

Article

International migration research, progress update: April 2026

An update on international migration methods and research to continuously improve admin-based migration estimates (ABMEs).

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1 . Overview of current migration statistics research

In November 2025, we published our work introducing new methods for estimating international migration for British nationals and EU+ nationals. These methods were adopted for the November 2025 long-term international migration (LTIM) publication. This marked a major milestone for us with LTIM no longer using any International Passenger Survey (IPS) data. This was the culmination of years of development and means that international migration estimates are no longer based on intentions to stay in or out of the UK as recorded on a survey. They are now based on observed behaviours within admin data.

While we have made significant improvements to our migration statistics over recent years, we are always working to improve our estimates, exploring the potential from new data sources and methods. This article provides an update on our current international migration research covering LTIM and other migration estimates.

We welcome feedback on our developing methods. Engaging with users is essential to our research, and your feedback helps ensure that our statistics best meet user needs.

2 . LTIM research and development

This section details all the research being undertaken to continuously improve our long-term international migration (LTIM) estimates. It is important to set these improvements in the wider context. Since 2019, our LTIM estimates have evolved from using the International Passenger Survey relying on respondents' migration intentions to using Home Office (HO) travel and visa data and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Registrations and Population Interaction data (RAPID). This has covered the main migration groups of non-EU visa holders, EU+ migrants and British nationals.

Our current research is exploring data and methods that will help us overcome previous data limitations covering groups that do not travel on visas or do not have matched arrival and departure data.

Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)

Indefinite Leave to Enter (ILE) and Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), commonly referred to as settlement, is an immigration status that grants individuals the right to live, work, and study in the UK on a permanent basis. It is separate to the EU Settlement Scheme which is included in LTIM. The right to apply for ILR is open to:

- those who work in the UK
- have family in the UK
- have lived in the UK (legally) for a set period of time defined by the HO
- [other individuals who meet specific eligibility criteria](#)

If an individual with ILR leaves the UK for over two continuous years they lose their ILR, with some exceptions. To re-enter the UK and regain ILR they must apply for a [Returning Resident visa](#). The Home Office Borders and Immigration (HOBI) data includes information about individuals with ILR and those who return on a returning resident visa.

Our current method for estimating long-term international migration of non-EU+ nationals only includes visa holders and is based on an individual's first arrival and last departure within the period their visa is valid. This is known as the first arrival, last departure (FALD) method. As ILR is granted for an indefinite period and has no end date, this method cannot be applied to individuals with ILR. We currently do not include the migration of non-EU+ nationals once they have obtained ILR in our current LTIM estimates. However, for individuals who originally arrived on a visa (such as family or work) their initial immigration into the UK is included in our estimates.

Home Office data shows that from 2022 to 2025, [between 120,000 and 160,000 grants of ILR were issued each year](#). For these grants, the individuals' initial immigration into the UK is included in our published estimates. Our assumption is that once ILR has been granted, the majority of these individuals will stay in the UK, given the time and cost associated with obtaining ILR. Our research is focused on the individuals who emigrate long-term from the UK, that is leave for 12 months or more, after obtaining ILR and any subsequent re-immigration.

There are a small number of individuals who enter the UK with immediate ILE/ILR. For example, Home Office data shows that from 2022 to 2025, [between 1,800 and 3,400 individuals were granted immediate ILE/ILR](#) under the family route each year and will therefore enter the UK with permanent leave status.

In November 2025, we implemented a method for estimating LTIM for those who hold EU Settled Status and therefore do not require visas. This method uses an individual's travel data to calculate time spent in and out of the UK. It groups extended trips into and out of the UK into a single travel period to assess their cumulative length of stay in and out of the country.

Our current research is to understand whether this same [cumulative length of stay method](#) can be applied to those who hold ILR to produce long-term immigration and emigration estimates for this group. We are working with the HO and migration experts to accurately identify and refine our assumptions in line with the migration policy for those with ILR.

