

Statistical bulletin

# Births by parents' country of birth, England and Wales: 2012

Annual statistics on live births. Includes countries of birth for non-UK born mothers and fathers.



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# 1 . Key findings

- A quarter of births (25.9%) in 2012 were to mothers born outside the UK which was a slight increase from 2011 (25.5%)
- The total fertility rates (TFRs) for UK born women and non-UK born women have remained unchanged at 1.90 and 2.29 respectively between 2011 and 2012
- Poland remains the most common country of birth for non-UK born mothers in 2012
- Romania moved into the top 10 most common countries of birth for non-UK born mothers in 2012, replacing China
- Pakistan remains the most common country of birth for non-UK born fathers in 2012
- Romania moved into the top 10 most common countries of birth for non-UK born fathers in 2012, replacing Ghana
- Newham remains the local authority with the highest proportion of births to non-UK born women (76.7%) in 2012

## 2 . Summary

This bulletin presents statistics on live births in England and Wales in 2012 by parents' country of birth. In particular, it reports the 10 most common countries of birth for non-UK born mothers and fathers, the age of mothers by country of birth as well as total fertility rates (TFRs) for UK born and non-UK born women. The percentage of births to non-UK born mothers is also provided at local authority level.

Parents' country of birth statistics have been derived from final annual birth registration data which include all live births occurring in England and Wales in a calendar year.

This is the first time that detailed 2012 birth statistics for England and Wales on parents' country of birth have been published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Previously, only the overall proportion of births to mothers born outside the UK was included in the [Birth summary tables - England and Wales, 2012](#) published in July 2013.

## 3 . Live births to UK and non-UK born women

The total number of live births in England and Wales rose slightly to 729,674 in 2012 compared with 723,913 in 2011 (an increase of 0.8%). This increase in births resulted from a rise in births to both non-UK born mothers (4,550 more births in 2012) and UK born mothers (1,208 more births in 2012).

The number of births to UK born mothers increased slightly by 0.2% from 539,364 in 2011 to 540,572 in 2012. There was a larger increase in the number of births to non-UK born mothers, increasing by 2.5% from 184,529 in 2011 to 189,079 in 2012. Births to non-UK born mothers accounted for 25.9% of all live births in 2012, compared with 25.5% in 2011. This is the highest proportion of births to mothers born outside the UK since the collection of parents' country of birth was introduced at birth registration in 1969 (Figure 1). This proportion has increased every year since 1990, when it was 11.6%, with a marked rise over the last 12 years. In 2000 the proportion of births to non-UK born mothers was 15.5%.

The small rise in the number of births to UK born women is a continuation of the previous trend of a rising numbers of births to UK born women since 2002 (490,711 live births) although there were small declines in 2005, 2009 and 2011. In contrast, the number of births to women born outside the UK has risen every year since 1995.

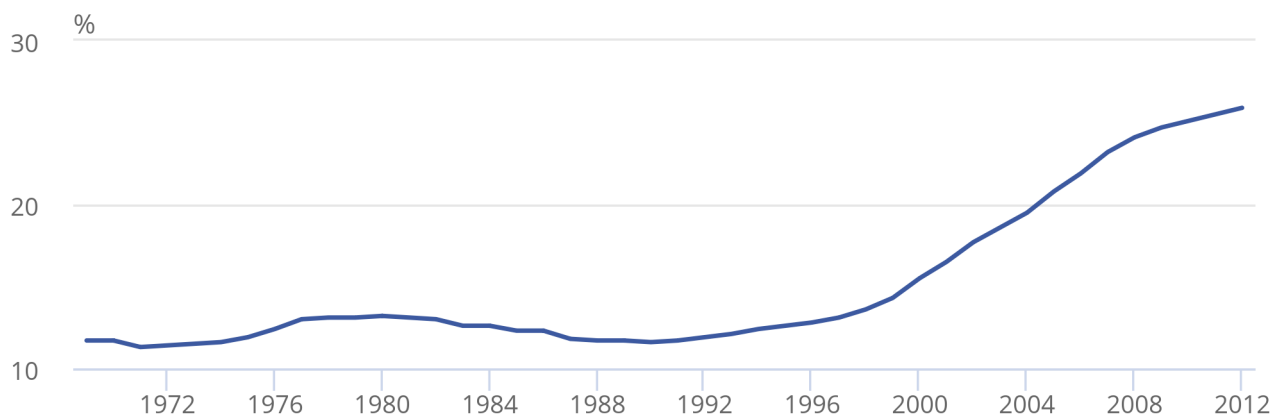
According to estimates derived from the Annual Population Survey (APS), the population of UK born women of childbearing age (15 to 44) fell by 0.8% between 2011 and 2012 while the population of foreign born women of childbearing age rose by 2.6%. The number of non-UK born women of childbearing age who are living in England and Wales has increased, causing the increase in the number of births to these women.

