

Statistical bulletin

# Internal migration, England and Wales: Year ending June 2014

Residential moves between local authorities and regions in England and Wales, as well as moves to or from the rest of the UK (Scotland and Northern Ireland).



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## Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Introduction](#)
3. [Total moves](#)
4. [Characteristics of movers](#)
5. [International comparisons](#)
6. [Users and uses of internal migration statistics](#)
7. [Further information](#)
8. [Future developments](#)
9. [Tell us what you think](#)
10. [References](#)
11. [Background notes](#)

# 1. Main points

- There were an estimated 2.85 million residents moving between local authorities in England and Wales between July 2013 and June 2014, an increase of 5% compared with a year earlier
- There were 55,500 moves from England and Wales to Northern Ireland and Scotland, compared with 46,600 from Northern Ireland and Scotland to England and Wales. This means there was a net internal migration loss for England and Wales of 8,900 people
- There were more female movers than males: 52% of movers were female and 48% were male
- Young adults were most likely to move, with the biggest single peak reflecting moves to start higher education
- Of the English regions, London had the highest rate of internal migration net outflow (8.2 per 1,000 residents as at mid-2013). The region with the highest rate of internal migration net inflow was the South West (4.8 per 1,000 residents as at mid-2013)

## 2. Introduction

This is the first time we have published internal migration estimates for England and Wales for the year ending June 2014 (that is, the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014). As in previous years, we have defined internal migration as residential moves between local authorities and regions in England and Wales, as well as moves to or from the rest of the UK (Scotland and Northern Ireland). We have excluded moves within a single local authority, as well as international moves into or out of the UK.

Our statistics are based on a combination of administrative data and represent the best available source of information on internal migration. They have a wide range of uses across central and local government, as well as academia and business. We discuss this in more detail in the “Users and uses of internal migration statistics” section of this bulletin. Our [internal migration methodology page](#) has further information on the data sources and methods, and their limitations

This bulletin summarises total moves, moves by age, moves by sex and moves by area. However, if you wish to do your own analysis please use the accompanying tables, which are described in more detail in the “Further information” section.

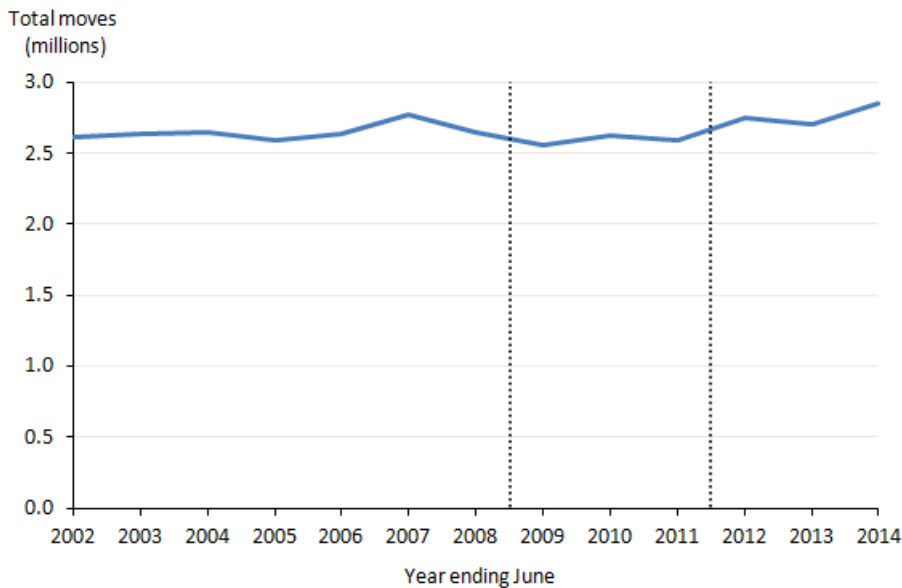
## 3. Total moves

### Moves between local authorities in England and Wales

In the year between July 2013 and June 2014, there were an estimated 2.85 million residential moves between local authorities in England and Wales. This compares with 536,000 international immigrants who arrived in England and Wales and 287,000 international emigrants who left England and Wales during that period.

Figure 1 shows the number of moves between local authorities in England and Wales since the year ending June 2002. Although the series has been broadly consistent, the year ending June 2014 had 141,000 more moves than the year ending June 2013, an increase of 5%. Although we can't be certain what drove this increase, potential factors include changes in the employment and housing markets, as well as changes in the numbers of people moving for study. An important factor may be the 10% increase in house prices across the UK in the year ending June 2014, a much faster rate of increase than in the 3 preceding years ([ONS, 2014a](#)).

