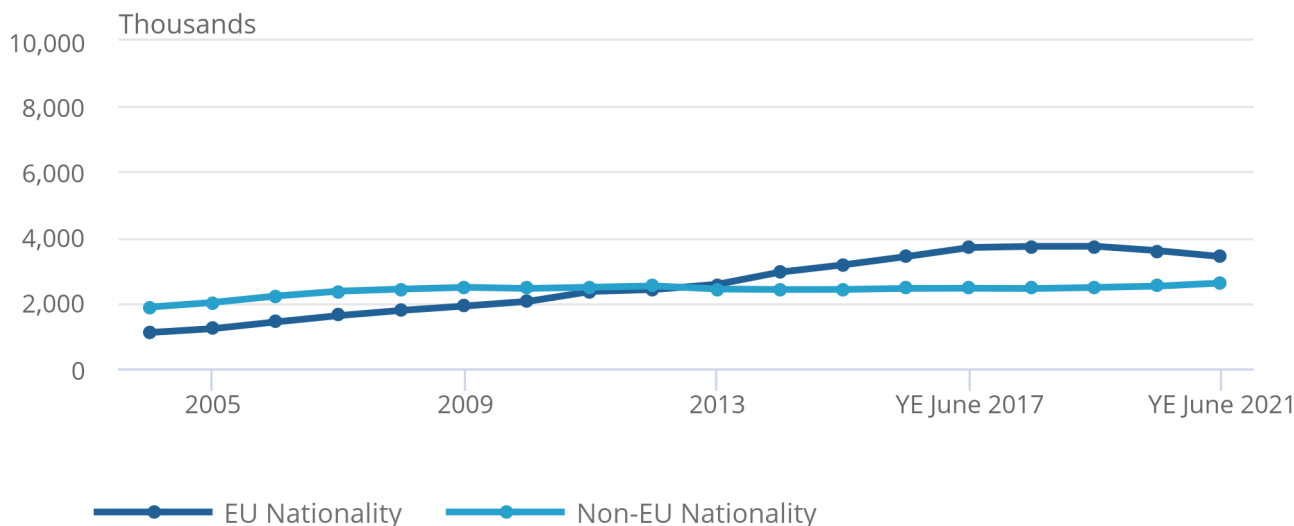
The number of EU nationals currently resident in the UK decreased from an estimated 3.6 million to 3.4 million between the year ending June 2020 and the year ending June 2021. The non-EU-national population (2.6 million) has remained broadly stable since 2008 (Figure 3).

Figure 3: The EU national population decreased, and the non-EU national population remained broadly stable

Estimates of the EU and non-EU national resident population of the UK by nationality, 2004 to year ending June 2021

Figure 3: The EU national population decreased, and the non-EU national population remained broadly stable

Estimates of the EU and non-EU national resident population of the UK by nationality, 2004 to year ending June 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

Notes:

1. Estimates are in thousands.
2. Estimates use Labour Force Survey responses that have been reweighted to new population counts.
3. For comparability of trends mid-year estimates have been used where available. Prior to year ending June 2016 calendar year data has been used.

The reweighting of the Labour Force Survey and Annual Population Survey means that estimates for UK, EU and non-EU populations are more robust, but there remains a high level of uncertainty around these numbers, particularly below EU and non-EU level. This likely reflects that the methodological improvements were not targeted at these detailed levels, and therefore should not be compared with previous years.

India is the most common non-UK country of birth in the year ending June 2021. Polish has been the most common non-British nationality in the UK since 2007. The countries of birth and nationalities making up the top five in the year ending June 2021 are in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Population of the UK for the five most common non-UK countries of birth and nationalities, year ending June 2021

Country of Birth			Nationality		
Country	Estimate	Confidence Interval (±)	Country	Estimate	Confidence Interval (±)
India	896	52	Poland	696	46
Poland	682	46	India	370	34
Pakistan	456	37	Republic of Ireland	370	34
Republic of Ireland	412	35	Italy	342	32
Germany	347	32	Romania	342	32

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

Notes

1. Estimates are in thousands.
2. Estimates use Labour Force Survey responses that have been reweighted to new population counts.