In addition, we are assessing how our ILR methodology interacts with the [first arrival, last departure \(FALD\) method](#) used to calculate non-EU+ visa holder migration estimates. The focus of this will be to reduce the risk of double counting or missing cases within our LTIM estimates. We do not want to double count individuals where we see evidence of them immigrating on a visa, such as a work or study visa, and include them within our immigration estimates again when they get ILR. Additionally, we do not want to include individuals in our emigration estimates, at the end of their initial visa if they have obtained ILR.

Finally, as part of our research, we will be estimating migration of individuals with ILR from the point that an individual is granted ILR, up until the point they may go on to gain British citizenship. At the point of gaining British citizenship, they would be included in British national migration estimates.

Improvements to emigration

Our current LTIM method for emigrating EU+ and non-EU+ visa holders (FALD) uses a final departure date within a visa or multiple visas valid dates. For most emigrants, a final departure is present in the data. Where it is not, we currently assume that the person left at the end of their visa.

A missing departure in the data does not automatically mean a person has overstayed their visa and is still in the country. A departure may be missing because:

- it is not matched against an arrival by the system
- the person has died
- the departure was via the Common Travel Area
- dual nationals have used different documentation to enter and leave the UK

Some arrivals and departures may still be matched for the latter two categories.

We are researching two groups that do not have a final departure in the data, which the current LTIM method would be falsely emigrating. These groups are those who have made an in-country visa application after their previous leave expired and therefore have permission to stay in the country via 3C leave and those that have overstayed their visa.

In-country visa applications

3C leave is the period for which a person has permission to remain in the UK, after their previous permission to stay (usually via a visa and known as leave) has expired, and they are awaiting the decision on a new in-country visa application. Read more about 3C leave in [3C and 3D leave: caseworker guidance](#).

Our current LTIM methods generally emigrate individuals who have come to the end of their visa, unless they moved to a new visa. In some cases, those individuals have made in-country applications and retain permission to stay in the UK by 3C leave. Currently, we account for some of these people in our methods, but we also emigrate some who have 3C leave. This is more common in our provisional estimates, as normally new visas would be issued and identified in subsequent data cuts, meaning when we revise emigration estimates those people are correctly captured as being in the UK.

There is more we can do to avoid emigrating those who are between visas. We have been learning more about the indicators of 3C leave in the admin data and testing adjustments to the existing methods. We are working to update our current methods to include more indicators of 3C leave in the LTIM estimates to be published in May 2026.

Beyond May 2026, we will continue working with the HO to receive further indicators of 3C leave and adapt our processing to enable us to further improve and give a timelier estimate of emigration.

Overstayers

An overstay is someone who remains in the UK after their permission has expired. Determining who is an overstay is challenging. This is because of all the reasons previously discussed why a departure might not be in the available data and why some migrants can come to the end of their visa and be legally in the UK. This is because we are trying to evaluate if a missing departure is because of missing data or a genuine non-departure.

We are assessing HO data to try and develop a method to account for overstayers in LTIM emigration estimates. HO guidance states:

"Where an individual has been granted permission to enter or stay in the UK, they must comply with the conditions of that permission including, but not limited to, the timeframe any permission is valid for. Prior to the expiry of any extant permission an individual should either apply for further permission to stay or depart from the UK. Remaining in the UK after permission has expired is commonly known as overstaying". [Applications from overstayers Version 12.0, page 4 \(PDF, 206 KB\)](#).

British national time series by age and sex

In November 2025 we published British national LTIM using our new method based on the DWP RAPID. This generated new user needs for more information on the age and sex of British national migrants. In response to this we are developing a method to produce a time series for year ending (YE) December 2022 to YE December 2025 for British national immigration, emigration and net migration estimates by age and sex. This will be included in the LTIM May 2026 publication.