**Figure 1: Total moves between local authorities in England and Wales, years ending June 2002 to June 2014**



The first year in the chart is the year ending June 2002 because it is the earliest year for which we made an adjustment to take better account of study-related moves. However, the statistics have 2 further breaks in consistency:

1. In the year ending June 2009, a local government reorganisation reduced the total number of local authorities in England and Wales from 376 to 348. This meant that from that year onwards, any moves between the former constituent parts of the merged authorities were excluded from the statistics. However, the estimated reduction in total moves (based on a comparison using the data for the year ending June 2012) is proportionally small, around 35,000 per year, and it is assumed that it is similar for this year.
2. In the year ending June 2012, new methods were introduced to improve the adjustment for study-related moves. We have published a review of the changes and their potential impact ([ONS, 2013 \(194.6 Kb Pdf\)](#)). However, although the new methods will have a more substantial impact at local level, especially in local authorities with universities, the impact at national level will be small.

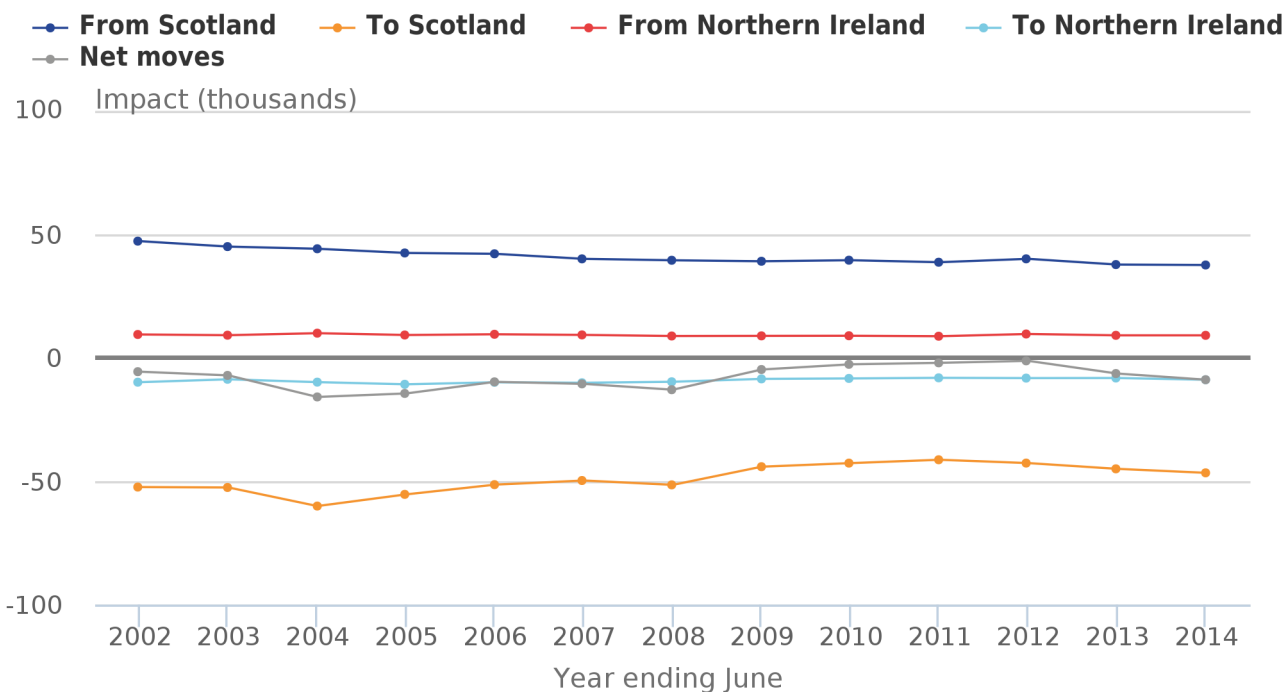
Although these changes have had limited effect overall, they do mean that although the value for the year ending June 2014 is the highest in the series, we can't be certain that it actually reflects the highest number of people moving.

Considering the rest of the series, a likely cause of the slight decline in the late 2000s was the recession, which had an impact on people's incomes, the employment market and, in consequence, the housing market ([Campos et al., 2011 \(395.6 Kb Pdf\)](#)). However, given the overall consistency of the series, it would appear that even the recession did not have a large impact on the number of moves across local authority boundaries.

## Cross-border moves

We define a cross-border move as one in either direction between England and Wales and the rest of the UK (Northern Ireland and Scotland). Figure 2 displays cross-border moves since the year ending June 2002.

**Figure 2: Impact on population of England and Wales of cross-border moves to and from Northern Ireland and Scotland, years ending June 2002 to June 2014**



Source: Office for National Statistics

In the year ending June 2014, the net number of cross-border moves out of England and Wales was 8,900, which was the highest net outflow since the year ending June 2008. The overall number of cross-border moves has been lower in recent years than it was earlier in the series; this has mainly been because of fewer moves both into and out of Scotland.

As with moves within England and Wales, it is likely that economic factors have had an impact on cross-border flows. Another factor likely to have had an effect is the development of differing policies on university tuition fees in the different parts of the UK, meaning that it has become financially more favourable for students from Scotland to remain in Scotland for study ([Which? University, 2014](#)). It is not known whether the build-up to the Scottish independence referendum in September 2014 had any impact.