Annual Population Survey data from the ONS are based on a survey. It is not possible to survey all people resident in the UK, so these statistics are estimates based on a sample, not precise figures.

More about the population and migration

- Research on [the way we produce population and migration statistics](#).
- Latest estimates on [migration into and out of the UK](#).
- Find out about the [future design of migration estimates](#).
- Latest research on [population estimates using administrative data](#).
- Research into [estimating the student population](#).
- Analysis on the [different types of visas held in the UK](#).

4 . Non-UK populations regional comparisons

The proportion of the population in local authorities who were born outside the UK, or who held non-British nationality, varied across the country. The interactive map (Figure 4) allows you to explore these patterns in more detail.

Figure 4: Population of non-UK-born and non-British nationals varies across the country

Percentage of non-UK-born and non-British national populations in Great Britain, by local authority, year ending June 2021

Notes:

1. Data are unavailable for the districts of Northern Ireland.

Download this chart

[.XLSX](#)

London has the highest proportion of non-UK populations

London remained the area with the largest proportion of non-UK-born residents in the year ending June 2021; an estimated 37% were non-UK-born, while 21% were non-British nationals (Figure 4).

The local authority with the highest percentage of non-UK-born residents was Kensington and Chelsea (53%). The local authorities with the highest percentage of non-British national residents were Hounslow and Kensington and Chelsea (both 31%).

5 . Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality data

[Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality](#)

Dataset | Released 25 November 2021

UK residents by broad country of birth and citizenship groups, broken down by UK country, local authority, unitary authority, metropolitan and London boroughs, and counties. Estimates from the Annual Population Survey.

[Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality: individual country data](#)

Dataset | Released 25 November 2021

UK residents by individual countries of birth and citizenship, broken down by UK country, local authority, unitary authority, metropolitan and London boroughs, and counties. Estimates from the Annual Population Survey.

6 . Glossary

EU27

EU27 is referred to as EU throughout this bulletin. EU27 is the sum of EU14, EU8 and EU2, plus Malta, Cyprus and Croatia (from 1 July 2013).

EU14

Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Spain and Sweden.

EU8

Eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004: Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

EU2

Bulgaria and Romania.

EU other

The two Mediterranean countries, Malta and Cyprus, that joined the EU in 2004 and Croatia, which joined the EU in mid-2013.

Non-EU

Non-EU is the sum of Asia, the Rest of the World and the rest of Europe.

Non-response bias

Non-response bias is the bias that occurs when the people who respond to a survey differ significantly from the people who do not respond to the survey, which can cause the sample to be unrepresentative of the population or cause larger variance in the estimates.

Rest of the world

Rest of the World is the sum of North America, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central and South America, and Oceania.

Rest of Europe

Rest of Europe are the countries remaining once the EU27 countries and the UK have been excluded from Europe. A list of which countries are in each country group is available in the [international migration table of contents](#).

7 . Measuring the data

Estimates of the population of the UK by country of birth and nationality are based upon data from the [Annual Population Survey \(APS\)](#).

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in the [Population by country of birth and nationality QMI](#).

We are transforming our migration statistics, making use of all available data to provide a richer and deeper understanding of migration. More information is available in our latest update report on [population and migration statistics transformation](#).

8 . Strengths and limitations

The Annual Population Survey (APS) is a household survey and so does not cover most people living in communal establishments, some NHS accommodation, or students living in halls of residence who have non-UK-resident parents. As a result, the population totals used in APS estimates are not directly comparable with mid-year population estimates, which refer to the entire UK population.

The estimates in this bulletin contain [uncertainty](#).

