

Statistical bulletin

Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality: 2017

The latest population estimates for the UK by country of birth and nationality, covering the period from 2004 to the year ending December 2017.



Contact:
Nicola White
migstatsunit@ons.gov.uk
+44 (0)1329 444097

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1 . Main points

- Non-UK populations (non-UK born and non-British nationals) continued to increase in 2017; since reporting began in 2004, the non-UK populations of the UK have increased year-on-year as more non-UK people continue to come to the UK to live than move to live abroad for a year or more.
- The non-UK born population increased from 9.2 million in 2016 to 9.4 million in 2017 (up 3%) and the non-British population increased from 6.0 million to 6.2 million (up 4%).
- The increase in non-UK populations in the last few years has been largely accounted for by EU populations, particularly EU14 and EU2, with those born in Romania, or with Romanian nationality, seeing the largest increases.
- Poland remains the most common non-UK country of birth, taking over from India in 2015 (which reflected longer-term migration trends); Polish has been the most common non-British nationality in the UK since 2007.
- In 2017, there were 3.6 million people resident in the UK who were born abroad and held British nationality – people born outside the EU are more likely to hold British nationality than those born in the EU.

2 . Statistician's comment

“Non-UK born and non-British populations continued to increase in 2017, as more people continue to come to the UK to live than move to live abroad for a year or more.

“Poland-born residents and Polish nationals were the most common populations from outside the UK, with an estimated 1 million Polish nationals now living in the UK. However, the largest increases in population were seen from those born in Romania and those with Romanian nationality.”

Nicola White, Migration Statistics Division, 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 is 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, we will now be releasing data twice a year, in May (calendar year) and November (mid-year); this means that we are publishing data five months after the reference period. Previously, data were released eight months after the reference period in August each year.

This bulletin should be read alongside the published tables of [Population by country of birth and nationality, January 2017 to December 2017](#) and the [underlying datasets](#). Full details of definitions, data and methods can be found in the [Population by country of birth and nationality Quality and Methodology Information](#) and [International Migration – terms, definitions and frequently asked questions](#).

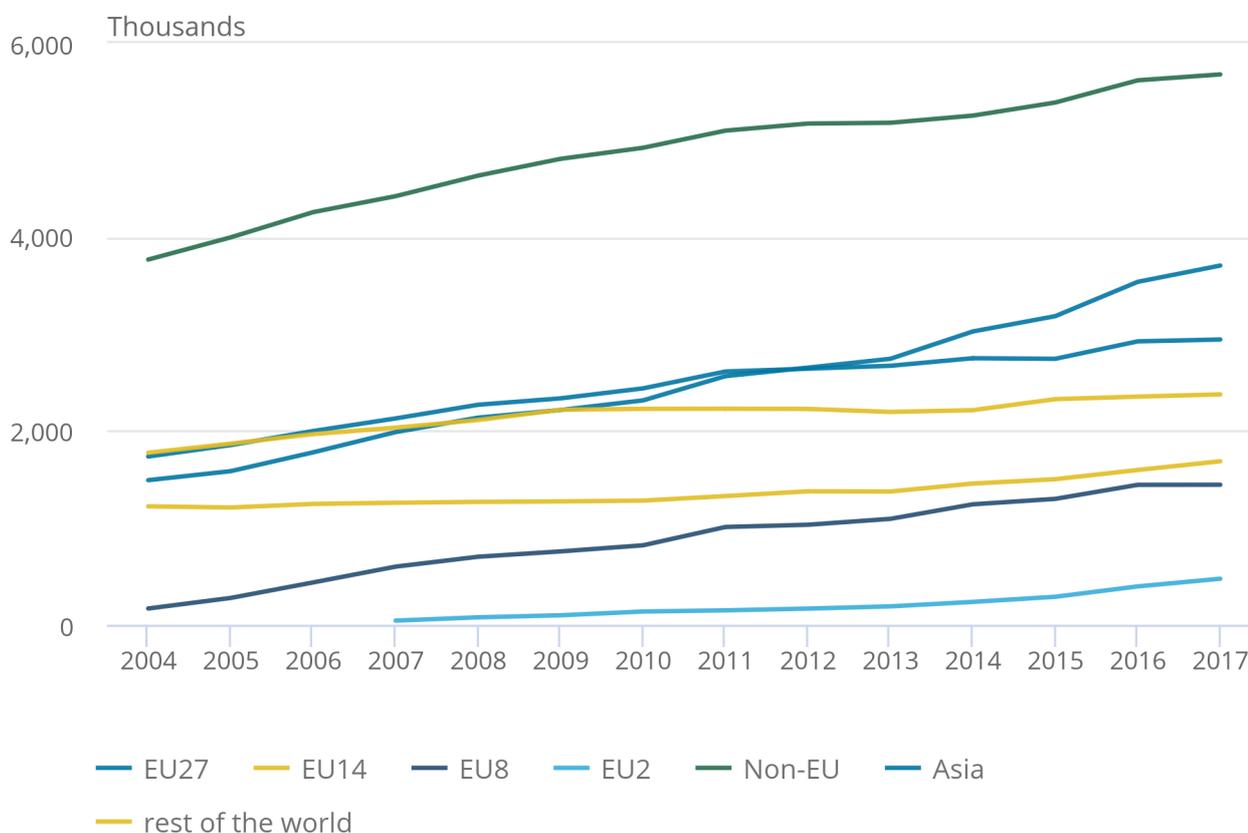
Please note that all the changes detailed in the release are statistically significant unless specifically stated otherwise.