## 4. Characteristics of movers

In this section we look at internal migration in the year ending June 2014 by age, sex and area.

The new methods of student adjustment introduced in the year ending June 2012, will have had more impact on moves by age, sex and area than on internal migration as a whole ([ONS, 2013 \(194.6 Kb Pdf\)](#)). Also since the year ending June 2012 we have based our estimates on age at mid-year rather than age at date of move. Because of these changes, we have not provided detailed time series comparisons. However, all the general patterns are similar to those in the year ending June 2013. We have also assumed that these patterns have, as a rule, only changed slowly over time.

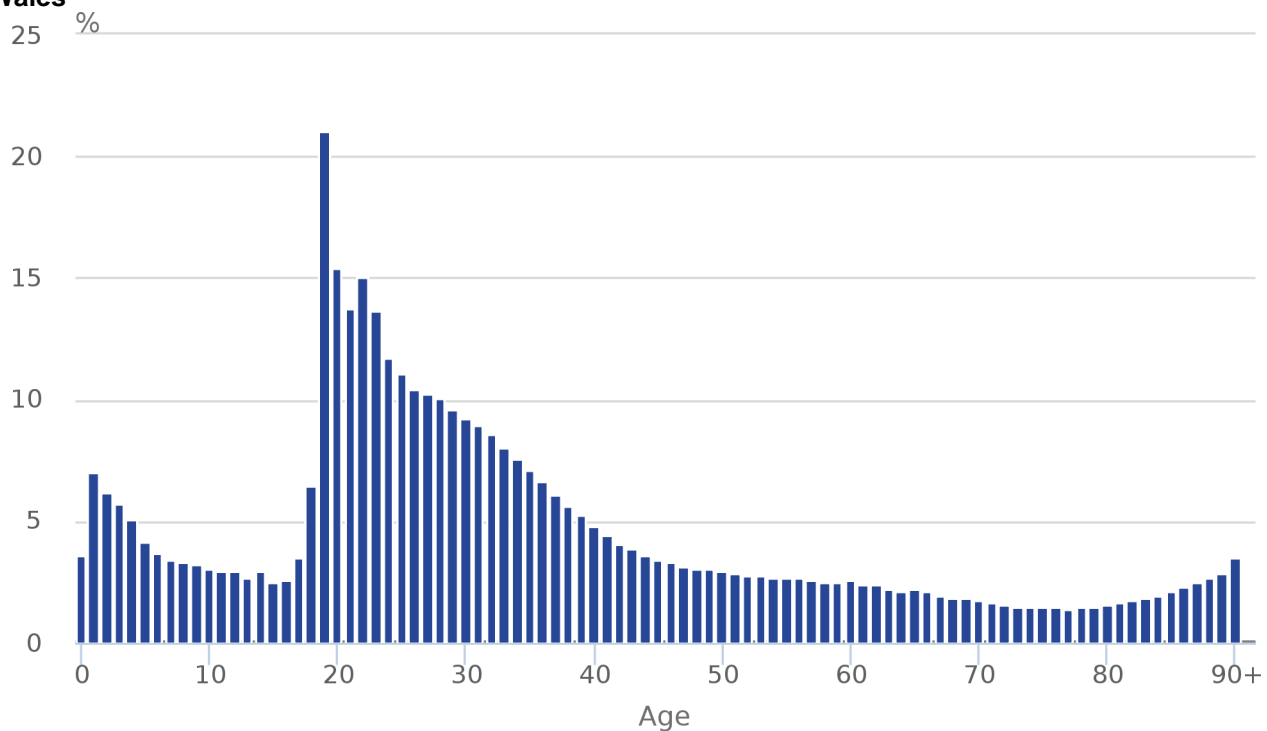
### 1. Age

Age of internal migrants is based on age at mid-2014 (specifically 30 June) rather than age at date of move – we have done this so the statistics integrate with our mid-year population estimates. So, for example, if someone born in May 1995 moved to another local authority to start university in September 2013, their age in the dataset would be 19, even though they were 18 when they actually moved.

Figure 3 shows the number of people who had moved local authority over the previous 12 months (including those arriving from Northern Ireland and Scotland), as a proportion of the population for each age in England and Wales as at mid-2014. This provides an approximation of what percentage of people moved at each age. However, the percentages will not be exact because:

1. many people's age at mid-2014 will have been 1 year older than when they moved. This will have had particular impact at age 0 (approximately half of people who moved aged 0 will have been aged 1 by mid-2014) and at student ages
2. some people will have moved more than once during the year
3. some people will have moved during the year, but no longer lived in England and Wales by the end of the year, either because they had moved elsewhere or died. These people will be included in the internal migration data but not in the population estimates

**Figure 3: Moves into local authorities in England and Wales (including moves from Northern Ireland and Scotland) by age, year ending June 2014, as a proportion of the mid-2014 population of England and Wales**



Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Age is age at mid-2014.