**Figure 1: Percentage of live births to mothers born outside the UK, 1969–2012**

England and Wales

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England and Wales



Source: Office for National Statistics

It is not just recent migration that has an impact on the childbearing population; the current size and age-structure of the foreign born population is in part determined by levels of earlier in-migration of children and younger women between the 1970s and 1990s. In addition the descendants of past in-migrants are likely to constitute an increasing share of the UK born population ([Tromans et al., 2009](#)).

## 4 . Estimated fertility rates for UK and non-UK born women

In 2012, the estimated total fertility rate (TFR) in England and Wales (see background notes 3 and 4) for women born in the UK was 1.90 children per woman. As in previous years, the estimated TFR for women born outside the UK but living in England and Wales was higher, at 2.29 children per woman in 2012. These figures remain unchanged from 2011.

The estimated TFR for women born in the UK increased from 1.69 in 2004 to 1.90 in 2011 and 2012. This is in line with the trend for the overall TFR for all women living in England and Wales. In contrast, the estimated TFR for women born outside the UK fluctuated around 2.50 between 2004 and 2007 before falling to 2.29 in 2011 and 2012.

The majority of women of childbearing age living in England and Wales were born in the UK (80% in 2012, down from 81% in 2011). Therefore UK born women make the largest contribution to the overall TFR. However, estimates based on the APS indicate that non-UK born women account for an increasing share of the childbearing age population in England and Wales. Between 2004 and 2012 the proportion of women of childbearing age who were born outside the UK grew from 13% to 20%. Because this group has higher fertility, on average, than those born in the UK, their increasing population share has pushed the estimated overall TFR upwards since 2004.

The TFR depends on the size of the female population of childbearing age and the number of births. The TFR for UK born women remained unchanged from the rate of 1.90 in 2011, as both the number of births and the size of the population have changed by less than 1% between 2011 and 2012.

Between 2007 and 2011 the number of births to non-UK born women increased annually, but because the increase in the non-UK born childbearing age population was proportionally larger than the increase in births their estimated TFR decreased. Between 2011 and 2012 similar rates of increase were seen in the number of births to non-UK born women (2.2%) and the size of the non-UK born childbearing population (2.6%). As a result the TFR for non-UK born women remained unchanged at 2.29 in 2012.

Estimated TFRs for UK and non-UK born women will be sensitive to changes in the timing of births within women's lives. For example, research has noted that immigrant women typically have low fertility prior to immigration, followed by high fertility immediately after immigration ([Toulemon 2004](#)). If this were also the case in England and Wales, the estimated TFR for non-UK born women could be inflated by this timing effect.

The diverse fertility levels of migrants born in different countries are important when analysing the impact of migration on fertility in recent years. A report on "[Childbearing of UK and non-UK born women living in the UK - 2011](#)" looks at fertility patterns in the UK for UK born and non-UK born mothers in the period 2007–2011, using APS data. The report includes an investigation of fertility patterns at the country level, and also of specific non-UK maternal countries of birth.

TFRs for individual countries are only available for census years. Rates based on the 2001 Census for England and Wales ([Table 5: Total fertility rates: country of birth of mother, 1991 and 2001 \(558.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)) show that women born in certain countries tend to have higher fertility than others. Further analysis of fertility rates at an individual country level, using 2011 Census data, is planned for the future (see background note 8).