4 . Non-UK populations of the UK continue to rise and drive population increase

Non-UK populations (both non-UK born and non-British nationals) continued to increase over the year to 2017, as more people continue to come to the UK to live than move to live abroad for a year or more (Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1: Estimates of the non-UK born resident population of the UK by country of birth, 2004 to 2017

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

Notes:

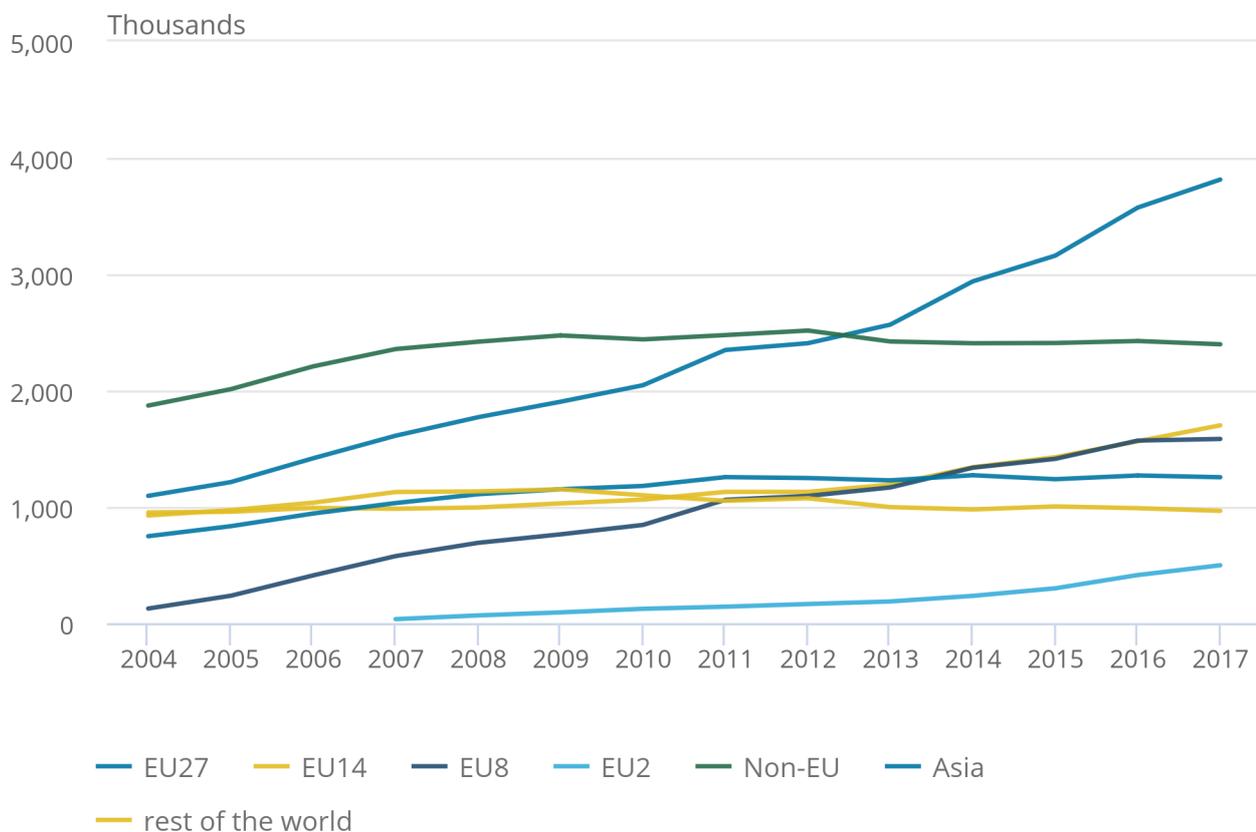
1. EU27 is the sum of EU14, EU8, and EU2, plus Malta, Cyprus, and Croatia (from 1 July 2013). These three countries are not shown on the chart separately.
2. Non-EU is the sum of Asia, the Rest of the World, and the rest of Europe. The rest of Europe grouping is not shown on the chart.