Figure 3 shows a comparatively high likelihood of moving for very young children. Part of this may be simply because their parents are at an age where moving is still common. The addition of children to a family may also lead to a move to more spacious accommodation, or to an area perceived as preferable for children to be raised. Parents may also decide to move to ensure they are in a particular school catchment area. However, once children are at school, moves are much less common, potentially because of the disruption it would cause the children as well as the parents.

It is in early adulthood where most moves occur, with the peak age for moves being 19, the main age at which people leave home for study. Even accounting for multiple moves and people who left England and Wales during the year, it is likely that approximately 20% of 19-year-olds living in England and Wales at mid-2014 had moved during the previous 12 months.

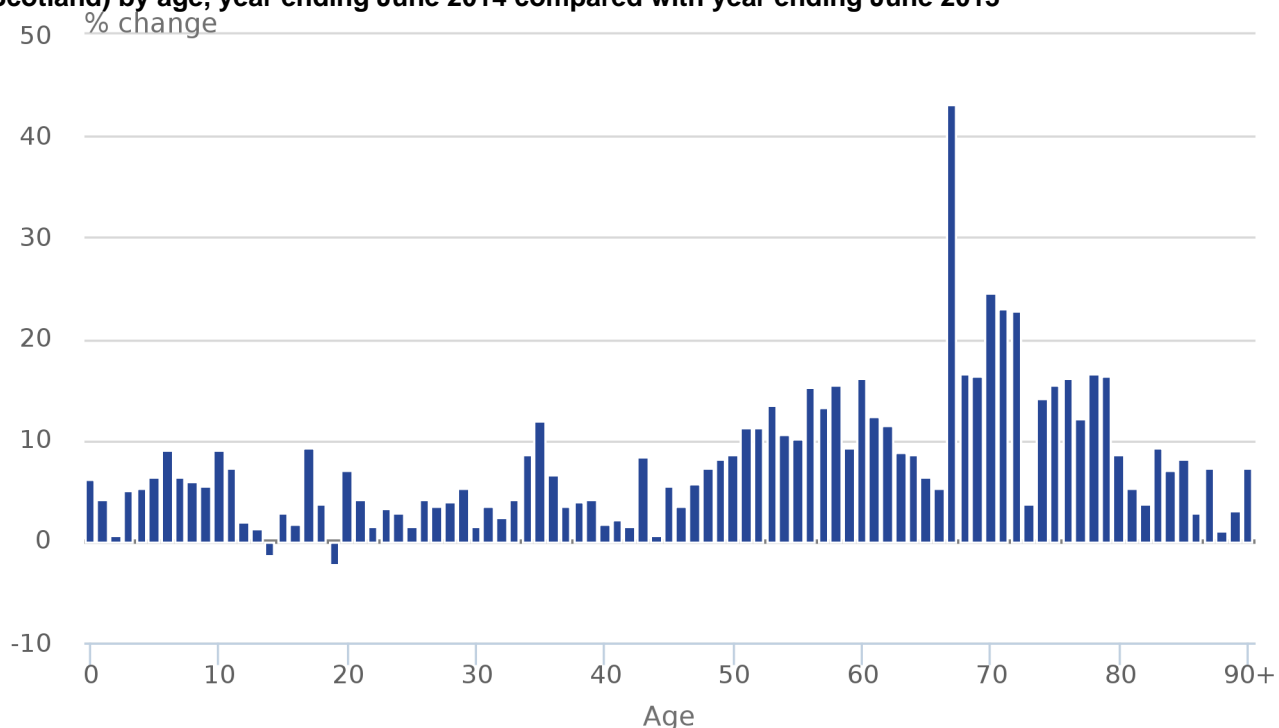
There is another peak at age 22; in many cases this will reflect graduates moving for employment, further study, returning to their home address or potentially moving in with a partner.

Levels of movement remain comparatively high through the 20s and 30s but gradually decline with age. This may reflect people becoming more settled in their employment, in an area and in relationships, as well as because they have school-age children.

However, from the late 70s onwards, the proportion of people moving rises. There are many reasons why people of this age may wish to move, including being closer to their family (potentially after a bereavement), downsizing into something more manageable, or specifically to access support and care ([My Ageing Parent](#)).

In Figure 4 we compare how moves by age increased in the year ending June 2014 compared with the previous year.

**Figure 4: Percentage change in internal migration moves (including moves from Northern Ireland and Scotland) by age, year ending June 2014 compared with year ending June 2013**



Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Age is age at mid-2014.

Figure 4 shows that there have been increases at almost all ages, with the exception of slight declines at ages 14 and 19. The largest increase is at age 67, but that is partly because of the large increase in the total number of 67 year olds in the UK, as people born in the baby boom following World War 2 reach that age. However, most of the other large increases, typically 10 to 15%, are also occurring between the ages of 50 and 80.

The year ending June 2014 was a period of steady economic growth ([ONS, 2014b](#)) and growing employment ([ONS, 2014c](#)). These may have contributed to the increase in the number of moves for younger adults, but the effect is likely to have been limited for people aged between 50 and 80. For those age groups in particular, a possible factor is the 10% increase in house prices during the year, which may have encouraged people to move after a few years of avoiding moving because of comparatively stable prices ([ONS, 2014a](#)).