Coronavirus and Labour Force Survey estimates

The APS is weighted to be representative by age, sex and region, plus additional weighting for housing tenure. Modelled population totals for UK, EU and non-EU country of birth was introduced following [the reweighting of the Labour Force Survey \(LFS\) in July 2021](#). This new weighting methodology uses growth rates from HM Revenue and Customs Real Time Information (RTI) employee data to improve the population weights. Because of data availability in RTI, Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 modelled growth rates were used for the 2021 data.

An additional non-response adjustment was also applied using factors based on local area level information from the 2011 Census. Further information on the methods used to reweight the LFS is available in the [Labour Force Survey weighting methodology](#).

One impact has been that the sample size of the APS has become smaller, which leads to more variability in the estimates. Estimates for small groups, which are based on smaller subsets of the APS sample, are less reliable, subject to larger potential sample bias and tend to be more volatile than for larger aggregated groups. Therefore, users are advised to be cautious when drawing conclusions from estimates that are broken down to smaller groups, for example, by country, nationality, age or local authority.

When the recent [Labour Force Survey weighting methodology](#) was applied, there was a small error in the implementation. When calculating three-month averages for RTI the months used were the previous three-month average. For example, for the October to December period, the RTI data used was that for September to November. This led to a slight overestimation of the non-UK population by approximately 0.5%. This represents less than half the size of the sampling variability. The size is roughly the same over the quarters of 2020 and the impact on January to December 2020 APS estimates is about 14,000 for EU-born, 25,000 for non-EU-born and 39,000 for non-UK-born.

Caution comparing estimates from different sources

The APS is not designed to measure long-term international migration flows but does give insights into changes in our population. The population estimates in this bulletin are what we refer to as stocks. It is not possible to directly compare stocks from the APS and migration flows, as outlined in our latest blog on how we count migrants: [Experimental migration data: No evidence of UK exodus](#).

When comparing data sources, users must be aware of the differences in coverage, accuracy, timing, and quality of these sources and why this can mean that they cannot be compared on a truly "like-for-like" basis. No conclusions should be drawn before each of these aspects has been carefully considered.

In particular, the population estimates by country of birth and nationality cannot be directly compared with the figures from the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS). While these two data sources provide valuable insights on a particular aspect of migration, they cannot be directly compared because of differences in what the statistics measure and how they are compiled. These differences have been explained in more detail in the blog [Are there really 6m EU citizens living in the UK?](#)

9 . Related links

[How we are improving population and migration statistics](#)

Article | Released 15 November 2021

Find out more about our population and migration statistics transformation journey.

[Population and migration statistics system transformation -- recent updates](#)

Article | Released 25 June 2021

Updates on our latest progress and links to our related statistics and research reports.

[Measuring migration: the story behind the headlines](#)

Article | Released 17 September 2021

In this interactive article we take you behind the headlines and use the latest data to answer questions about international migration. We also explain why measuring migration is harder than you might think

[Local area migration indicators, UK](#)

Dataset | Released 17 September 2021

Different migration-related data sources at local authority level including migration flows, non-UK-born and non-British populations, National Insurance number registrations, GP registrations, and births to non-UK-born mothers.

[Coronavirus and its impact on the Labour Force Survey](#)

Article | Released 13 October 2020

The impact of changes made to the Labour Force Survey in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and the methods used to adjust the data.

[Labour Force Survey weighting methodology](#)

Article | Released 17 May 2021

New population weights using Pay As You Earn Real Time Information data to allow for changes to Labour Force Survey (LFS) collection methods, and changes to population movements in 2020.

[Are there really 6 million EU citizens living in the UK?](#)

Blog | Released 2 July 2021

Media reports have suggested there are many more EU nationals in the UK than previously thought. This is because of the numbers applying for the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) compared with the ONS's estimates of EU nationals in the UK. Jay Lindop explains why EUSS data should not be used as an indicator for how many EU nationals are living here.