There was an increase in the non-UK born population of the UK, increasing from 9.2 million to 9.4 million between 2016 and 2017 (an increase of 3%) (Figure 1). This growth was largely caused by an increase in the EU born population (from 3.5 million to 3.7 million), specifically those born in the EU14 (from 1.6 million to 1.7 million) and EU2 (395,000 to 474,000).

The same pattern is seen for the non-British national population in the UK.

Figure 2: Estimates of the non-British resident population of the UK by nationality, 2004 to 2017

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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.
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In 2017, around 1 in 7 of the population of the UK were born abroad (9.4 million) – this has been steadily increasing each year and the majority (61%) of these were born outside of the EU (5.7 million) (Table 1).

In 2017, around 1 in 10 of the population of the UK had non-British nationality (6.2 million) – again, this has been steadily increasing year-on-year and half (51%) of these held EU nationality (3.8 million).

Table 1: Estimates of the resident population of the UK by country of birth and nationality, 2017

| | Country of birth | | Nationality | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| | Estimate | Percentage | Estimate | Percentage |
| All residents | 65,176 | 100 | 65,176 | 100 |
| UK born/British National | 55,777 | 86 | 58,946 | 90 |
| Non-UK born/Non-British National | 9,382 | 14 | 6,210 | 10 |
| EU27 | 3,705 | 6 | 3,813 | 6 |
| EU14 | 1,686 | 3 | 1,700 | 3 |
| EU8 | 1,444 | 2 | 1,583 | 2 |
| EU2 | 474 | 1 | 497 | 1 |
| Non-EU | 5,677 | 9 | 2,397 | 4 |
| Asia | 2,942 | 5 | 1,254 | 2 |
| Rest of the World | 2,376 | 4 | 965 | 1 |

Source: 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.

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

Poland was the most common non-UK country of birth in 2017 and Polish was the most common non-British nationality in the UK – an estimated 1 million Polish nationals lived in the UK in 2017 (Table 2).

In 2017, Poland born residents accounted for 10% of the total non-UK born residents in the UK; while resident Polish nationals accounted for 16% of the total non-British nationals resident in the UK.