## 5 . Country of birth of foreign born mothers

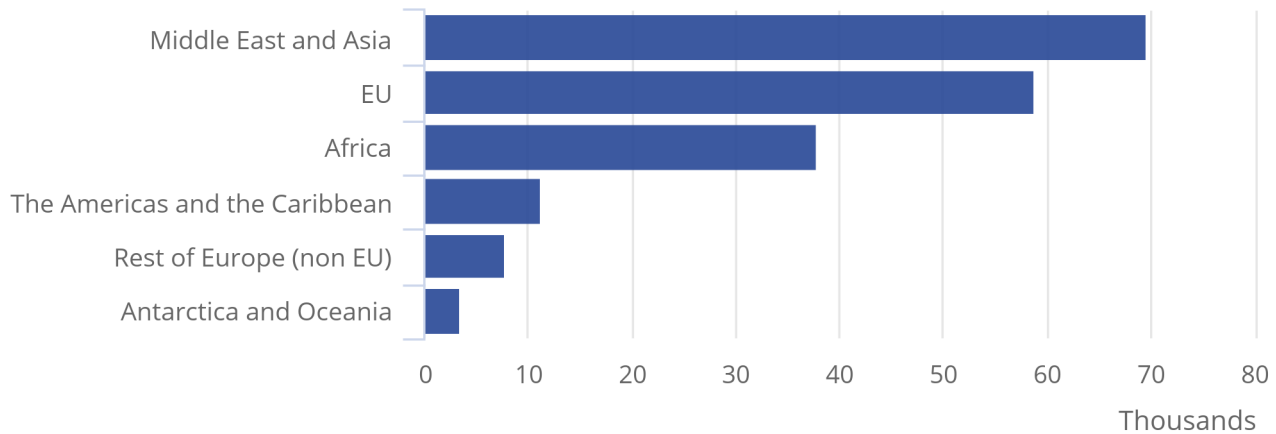
In England and Wales in 2012, births to mothers born in the European Union (EU), excluding the UK, represented 8.1% of all live births (Figure 2). Births to mothers born in one of the 12 countries that have joined the EU since April 2004 represented the majority of these births (5.6% of all live births). Mothers born in the Middle East and Asia contributed 9.5% of all live births while mothers born in Africa contributed 5.2%.

**Figure 2: Number of live births to mothers born outside the UK, by country group, 2012**

**England and Wales**

Figure 2: Number of live births to mothers born outside the UK, by country group, 2012

England and Wales



**Source: Office for National Statistics**

**Notes:**

1. EU figures are based on the EU as constituted in 2012 for comparability. See background note 6 for a list of the 27 countries included.

In 2012, Poland, Pakistan and India were the three most common countries of birth for non-UK born mothers (Table 1). Between 2001 and 2006, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh were consistently the three most common countries. However, in 2007, Poland replaced Bangladesh as the third most common country, rising to second place in 2008 and first place in 2010.

Poland appeared in the top 10 most common countries of birth for non-UK born mothers in 2005 when it was ninth. In 2002 there were 1,016 live births in England and Wales to Polish born mothers, compared with 1,830 in 2004 when Poland joined the EU and 21,156 in 2012.

Between the year ending December 2003 and the year ending December 2012 the estimated total Polish born population of the UK increased from 75,000 ([ONS, 2011](#)) to 646,000 ([ONS, 2013a](#)). It should be noted that when you look at the populations of the A8 countries that joined the EU in 2004 (Poland, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia) Poland accounts for more than half of the total population of those countries (see international comparisons within the [Eurostat database](#)). This partially explains why the Polish-born population in the UK has increased so much more than other countries.

In 2012, Romania moved into the top 10 non-UK countries of birth of mother, replacing China. This is the first time that Romania has appeared in the top 10 (figures available back to 2001), having gradually increased in the rankings. Romania joined the EU in 2007.

On the whole the top 10 non-UK countries of birth of mother have remained fairly similar across the 10-year period since 2002 with seven countries remaining constant: Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Somalia, Germany and South Africa. Jamaica left the top 10 in 2004 while United States left in 2005, Ireland in 2007, Ghana and Sri Lanka in 2011 and China in 2012.