## 2. Sex and age

Of the 2.90 million internal moves into local authorities in England and Wales (including moves to or from Northern Ireland or Scotland) during the year ending June 2014, a total of 1.52 million (52%) were female and 1.38 million (48%) were male. This means that for every 100 female movers, there were 91 male movers.

There are various factors which contribute to this difference between the sexes. One factor is that there are slightly more females than males in the UK population as a whole – 51% compared with 49% ([ONS, 2015a](#)). There are also likely to be differences in patterns of moving for work, or as relationships are formed or break up. However, the most dominant factor is likely to be that more females attend higher education institutions: in the 2013 to 2014 academic year, 56% of all higher education students in the UK were female, and among full-time students, who are assumed to be more likely to move for study, 55% were female ([HESA, 2015, Table 1](#)).

Another important factor is that these internal migration statistics exclude moves into and out of the armed forces, which are predominantly men.

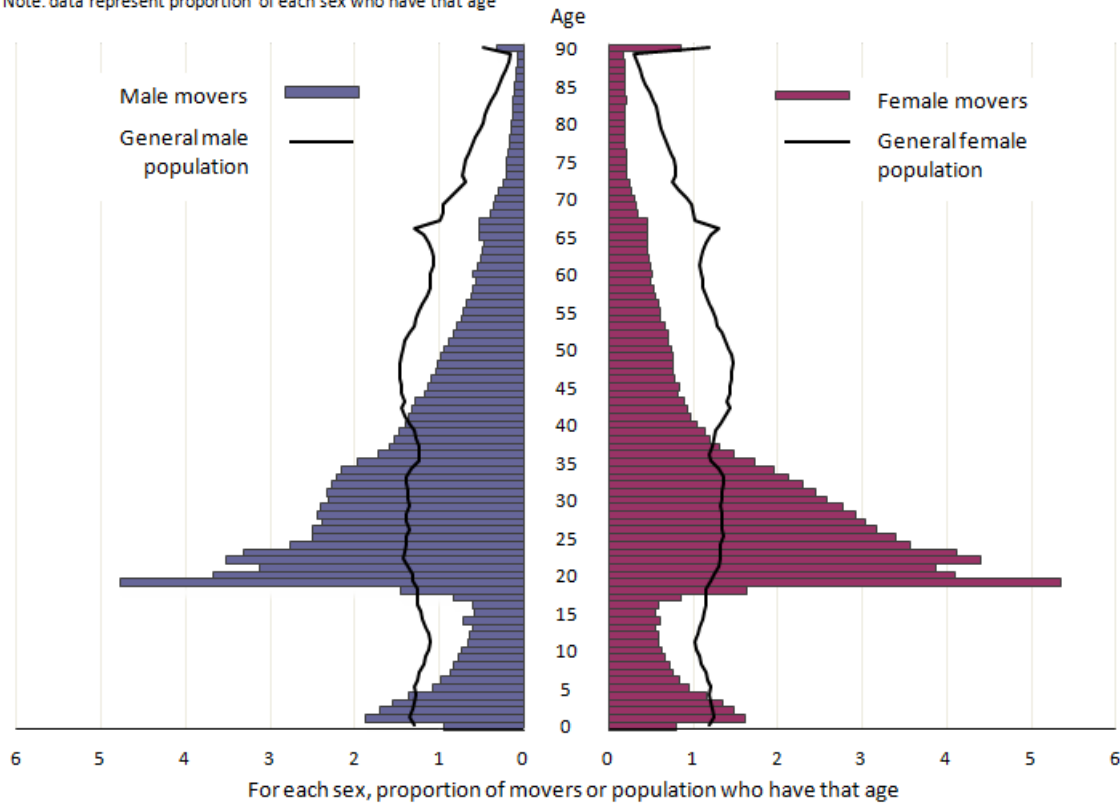
There is also likely to be some impact of the fact that our statistics are largely derived from data on people's re-registration with a new GP when they change address. However, some people, especially young men, may not register with a new GP after they have moved, causing their moves to be missed from the statistics ([Smallwood and Lynch, 2010 \(145.3 Kb Pdf\)](#); also [ONS, 2014d](#)).

Another way of considering the age and sex profile of internal migrants is to consider how it compares with the age and sex profile of the general population. In Figure 5 we present this comparison in the form of pyramids:

- the solid pyramid shows, for each age and sex group, the number of movers as a percentage of all movers of that sex in the year ending June 2014 (for example, 19-year-old males made up 4.8% of all male movers)
- the outline pyramid shows, also for each age and sex group, the percentage of the entire population of that sex in England and Wales who were in that age group as at mid-2014 (for example, 19 year old males made up 1.3% of all males)

**Figure 5: Population pyramids showing movers into local authorities in England and Wales (including moves from Northern Ireland and Scotland), year ending June 2014, and the total population of England and Wales, mid-2014**

Note: data represent proportion of each sex who have that age



If the solid pyramid is wider than the outline pyramid, people at that age are disproportionately likely to have moved. This applies to very young children and adults aged between 18 and the high 30s. For all other ages the outline pyramid is wider than the solid pyramid, meaning people are disproportionately unlikely to have moved.