The largest increase for an individual country between 2016 and 2017 was seen for those born in Romania, and those with Romanian nationality.

The Romania born population increased by 80,000 to 390,000, and resident Romanian nationals increased by 83,000 to 411,000. Romanian nationals are now the second most common nationality after Polish.

Table 2: Five most common non-UK countries of birth and non-British nationalities for usual residents of the UK, 2017

| Country of birth | Nationality |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Poland (922,000) | 1. Poland (1 million) |
| 2. India (829,000) | 2. Romania (411,000) |
| 3. Pakistan (522,000) | 3. Republic of Ireland (350,000) |
| 4. Romania (390,000) | 4. India (346,000) |
| 5. Republic of Ireland (390,000) | 5. Italy (297,000) |

Source: Office for National Statistics

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

In 2017, 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 – this has been steadily decreasing each year) (Table 3).

Table 3: Estimates of the resident population of the UK, country of birth by nationality held, 2017

| | All residents | British | EU | Non-EU |
|---------------|---------------|---------|-------|--------|
| All residents | 65,176 | 58,946 | 3,813 | 2,397 |
| UK Born | 55,777 | 55,304 | 321 | 145 |
| Non-UK Born | 9,382 | 3,635 | 3,492 | 2,251 |
| EU | 3,705 | 543 | 3,136 | 25 |
| Non-EU | 5,677 | 3,092 | 356 | 2,226 |

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Estimates in thousands.
2. EU 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.

The majority of the UK-born population also have British nationality (55.3 million). Residents born outside the EU are more likely to have British nationality (3.1 million) than those born in the EU (543,000).

Since 2004, when the Annual Population Survey (APS) began, EU born residents have become less likely to report British nationality – 33% were British in 2004 compared with 15% in 2017. This is likely to be due partly to changes in entry requirements and to EU citizens from the EU8 and EU2 countries who no longer required British nationality in order to reside in the UK.

However, a similar proportion of non-EU born residents reported British nationality in 2017 (54% British) compared with 2004 (51% British).

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

Estimates of the [UK population by country of birth and nationality are available at local authority level](#). The largest non-UK born and non-British national populations were in London in 2017 (which is the region with the highest proportion of non-UK born residents, at 38%, and non-British residents, at 24%) (Table 4).

Table 4: Local authorities with the highest proportion of non-UK born and non-British national populations, UK, 2017

| Country of birth | Nationality |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Newham (57%) | 1. Newham (38%) |
| 2. Brent (53%) | 2. Westminster (36%) |
| 3. Westminster (53%) | 3. Brent (34%) |
| 4. Hounslow (50%) | 4. Hounslow (33%) |
| 5. Harrow (50%) | 5. Kensington and Chelsea (32%) |

Source: Office for National Statistics

The proportion of the population in local authorities who were born outside the UK, or who held non-British nationality, varied across the UK. The interactive maps (Figure 3) allow you to explore these patterns in more detail, plus see how the proportions have changed over the last decade.

Figure 3: Percentage of non-UK born and non-British national populations in the UK, by local authority, 2017

[Download the data](#)

If you are also interested in other indicators of migration at local authority area, please see our [Local Area Migration Indicator Suite](#) and [Migration levels: What do you know about your area?](#)

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 local authority and for individual countries.

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

Today (24 May 2018) we are publishing an update article on our [Migration Statistics Transformation](#).

Today we also publish [Short-Term International Migration](#), providing information on international migration for periods of between 1 and 12 months.

If you would like to subscribe to our newsletter, please send an email to pop.info@ons.gov.uk with the subject title "Subscribe to ONS Population Statistics Newsletter", or you can also follow our statistician @JayLindop_ONS on Twitter for the latest population statistics news and updates and to 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
- uses and users 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 [International migration – terms, definitions and frequently asked questions](#).