**Table 1: Ten most common countries of birth of mother for non-UK born mothers, 2012**

England and Wales

	Country of birth of mother	Number	Percentage of all live births
1	Poland	21,156	2.9
2	Pakistan	19,091	2.6
3	India	14,621	2.0
4	Bangladesh	8,224	1.1
5	Nigeria	7,685	1.1
6	Somalia	5,300	0.7
7	Germany	5,064	0.7
8	Lithuania	4,535	0.6
9	Romania	4,406	0.6
10	South Africa	4,231	0.6
Total outside the UK		189,079	25.9

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Figures by country include births to mothers whose usual residence is outside England and Wales. The total outside the UK excludes those births where the mother's country of birth was not stated.

## 6 . Country of birth of foreign born fathers

In 2012, there were 175,639 babies born to non-UK born fathers which represents 24.1% of all live births. A smaller proportion (18.6%) of babies born had both parents born outside the UK. Information for fathers is not available for births registered solely by the mother (5.7% of all live births in 2012).

The top 10 most common countries of birth of non-UK born fathers consisted of the same countries between 2008 and 2011 but in 2012 Romania replaced Ghana (Table 2). This is the first time that Romania has appeared in the top 10 (figures available back to 2008), having gradually increased in the rankings. Pakistan is the most common, followed by Poland, India and Bangladesh. The top 10 countries of birth of non-UK born fathers in 2012 are similar to those of non-UK born mothers, with the inclusion of Sri Lanka rather than Lithuania and some differences in ranks.

**Table 2: Ten most common countries of birth of father for non-UK born fathers, 2012**

England and Wales

	Country of birth of father	Number	Percentage of all live births
1	Pakistan	20,280	2.8
2	Poland	16,432	2.3
3	India	13,991	1.9
4	Bangladesh	9,033	1.2
5	Nigeria	8,628	1.2
6	Somalia	4,877	0.7
7	South Africa	4,337	0.6
8	Germany	4,187	0.6
9	Romania	3,867	0.5
10	Sri Lanka	3,745	0.5
Total outside the UK		175,639	24.1

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

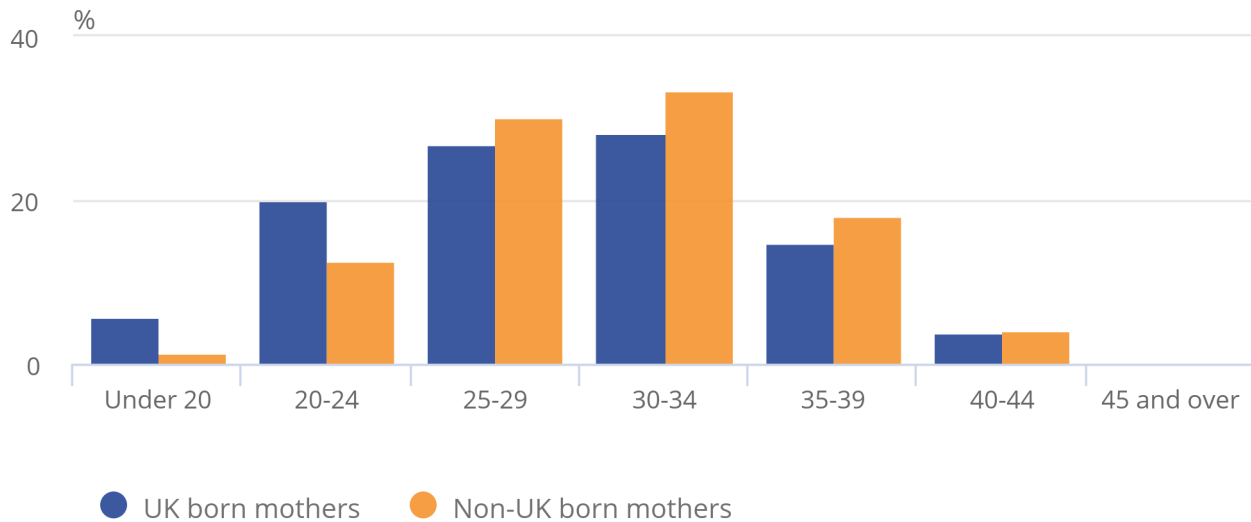
1. Figures by country include births to fathers whose usual residence is outside England and Wales. The total outside the UK excludes those births where the father's country of birth was not stated.
2. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008 contained provisions enabling two females in a same-sex couple to register a birth from 1 September 2009 onwards. Due to the small numbers, births registered to a same-sex couple (914 in 2013) are included in the figures with the country of birth of the second female parent being included under the country of birth of father.