Figure 5 also shows that among older people there were more female movers than male movers – in fact 60% of movers aged 70 or over were female. This reflects the fact that 57% of the UK population aged 70 and over are female ([ONS, 2015a](#)) and is likely to be enhanced by the higher likelihood of females to be widows ([ONS, 2014e](#)).

### 3. Area

Here we consider internal migration at regional and local authority level. However, note that these comparisons consider internal migration only and that several other factors will influence total population change in an area, including births, deaths and international migration. This means that total population change will not necessarily be in the same direction as net internal migration. Information on total population change in the year ending June 2014 is available in the [mid-2014 population estimates](#) publication.

Table 1 shows the number of internal migration moves into and out of the regions of England and the country of Wales (including moves to or from Northern Ireland or Scotland) in the year ending June 2014. The table is presented in order of net moves per thousand mid-2013 population. The mid-2013 population is used because it is the starting point of the year ending June 2014.



**Table 1: Internal migration moves (including cross-border moves), year ending June 2014, and mid-2013 population estimates, for the regions of England and the country of Wales**

Area	Moves in (thousands)	Moves out (thousands)	Net change (thousands)	Mid-2013 population (thousands)	Net moves per thousand population
South West	146.0	120.3	25.7	5,377.6	4.8
East	158.7	139.2	19.5	5,954.3	3.3
South East	242.3	222.3	20.0	8,792.8	2.3
East Midlands	120.5	114.4	6.2	4,598.4	1.3
North East	44.0	43.8	0.3	2,610.5	0.1
Wales	57.5	57.3	0.2	3,082.4	0.1
West Midlands	109.2	112.1	-3.0	5,674.7	-0.5
North West	113.9	118.3	-4.4	7,103.3	-0.6
Yorkshire and The Humber	105.7	110.3	-4.7	5,337.7	-0.9
London	204.4	273.1	-68.6	8,416.5	-8.2

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Because of rounding, totals may not sum.

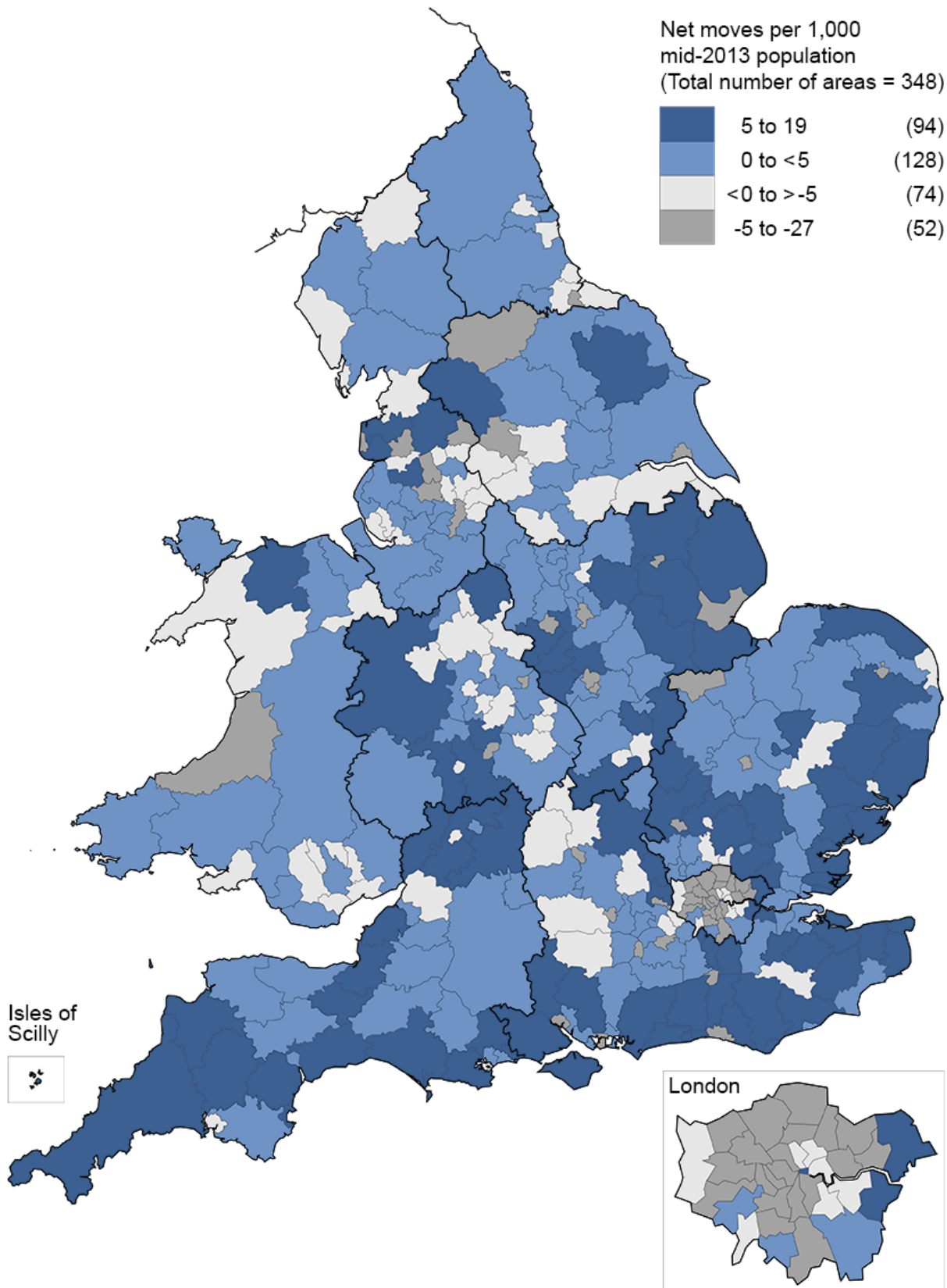
The 2 regions with the highest numbers of moves in and moves out are London and the South East. However, they are also the regions with the largest population. By comparing net moves per thousand population we can take account of the effect of population size. The main messages are:

- regions in the south of England had greater net change than regions in the north of England during the year ending June 2014
- except for London, regions in the east and south of England had net internal migration inflows; the region with the highest rate of net migration inflow was the South West (net of 4.8 moves in per 1,000 mid-2013 population)
- more northerly regions tended to have smaller net inflows or small net outflows
- London had by far the largest rate of net internal migration outflow, and also the largest net change in relation to population size (net of 8.2 moves out per 1,000 mid-2013 population)

[Previous years' internal migration estimates](#) show that this general pattern of a large net outflow from London and a large net inflow to other parts of southern and eastern England has existed for a number of years.

Map 1 shows net flows per 1,000 mid-2013 population for each of the 348 local authorities in England and Wales. This also includes all moves to or from Northern Ireland and Scotland.

**Map 1: Net flows of internal migrants by local authority, year ending June 2014, per 1,000 mid-2013 population, local authorities in England and Wales**



Source: Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0.  
Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2015

In total there were 222 local authorities with more people moving in than out, of which 94 had a net inflow of more than 5 per 1,000 population (mid-2013). Most of those are in regions that also had a higher net inflow: South West, East, South East and East Midlands. However, some local authorities in all of these regions experienced a net outflow, demonstrating that there is considerable within-region variation.

Conversely, there were 126 local authorities with more people moving out than in, of which 52 had a net outflow of more than 5 per 1,000 population (mid-2013). London had a particular concentration of local authorities with high net outflows, reflecting the high net outflow for the London region overall. An important explanation for this is that many parents with young children move out of London ([ONS, 2014f](#)). London is also the most common region of first residence for international migrants to the UK ([ONS, 2015a \(440.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)) and some of these may later move to other regions, potentially also with children. Similar factors may also contribute to the high net outflows from many provincial cities.

## 5. International comparisons

Making international comparisons of internal migration statistics is not straightforward. Complications include:

- different data sources for creating internal migration statistics, which may also have different levels of quality
- different frequencies of production: UK statistics are available on an annual basis, but this is not true for all countries
- different definitions of what constitutes internal migration
- different geographic structures and sizes of geographic areas. In theory 2 countries could have the same number of people changing address but have differing internal migration totals because one country has larger regions or local authorities than the other

However, [Bell et al \(2015\)](#) have developed “national migration intensities”, which are intended to provide reasonably comparable estimates of levels of internal migration levels in different countries. These suggest that there is considerable variation around the globe but that the intensity in the UK, although fairly high, is lower than in countries in North America, Oceania and Scandinavia. Countries in Asia, Central America, and southern and eastern Europe typically have lower migration intensities, while the picture in Africa and South America is varied.

Bell et al also looked at the causes of these differences. Countries with a higher proportion of young people are likely to have higher migration intensities, simply because younger people are more likely to move than older people. Migration intensities also tend to be higher in more developed countries with greater urbanisation, higher per capita income and expenditure and higher labour force participation (especially of women). They also tend to be higher in counties with a higher net international migration rate, not least because international arrivals may subsequently migrate within the country. The nature of the housing market is likely to have an impact, as would any legal restrictions on internal migration.