Estimating British nationals using travel data

Alongside our work to develop a British national migration estimate using DWP data (implemented in November 2025) we have also been researching if HO travel data can further improve estimates of migration flows of British nationals.

Research to date has confirmed that it is possible to identify British nationals and their migration patterns in this data. We will be creating experimental estimates based on time spent in and out of the country. This will include methods used by other national statistics institutes and the cumulative length of stay method used for estimating migration of those with EU settled status.

The first iteration of our research estimates has been created using an approximation of the [12/16-month rule used by Statistics New Zealand and the Australian Bureau of Statistics](#). These estimates are a starting point as we quality assess different methodologies using travel data to estimate British national migration. Early estimates are promising and show plausible migration trends.

In the historic dataset we have been working with, there are challenges in separating confirmed departures and check-in events. We will soon be evaluating an updated dataset that will hopefully mitigate some of these challenges. We are also exploring other HO data to improve and assess the overall quality of this work.

The current LTIM method has adjustments for coverage gaps in RAPID data, for example, children, young adults and older adults with limited interaction with the tax and benefits system. While HO data have coverage gaps for travel via the Common Travel Area (that is, crossing the Irish border), this research will explore the possibility of combining DWP RAPID and HO data to produce British national migration estimates with higher accuracy.

Re-arrivals adjustment for long-term migration

Current provisional LTIM estimates include all of those who arrive on a long-term visa who should be here for 12 months. Two adjustments are applied - one to immigration for a proportion of those who we assume will leave before 12 months (early leavers) and one to emigration for those who we assume will return to the UK before the 12-months end (re-arrivals). As estimates move from provisional to final, this adjustment is replaced by actual behaviour. While our adjustments using past behaviour offer good evidence for our adjustments, there are limitations as behaviours can change.

We are beginning research into improving our emigration re-arrival adjustment. Our research will evaluate if a similar approach to the immigration adjustment will reduce the scale of revisions between provisional and final estimates. We have carried out previous research into the immigration early leavers adjustment, as can be seen in our [International migration research, progress update: November 2024 article](#). The research has shown that applying an adjustment at a more granular level for example age, sex, and nationality, and using more current data can reduce bias and lead to smaller revisions between provisional and final estimates. We will investigate if this finding is also true when it comes to emigration and the re-arrivals adjustment.

Long-term migration uncertainty estimates

We are considering alternative estimates of uncertainty to the currently published uncertainty intervals. Since November 2023, we have published uncertainty intervals for LTIM estimates, which are a [simulation based approach](#). This approach focuses on quantifying uncertainty associated with adjustments and modelling in the estimation process. However, our simulation approach only considers uncertainty around the adjustments and not how data variability or step changes in the estimation process impact the stability of our estimates.

As an alternative, we have been researching the [variability of LTIM estimates with respect to their stability over time](#). Our research considers precocity error as a metric to estimate the difference between previously published estimates and the latest revised estimates. We are exploring how modelling revisions can provide information to users on the stability of current estimates, through predicting a likely revision range based on the trend and pattern of previous revisions. We regard these intervals as being more comprehensive as they incorporate and convey more information about the sources affecting the stability of estimates, compared with current published uncertainty intervals.

3 . Estimating unauthorised migration

This section details research on methods to estimate the flow and stock of unauthorised migration. Flow refers to the movement of people, for example, in and out of the UK, whereas stock refers to the total at a given point in time.

Method to estimate the flow of unauthorised migration

Long-term international migration (LTIM) does not include any estimation of unauthorised migration. Our research is focused on exploring Home Office (HO) data and keeping up to date with emerging academic methods. An unauthorised migrant is a person living in a country without legal permission to enter or remain there. The term "undocumented" is used interchangeably with unauthorised. People can become unauthorised in the UK in four main ways:

1. they come to the UK on a visa but stay after it expires, or their permission to stay is removed (this category is being explored as set out in the Overstay section)
2. they enter the UK without permission, or use false documents to enter the country
3. they remain in the UK after their asylum claim is refused and they have no more appeals
4. they are born in the UK to parents who do not have legal status, as being born in the UK does not automatically give someone citizenship or the right to remain

Research into estimating unauthorised immigration involves assessing and combining several HO data sources that cover the categories stated above. These include exploring data on the number of detected arrivals via illegal routes to the UK, people claiming asylum by route of entry and child citizenship and registration data. We are also exploring HO voluntary and involuntary returns data. See more in [HO's Immigration system statistics data tables](#).

Method to estimate the stock of unauthorised migration

Alongside exploring HO data, we are working closely with the Poznan University of Economics and Business, Poland who are developing a statistical framework for estimating the size of a country's unauthorised migrant population using aggregated admin data. The University of Southampton and The Migration Observatory, Oxford University are also providing advice and support.

A component of their approach is modelling detection data in Poland. We are exploring how UK detection data could be applied to this model. Observed counts of people detected while staying unlawfully represent an unknown fraction of the true unauthorised population.

After consultation with the [EU Measuring Irregular Migration Project \(MIRREM\) \(PDF 6.0 MB\)](#), this academic research is going through the process of seeking publication in an academic journal for evaluation. Expert academic feedback will be vital in determining the next steps of this research and if it has the potential to be developed for estimating UK unauthorised migration. This work aims to give a range of the potential level of unauthorised migrant stock in the UK which could improve population estimates but would not be an estimate that would be included in LTIM estimates (which estimates flow of migration).

4 . Estimating local authority level long-term international migration

Long-term international migration (LTIM) estimates broken down by Local Authority (LA) are an important input to population estimates and projections. They are produced using admin data that contain information on LA, age and sex to estimate how migration is distributed across local areas and demographic groups. As part of the continuous improvement of these statistics, we are focusing on better coverage and estimation for migration of children aged under 18 years and adults in higher education.

Child migration

Our current method for estimating LA, age, and sex distributions of child immigration and emigration relies on longitudinally linked data from the Personal Demographic Service (PDS). While the PDS offers valuable coverage of children registered with a GP, it misses emigration events for individuals who leave England and Wales without deregistering.

To address this, we are exploring alternative admin datasets and data linkages that may provide a more complete picture of child migration flows. The research will assess the coverage and quality of these alternative data and consider how they might complement or replace the existing PDSbased approach. This research is in very early stages of data exploration.

Adult student migration

The distribution of adult migration by LA, age and sex is primarily derived from Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Registration and Population Interaction Database (RAPID). Individuals who participate in both higher education and employment are captured in each dataset, which can result in the same person being counted twice.

To address this, the current method applies an adjustment to remove students in higher education who are also in employment. This approach has several limitations.

Firstly, since it relies on a three-year proportional average by LA and nationality derived from academic years 2015 to 2016, to 2017 to 2018, it cannot accommodate the boundary changes that occurred in Northern Ireland during this period.

Secondly, as the adjustment is not disaggregated by age and sex, the method is unable to reflect the age and sex distribution of working students within each local authority.

Finally, the method does not capture annual variation in adult student migration as it assumes the proportion of working students across LAs and nationalities is the same every year.

Our upcoming research will focus on developing an updated student adjustment method that addresses these limitations and better reflects year-on-year trends in adult student migration.

5 . Alternative definitions of migration

Alternative definitions of migration involve exploring new approaches to estimating alternative migration flows, to extend the coverage of existing statistics. This ensures that we analyse migration from multiple angles and avoid missing important aspects of population change.

International temporary mobility

International temporary mobility (ITM) refers to movements across international borders lasting less than 12 months for:

- study
- work
- healthcare
- asylum

ITM excludes:

- tourism
- visits to friends and family
- business trips

Unlike long-term migrants, who stay for a year or more, temporary migrants remain usual residents of their home country. They nonetheless contribute to the UK's temporary population and use local services, so understanding their scale is important for effective planning.

We have previously published statistics on ITM in our [Short-Term International Migration for England and Wales: year ending June 2019 bulletin](#), based on the International Passenger Survey (IPS). ITM was also captured in our [The changing picture of short-term international migration, England and Wales: Census 2021 article](#). These statistics were published as estimates of short-term international migration, with ITM reflecting an update to the terminology [recommended by the United Nations in their Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility \(PDF, 1,023 KB\)](#).

As with long-term international migration (LTIM), estimates of temporary mobility from the IPS were stopped because of [the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic and the disruption it caused to survey data collection](#).

Our research uses the same main administrative data source as for our LTIM estimates, that is Home Office Borders and Immigration Data (HOBID). Building on previously published work in our [Population and migration estimates - exploring alternative definitions: May 2023 article](#), we are continuing to investigate these data to develop a proof of concept and evaluate whether HOBID can replace previously published IPS based estimates.

Approach and methods in development

HOBID provides a record of travel events from both European Economic Area (EEA) countries and non-EEA countries, including information on individual visits and associated arrival and departure dates. For each person, we sequence each set of arrival and departure dates in chronological order, producing comprehensive travel histories. The travel histories are then used to calculate how long each person has stayed in the UK cumulatively, which could be across a single or a multiple number of visits. We do this for all visits that begin in a reference period, for example year ending December. This is done for all people, regardless of whether they hold a visa or do not require a visa to enter the UK.

For ITM, we focus on the following cumulative length of stay groups. These provide more detail than the [previous IPS estimates](#), and may allow us to see seasonal trends more clearly:

- 1 month up to 3 months
- 3 months up to 6 months
- 6 months up to 9 months
- 9 months up to 12 months

Many temporary migrants require only an [Electronic Travel Authorisation](#) (ETA) or a [Standard Visitor](#) visa to enter the UK. During their validity period, people can make multiple visits, each lasting up to 6 months. Visits can be made for a variety of purposes, and from the data we cannot identify the exact purpose of each visit. The UN Conceptual Framework for ITM defines tourism, visits to friends and family, and short business trips as out-of-scope. These types of visits are typically shorter, so we exclude individuals who stayed for less than one month in total from our analysis. This could help minimise the accidental inclusion of people visiting the UK for these out-of-scope reasons.

After isolating applicable visits, we remove any made by people identified as long-term international migrants and other long-term residents. We then produce population stocks by year and month, which count everyone present at a given time. Because ITM populations fluctuate daily, we calculate, for each cumulative length of stay group and for each day of the month, how many people were present. We then sum these daily counts and divide by the number of days in the month. This produces an average ITM stock for each month and each length of stay group, accounting for daily variation.

Essentially, the statistics provide a snapshot on the size of the temporary migrant population during each month of the year. We also produce supplementary flow statistics, including the month of first arrival and month of last departure.

Our current research

HOBID has strong potential for producing ITM estimates. Its detailed information on visits, including arrival and departure dates, makes it well suited to measuring how long individuals spend in the UK – an essential requirement for ITM statistics.

While we have made significant progress, several challenges remain, and we intend to work through these before publishing our findings. These challenges are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Some records have missing arrival or departure dates, because of this information not being captured. This can happen when people travel through the [Common Travel Area](#), for example, between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. A missing departure date can also reflect the fact of a person still being present in the UK. Currently we are only using records without missing information, which can introduce bias if the missingness is not random. We will investigate whether missing travel information can be imputed or adjusted for.

Disaggregating the estimates by subnational geography is challenging because HOBID does not record place of residence after a migrant has arrived in the UK. We will need to explore additional data sources and methods to produce ITM estimates for local authority areas, enabling their use in local planning.

There could be difficulty in fully aligning with the UN Conceptual Framework, because of not having everyone's reason for visiting the UK. We will investigate what we can do to try and address this limitation, and we will engage with users to see how important resolving this issue is to them.

The administrative data source used does not include detail on British nationals. As the work progresses, we will explore alternative data sources to capture this group, including British nationals who live abroad and come to the UK for periods of temporary mobility, and British nationals who live in the UK and go abroad for periods of temporary mobility.

6 . Estimating migration using cumulative length of stay

Increasingly we are using cumulative length of stay as a method to understand how long an international migrant spends in the UK. Admin data, specifically Home Office Borders and Immigration Data (HOBID), allow us to see when a migrant arrives in the UK, if they are likely still in the UK, and when they left. For each migrant we can use their visits to calculate how long they have spent in the UK cumulatively, which could be across a single or a multiple number of visits. Depending on the amount of time spent in the UK, we can set thresholds to capture long-term international migration, international temporary mobility, and very short trips made by tourists and business travellers.

This approach is particularly useful where individuals do not require a visa to stay in the UK. In this context, we do not have visa start and end dates to understand how long we might expect a migrant to stay. One example includes the [recent method change for those holding European Union \(EU\) Settled Status](#). By studying travel patterns and cumulative stays it was possible to understand how many people with EU Settled Status met the threshold to be categorised as long-term international migrants.

As described in this update, we are exploring cumulative length of stay to understand Indefinite Leave to Remain, British national migration, and International Temporary Mobility – topics covering people who often do not hold traditional visas. The admin data we are now using for international migration provide rich information on specific travel behaviours, and so it could be pertinent in future research to investigate wider applications of this cumulative length of stay approach.

7 . Research Maturity Framework

Our research is undertaken within a Research Maturity Framework. This framework breaks research down into distinct phases. This ensures we develop our research in a coherent way, considering all options and seeking advice from experts at the appropriate times. The activities here are a general illustration of the work we do at different phases of maturity and not an exhaustive list of everything we do.

Commissioning phase

Examples of activities include developing an understanding of requirements – who needs it and why, what must it deliver by when and how much effort is required.

Exploration phase

Examples of activities include innovation sessions, challenging assumptions, literature reviews, a short list of options, and asking if a new approach is needed.

Proof of concept phase

Examples of activities include a light touch development of options, an outline of methods, results, strengths and weaknesses, and gathering user feedback.

Development phase

Examples of activities include agreeing the strongest development path, producing the end-to-end design, building the beta version, stakeholder feedback, development of a quality assurance (QA) framework, writing a methods paper. This includes extensive internal and external quality assurance from independent panels.

Testing and validation phase

Examples of activities include dual running (where appropriate), stakeholder feedback, sensitivity analysis, and decision log and tree.

Productionise phase

Examples of activities include preparing code, pipelines and information to handover to the output team to apply the new method into published outputs.

The research in this update and their corresponding maturity phase (as of March 2026) is as follows:

- Indefinite Leave to Remain – development
- Overstayers – proof of concept
- British national time series by age and sex – testing and validation
- Estimating unauthorised migration – proof of concept
- Local authority level long-term international migration (LTIM): child migration – exploration
- Local authority level LTIM: adult student migration – exploration
- Measuring British national using travel data – proof of concept
- International temporary mobility – proof of concept

Improvements were implemented for completed research on the following dates:

- Adding migrants that have transitioned to a new visa – November 2024
- British national migration using Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Registrations and Population Interaction data (RAPID) data (no longer survey based) – November 2025
- EU+ migration using Home Office data (now using travel and visa data) – November 2025
- EU+ settled status migration (now using travel data) – November 2025

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8 . Glossary

Administrative data

Collections of data maintained for administrative reasons, for example, registrations, transactions, or record keeping. They are used for operational purposes, and their statistical use is secondary. These sources are typically managed by other government bodies.