## 7 . Age of mother

In 2012, the most common age group of both UK born mothers (28%) and non-UK born mothers (33%) was 30-34 years (Figure 3). A much higher proportion of UK born mothers were aged under 25 (27%) in comparison to foreign born mothers (14%). This is a similar pattern to 2011. This reflects the lower proportion of women aged under 25 in the non-UK born population of childbearing age, as many migrants are older than this on arrival in the UK.

**Figure 3: Percentage of live births by age of mother, UK and non-UK born mothers 2012**

Figure 3: Percentage of live births by age of mother, UK and non-UK born mothers 2012



Source: Office for National Statistics

## 8 . Mother's area of usual residence

In 2012, the region with the highest percentage of live births to mothers born outside the UK was London (57.4%). The North East had the lowest percentage of live births to mothers born outside the UK (9.9%). London and the North East have, since 2001, consistently shown the highest and lowest percentages respectively of live births to mothers born outside the UK.

Newham was the local authority with the highest percentage of births to non-UK born mothers in 2011 (76.7%). Outside of London, Slough had the highest percentage of live births to mothers born outside the UK (60.2%), followed by Luton (53.4%). These were also the two local authorities outside of London with the highest percentage of live births to non-UK born mothers in 2011. The area with the lowest percentage of births to mothers born outside the UK in 2012 was Redcar and Cleveland, with 3.6%; it was also the local authority with the lowest percentage of births to non-UK born mothers in 2011.

In Wales, the percentage of live births to foreign born mothers was 10.7%. Of the local authorities in Wales, Cardiff had the highest percentage of births to mothers born outside the UK (25.7%) and Torfaen had the lowest (4.3%). Cardiff also had the highest proportion of live births to non-UK born mothers in 2011 while Rhondda Cynon Taff had the lowest.

Geographical variations in the proportion of births to mothers born outside the UK are to be expected, due to local differences in the proportion of people born outside the UK. This can be seen in the indicators of migration at LA level ([ONS, 2013b](#)). In addition, the composition of the foreign born population, in terms of individual countries of birth, will vary considerably between local authorities.