## 6. Users and uses of internal migration statistics

Internal migration statistics have a range of uses across the public sector and beyond. For example:

- we use them in population estimates and projections
- central government uses them to inform policy-making and resource allocation to local authorities, who in turn use the statistics to help estimate the demands on their services – for example, the number of school places required
- clinical commissioning groups use them to help forecast requirements for health services, particularly for maternity and geriatric services
- various universities research internal migration: for example the University of Leeds, the University of Manchester and Newcastle University

- providers of services across the public and private sectors: for example, housing associations, developers and utility companies may use internal migration statistics to predict demand for their respective services in their area
- the media may use them to inform articles and debate on migration and related topics

## 7. Further information

This statistical bulletin is part of our [Internal Migration by Local Authorities in England and Wales, Year Ending June 2014](#) publication. The publication includes:

- detailed internal migration moves dataset; this provides information on moves between every pair of local authorities by age and sex, allowing users to do their own detailed analysis
- square matrices showing the total number of moves between each region and each local authority; as well as the 9 English regions, the regional matrix includes the other 3 UK countries: Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales
- tables of total inflows, outflows and netflows for each region and local authority (total flows for the country of Wales are included in the regional table)
- table of inflows and outflows for each region and local authority by sex and 5-year age group (flows for the country of Wales are included in the regional table)
- table of all moves by age and sex
- a geography lookup containing local authority and region codes and names
- a "[Questions and Answers \(205.2 Kb Pdf\)](#)" document
- [an interactive flows map](#), which allows you to click on a local authority and choose to see either where people are migrating from, or where they're migrating to
- [a guide to the methods](#) used to create these internal migration statistics
- [quality and methodology information \(QMI\)](#) document – overview notes summarising the quality of internal migration releases

The [mid-2014 population estimates publication](#) contains an analysis tool which includes internal migration inflows, outflows and netflows for each local authority, broken down by sex and single year of age up to 90 and over. The publication also contains country, region, county and local authority internal migration inflows, outflows and netflows; these are in Table MYE3.

## 8. Future developments

The statistics in this release are the best available source of information on internal migration moves affecting England and Wales. However, over time data sources change and new data sources become available. We are researching improvements to the current methods and intend to introduce them in June 2017.

## 9. Tell us what you think

This publication is intended to meet the needs of users and provide an interesting summary of the main messages in the data. But are we achieving this? If you have any comments on what you like, what you don't like, or what we could do differently, please let us know at [migstatsunit@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:migstatsunit@ons.gsi.gov.uk).

## 10. References

- Bell M, E Charles-Edwards, P Ueffing, J Stillwell, M Kupiszewski and D Kupizewska (2015): [Internal Migration and Development: Comparing Migration Intensities Around the World](#). Article published in Population and Development Review 41(1), March 2015. Note that you must be a subscriber to access the online article.
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- Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2013): [Analysis of internal migration research series, years ending June 2009 to June 2011](#).
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- Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2014b): [Second Estimate of GDP, Q2 2014](#).
- Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2014c): [Labour Market Statistics, August 2014](#).
- Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2014d): [A look at male and female movers by age](#).
- Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2014e): [2011 Census Analysis: How Have Living Arrangements and Marital Status Changed in England Since 2001?](#)
- Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2014f): [Focus on London moves](#).
- Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2015a): [Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland – Mid-2014](#).
- My Ageing Parent: [Guide to downsizing or moving for the elderly](#).
- Smallwood S and K Lynch (2010): [An analysis of patient register data in the Longitudinal Study – what does it tell us about the quality of the data?](#) Office for National Statistics. Article published in ONS (2010): Population Trends 141, Autumn 2010.
- Which? University (2014): [Quick guide to student finance if you're from Scotland](#).

## 11. Background notes

1. Local authorities include all unitary administrations (unitary authorities; metropolitan districts, London boroughs and the City of London) as well as the districts in non-metropolitan areas where there is a 2-tier (county-district) structure.
2. International migration comparisons in this bulletin use estimates of long-term international migrants. This is people who have entered England and Wales from abroad, or who have moved abroad from England and Wales during the year ending June 2014, and who have the intention of staying at least a year.
3. Estimates of internal migration moves for areas within Northern Ireland are produced by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA); please visit the [NISRA website](#) for more information. Estimates of internal migration moves for areas within Scotland are produced by National Records of Scotland (NRS); for more information please visit the [NRS website](#). A [comparison of ONS's, NISRA's and NRS's methods](#) is available.
4. We publish the detailed dataset and the various summary tables to make the maximum amount of information available to users and allow them to do their own analysis as required. However, we may produce custom tables to order, subject to legal frameworks, resources and agreements of costs. Please get in touch if you have any enquiries. The [ONS charging policy](#) is also available.
5. Our internal migration estimates are National Statistics. This means they have been assessed by the UK Statistics Authority as compliant with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They were first assessed in 2009 (Assessment 8) and were re-assessed in 2013 (Assessment 267). The assessment reports are available on the [UK Statistics Authority website](#).

6. We have produced these National Statistics to high professional standards and released them according to the arrangements approved by the UK Statistics Authority.
7. Should the statistics in this release need to be revised or corrected at any point, we will do this in line with the [ONS Revisions and Corrections Policy](#).
8. Pre Release Access List for [Internal Migration by Local Authorities in England and Wales, Year Ending June 2014](#).
9. Next publication: June 2016.
10. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).
11. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html) or from the Media Relations Office email: [media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)