British national

A British national is a person who holds a type of British (English, Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Irish) nationality. The six different types of British nationality are:

- British citizenship
- British overseas territories citizen
- British overseas citizen
- British subject
- British national (overseas)
- British protected person

For the purposes of our Registration and Population Interaction Database (RAPID)-based estimates, we have treated British national (overseas) as a separate category within the non-EU+ country grouping.

Common Travel Area (CTA)

The CTA is an administrative arrangement between the UK, Ireland and the Crown Dependencies (Isle of Man, Guernsey, and Jersey). The CTA was developed to facilitate the principle of free movement for British and Irish citizens between the UK, Ireland and the islands and to ensure that British and Irish citizens continued to benefit from a mutual enjoyment of rights. This means there are no routine immigration controls on routes from within the CTA to the UK, including the land border between Ireland and Northern Ireland.

EU and EU+

EU includes EU14, EU8, and EU2, plus Malta, Cyprus, and Croatia from 1 July 2013. British nationals are not included in these numbers at any point in time.

- EU2 is Romania and Bulgaria
- EU8 is Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia
- EU14 is Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden
- Other EU is Malta, Cyprus, and Croatia (joined from 2013)
- EU+ is all current EU countries, plus Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland

Home Office Borders and Immigration data

Home Office Borders and Immigration (HOBI) data combines data from different administrative sources to link an individual's travel in or out of the UK with their immigration history. This system has data for all non-European Economic Area (non-EEA) visa holders and EEA nationals.

International temporary mobility

International migrants who come to the United Kingdom for at least one month but less than 12 months for study, work, healthcare, and asylum and excluding tourism, visits to friends and family, and business trips.

Long-term international migration

Long-term international migration (LTIM) statistics estimate the flow, or movement, of migrants to and from the UK. This article uses the UN definition of a long-term international migrant, as explained in the [Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration paper \(PDF, 5MB\)](#). A long-term international migrant is defined as "A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence".

In this article, a long-term international immigrant refers to a person who has moved to the UK from abroad for a period of at least a year.

In this article, a long-term international emigrant refers to a person who has left the UK to go to another country for a period of at least a year.

Non-EU+

Non-EU+ is the sum of the rest of the world, including the rest of Europe, not included in the EU+ category. British nationals are excluded from these numbers.

Precocity error

Precocity error is interested in the stability of estimates when subject to revisions. As a quality metric it quantifies the difference between previously published estimates and latest available estimates.

Registration and Population Interaction Database

The Registration and Population Interaction Database (RAPID) is a database created by the Department for Work and Pensions. It provides a single coherent view of interactions across all benefits and earnings datasets for anyone with a National Insurance Number (NINo).

9 . Related links

[International migration research, progress update: February 2025](#)

Article | Released 26 February 2025

An update on international migration methods and research to further develop admin-based migration estimates (ABMEs).

[Long-term international migration, provisional: year ending June 2025](#)

Bulletin | Released 27 November 2025

Estimates of UK long-term international migration, year ending June 2012 to year ending June 2025. These are official statistics in development. Long-term refers to people entering or leaving the UK for a period of at least 12 months.

[Implementing new methods for estimating the international migration of EU+ nationals, progress update: November 2025](#)

Article | Released on 18 November 2025

Overview of new methods for estimating long-term migration of EU+ nationals using the Home Office Borders and Immigration (HOBI) data and revised time series for year ending June 2021 to December 2024.

[Implementing new methods for estimating the international migration of British nationals, progress update: November 2025](#)

Article | Released on 18 November 2025

Overview of new methods for estimating long-term migration of British nationals using the Registration and Population Interaction Database (RAPID) data and revised time series for the year ending June 2021 to December 2024.

[What is international migration and how do we estimate it?](#)

Article | Released on 18 November 2025

Estimating our population is complex. Find out what our migration statistics cover and how our methods are adapting to world events and changing trends.

10 . Cite this article

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 23 April 2026, ONS website, article, [International migration research, progress update: April 2026](#).