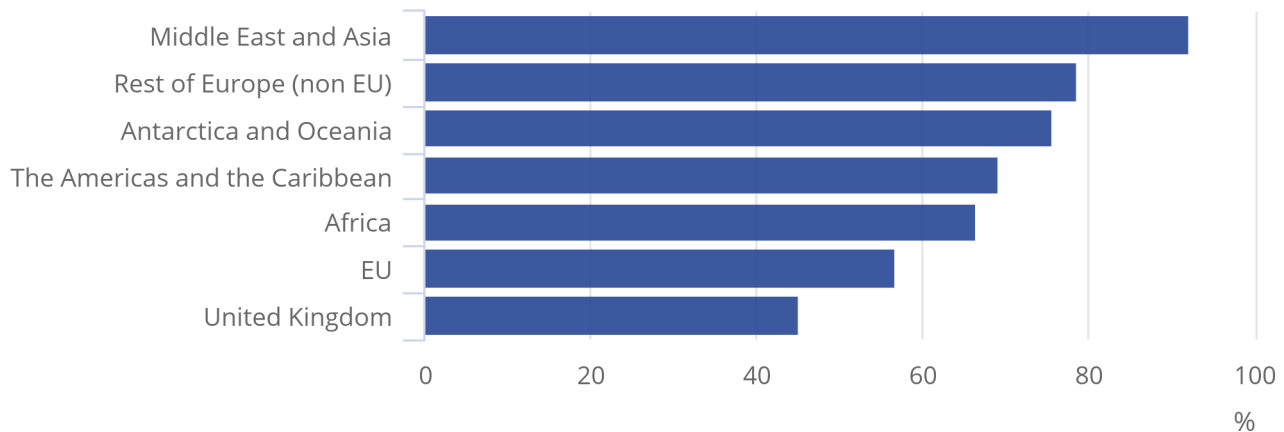


## 9 . Births within marriage/civil partnership

In 2012, a much higher proportion of births to non UK-born women took place within marriage/civil partnership (74%) than for UK-born mothers (45%) (Figure 4). This is a similar pattern to previous years. There is considerable variation in the proportion of births within marriage/civil partnership depending on the country of birth of the mother, for example, 93% of births to mothers from North Africa took place within marriage/civil partnership in 2012 in comparison to 38% of births to mothers from the Caribbean. These variations reflect different societal expectations between cultures, for example, the acceptability of cohabitation.

**Figure 4: Percentage of live births within marriage/civil partnership, by country group of birth of mother, 2012**

Figure 4: Percentage of live births within marriage/civil partnership, by country group of birth of mother, 2012



Source: Office for National Statistics

**Notes:**

1. EU figures are based on the EU as constituted in 2012 for comparability. See background note 6 for a list of the 27 countries included.

## 10 . Live births to non-UK born women in the UK

The percentage of live births to non-UK born women in the UK is 24.7%. For comparison, Scotland is 14.5% and Northern Ireland is 12.5%.

## 11 . Users and uses of parents' country of birth statistics

The Office for National Statistics uses data on parents' country of birth to:

- report on social and demographic trends
- analyse recent trends in births to UK and foreign born women

The Home Office is a key user of birth statistics by parents' country of birth. Data are used, for example, to inform policy decisions and help to estimate the size of migrant communities. Other key users of the data are local authorities and other government departments who use the data to inform planning and resource allocation.

Other users include academics, demographers and health researchers who conduct research into trends and characteristics. Lobby groups use birth statistics by parents' country of birth to support their cause or campaign. For example, organisations supporting parents from black and minority ethnic groups' access to maternity services. The media also report on key trends and statistics.

## 12 . Planned changes to birth outputs

During May 2012 changes were made to the Population Statistics Act, which means that information on the number of previous children and whether previously married is now collected from all mothers at birth registration and not just from married women. This will have an impact on a number of tables and [proposals for changes \(66.2 Kb Pdf\)](#) to outputs for 2012 and 2013 data were outlined on the ONS website in July 2012. Feedback from users was invited. No feedback was received and so the outlined changes are being implemented.

Changes to the tables included within [Live Births by socio-economic status of father](#) have also been considered, including implementing [the combined method for deriving the National Statistics Socio-economic classification](#) (using the higher NS-SEC of both parents rather than the NS-SEC of the father). A [proposal for changes to outputs for 2012 data \(63.5 Kb Pdf\)](#) was published on the ONS website in February 2013. Feedback from users was invited. No feedback was received so the outlined changes will be implemented.

## 13. Further information

More detailed data on [live births by parents' country of birth \(558.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) are available on the ONS website.

A [Quality and Methodology Information note \(275.2 Kb Pdf\)](#) for births is available on the ONS website. Further information on data quality, legislation and procedures relating to births is available in [births metadata \(439.7 Kb Pdf\)](#).

Further [birth statistics for England and Wales](#) are available on the ONS website. Further 2012 birth statistics will be published later in 2013, see the [Publication Hub](#) for more details on releases.

[National Records of Scotland](#) provides statistics on births for Scotland.

[Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#) provides statistics on births in Northern Ireland.

International comparisons of live births are available in the [Vital Statistics: Population and Health Reference Tables](#).

Official international migration data are available in the [Migration Statistics Quarterly Report](#) on the ONS website.

## 14. References

ONS (2013a). [Migration Statistics Quarterly Report, August 2013](#).

ONS (2013b). [Migration Indicators Tool](#).

ONS (2012). [Childbearing of UK and Non-UK Born Women Living in the UK, 2011](#).

ONS (2011). [Polish people in the UK](#).

Toulemon, L (2004). [Fertility among immigrant women: new data, a new approach, Population and Societies, 400, INED, Paris](#).

Tromans N, Natamba E and Jefferies J (2009). [Have women born outside the UK driven the rise in UK births since 2001?](#) Population Trends 136, pp 28–42.

## 15. Background notes

1. Country of birth of mother is used for this analysis since this information is collected at birth registration, unlike ethnicity or migration history. Care is needed in interpretation as country of birth should not be used as a proxy for these variables. For example, not all women born outside the UK will be recent in-migrants. Similarly, the UK born will include the children of earlier in-migrants (the second and third generation).
2. Birth figures are based on births occurring in the data year, but incorporate a small number of late registrations from births occurring in the previous year.
3. The total fertility rate (TFR) is the average number of live children that a group of women would each bear if they experienced the age-specific fertility rates of the calendar year in question throughout their childbearing lifespan (ages 15 to 44). It provides a snapshot of the level of fertility in a particular year and does not necessarily represent the average number of children that a group of women will have over their lifetime.
4. The estimated TFRs for UK and non-UK born women have been produced using estimated populations from the Annual Population Survey (APS) for the denominators. The APS is a combined survey of households in Great Britain, comprising the Labour Force Survey (LFS) plus various sample boosts. These boosts increase the size of the sample, meaning that more robust estimates are available from the APS than from the main LFS. TFRs estimated using population denominators from household surveys may differ slightly from TFRs based on population estimates. This is because population denominators derived from the APS are produced before the mid-year population estimates are available. See notes to [Table 6 \(558.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) for more information. The 2012 TFRs are calculated using the 2012 APS dataset, while the 2011 TFRs are calculated using the 2011 APS dataset. Both datasets are weighted using 2011 mid-year population estimates and projections which were calculated prior to the availability of 2011 Census results. The APS datasets will be reweighted to take account of the revised population estimates following the 2011 Census. They are due to be published in 2014 and the TFRs by country of birth of mother back to 2004 will be revised once this has occurred.
5. Recently published figures for the overall TFR for England and Wales use population estimates revised following the 2011 Census results, whereas the UK born and non-UK born TFRs in this release use APS population data which have yet to be revised.
6. EU figures are based on the EU as constituted in 2012 for comparability.  
  
2007 - Romania, Bulgaria 2004 - Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia 1995 - Austria, Finland, Sweden 1986 - Portugal, Spain 1981 - Greece 1973 - Denmark, Ireland, UK 1958 - Belgium, France, (West) Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands
7. Live births to UK born mothers and non-UK born mothers do not sum to total live births because a small number of records do not have mother's country of birth stated. In 2012, there were 23 records where the mother's country of birth was not stated.
8. ONS intends to publish 2011 TFRs for women born in specified country groups based on population denominators from the 2011 Census during the next 12 months.

9. There is a large degree of comparability in birth statistics between countries within the UK. However, there are some differences although these are believed to have a negligible impact on the comparability of the statistics. These differences are outlined in the [Quality and Methodology Information \(275.2 Kb Pdf\)](#) document for births.
10. A list of the names of those given pre-publication access to the statistics and written commentary is available in [Pre-release Access List – Parents' Country of Birth 2012](#). The rules and principles which govern pre-release access are featured within the Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Order 2008.
11. Special extracts and tabulations of births data for England and Wales are available to order (subject to legal frameworks, disclosure control, resources and agreements of costs, where appropriate). Such enquiries should be made to:

Vital Statistics Outputs Branch Life Events and Population Sources Division Office for National Statistics  
Segensworth Road Titchfield Fareham Hampshire PO15 5RR

Tel: +44 (0)1329 444 110 E-mail: [vsob@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:vsob@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

The ONS charging policy is available on the ONS website.

12. We would welcome feedback on the content, format and relevance of this release. Please send feedback to the postal or email address above.
13. Follow ONS on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).
14. 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)

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs
- are well explained and readily accessible
- are produced according to sound methods
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed