

Statistical bulletin

# Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality: 2019

Latest population estimates for the UK by country of birth and nationality, covering the period from 2004 to the year ending December 2019



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## Table of contents

1. [Other migration outputs in this release](#)
2. [Main points](#)
3. [Non-UK populations remain at similar levels to recent years](#)
4. [Non-UK populations vary across the UK](#)
5. [Measuring the data](#)
6. [Strengths and limitations](#)
7. [Related links](#)

# 1 . Other migration outputs in this release

Other international migration outputs released today (21 May 2020) can be found on the following pages:

- [Migration Statistics Quarterly Report: May 2020](#)
- [Short-Term International Migration for England and Wales: year ending June 2018](#)
- For related releases from other government departments, see [Related links](#).

The latest estimates reported in this bulletin relate to the year ending December 2019 and are unlikely to be affected by the recent developments with the coronavirus (COVID-19). For further information, please see the [Office for National Statistics' \(ONS'\) public statement on COVID-19 and the production of statistics](#).

## 2 . Main points

- In 2019, the non-UK-born population was 9.5 million and the non-British population was 6.2 million; the size of these populations has remained largely stable since 2017.
- The number of people with an EU nationality in 2019 remained broadly similar to 2018 levels, although there was a small increase in those holding EU2 nationality.
- India was the most common non-UK country of birth in 2019, with Poland the second most common country of birth; Polish has continued to be the most common non-British nationality in the UK since 2007.
- London remained the region with the largest proportion of non-UK-born and non-British populations in 2019.

## 3 . Non-UK populations remain at similar levels to recent years

Use caution when comparing population estimates by country of birth and nationality with administrative data. These estimates cannot be compared with figures from the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS). For more information, please see [Section 6](#): Strengths and limitations.

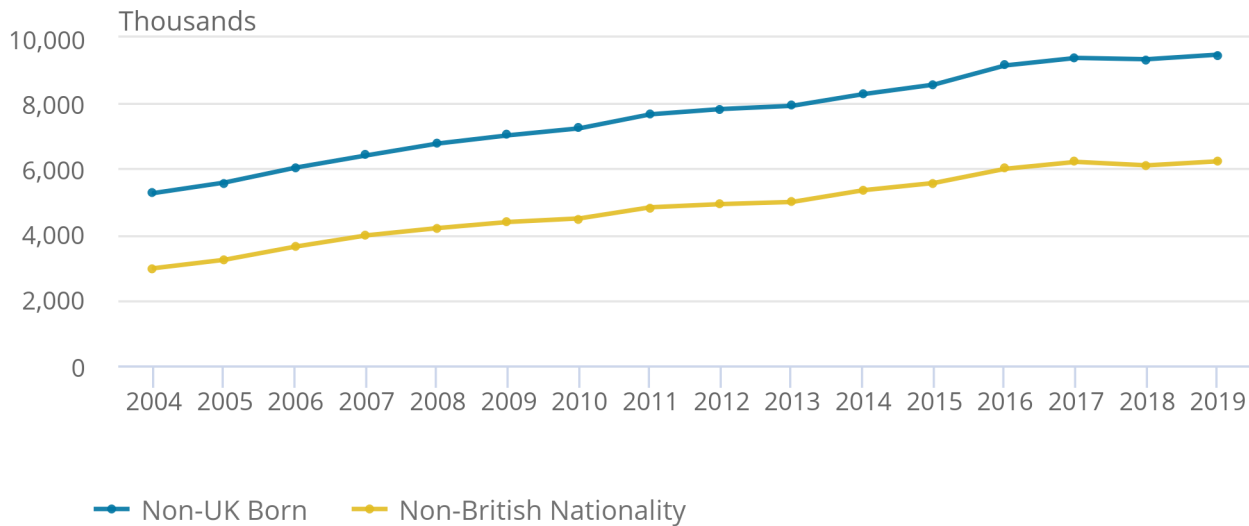
In 2019, the non-UK populations (non-UK-born and non-British nationals) of the UK remained at similar levels to those seen in 2018 and 2017 (Figure 1).

## Figure 1: Non-UK-born and non-British populations remained at similar levels to recent years

Estimates of the non-UK-born and non-British-resident population of the UK, 2004 to 2019

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Estimates of the non-UK-born and non-British-resident population of the UK, 2004 to 2019



Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

In 2019, the non-UK-born population was 9.5 million, with around one in seven of the UK population born abroad. The majority (62%) of these were born outside of the EU (5.9 million).

The non-British population was 6.2 million in 2019; around 1 in 11 of the UK population had a non-British nationality, and the majority (60%) of these held an EU nationality (3.7 million) (Table 1).

Table 1: Estimates of the resident population of the UK by country of birth and nationality, 2019

	Country of birth		Nationality	
	Estimate	Percentage	Estimate	Percentage
<b>All residents</b>	66,006	100	66,006	100
<b>UK born/ British National</b>	56,502	86	59,759	91
<b>Non-UK born/ Non-British National</b>	9,482	14	6,227	9
<b>EU27</b>	3,616	5	3,715	6
<b>EU14</b>	1,662	3	1,687	3
<b>EU8</b>	1,303	2	1,429	2
<b>EU2</b>	555	1	570	1
<b>Non-EU</b>	5,866	9	2,511	4
<b>Asia</b>	2,995	5	1,287	2
<b>Rest of the World</b>	2,492	4	1,008	2

Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

#### Notes

1. Estimates are in thousands. [Back to table](#)
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. [Back to table](#)
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. [Back to table](#)

In 2019, there were 3.7 million people resident in the UK who were born abroad and held British nationality. Non-EU-born people were more likely to hold British nationality (54%) than those born in the EU (15%) (Table 2).

Table 2: Country of birth of the resident population of the UK by nationality, 2019

Country of birth	Nationality		
	All	British	Non-British
All	66006	59759	6227
UK	56502	56031	467
Non-UK	9482	3721	5758
EU	3616	557	3059
Non-EU	5866	3164	2699

Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

#### Notes

1. Estimates are in thousands. [Back to table](#)
2. Totals may not sum because of rounding. [Back to table](#)
3. Non-UK country of birth estimates are the total of EU and non-EU estimates. [Back to table](#)

In 2019, the number of people with an EU nationality (3.7 million) was slightly greater than in 2018 (3.6 million). However, the total number of EU nationals in the UK continued to be below levels last seen in 2017 (3.8 million) (Figure 3).

This small increase in 2019 compared with 2018 can mainly be accounted for by those with EU2 nationalities (up 54,000). A similar pattern can be seen for those born in EU2 countries.

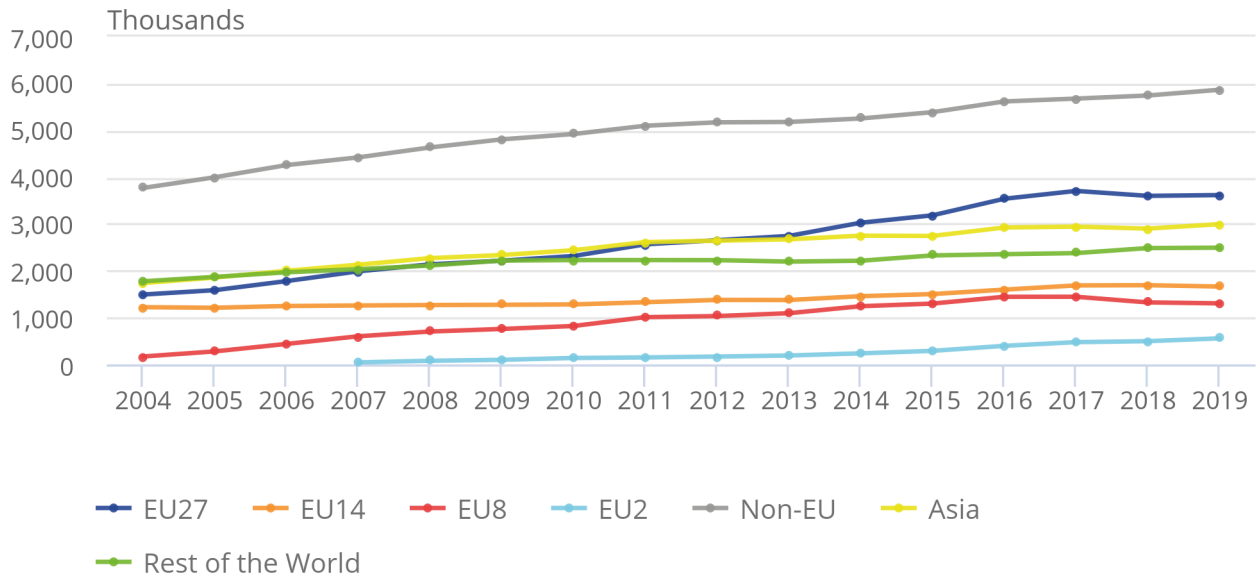
In 2019, the non-EU-born population was 5.9 million, and it has seen gradual increases since 2004 (Figure 2). The non-EU national population was 2.5 million in 2019, and it has remained relatively stable since 2008 (Figure 3).

**Figure 2: Non-EU-born population has seen gradual increases and EU-born population has stabilised over the last three years**

Estimates of the non-UK-born resident population of the UK by country of birth, 2004 to 2019

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Estimates of the non-UK-born resident population of the UK by country of birth, 2004 to 2019



Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

Notes:

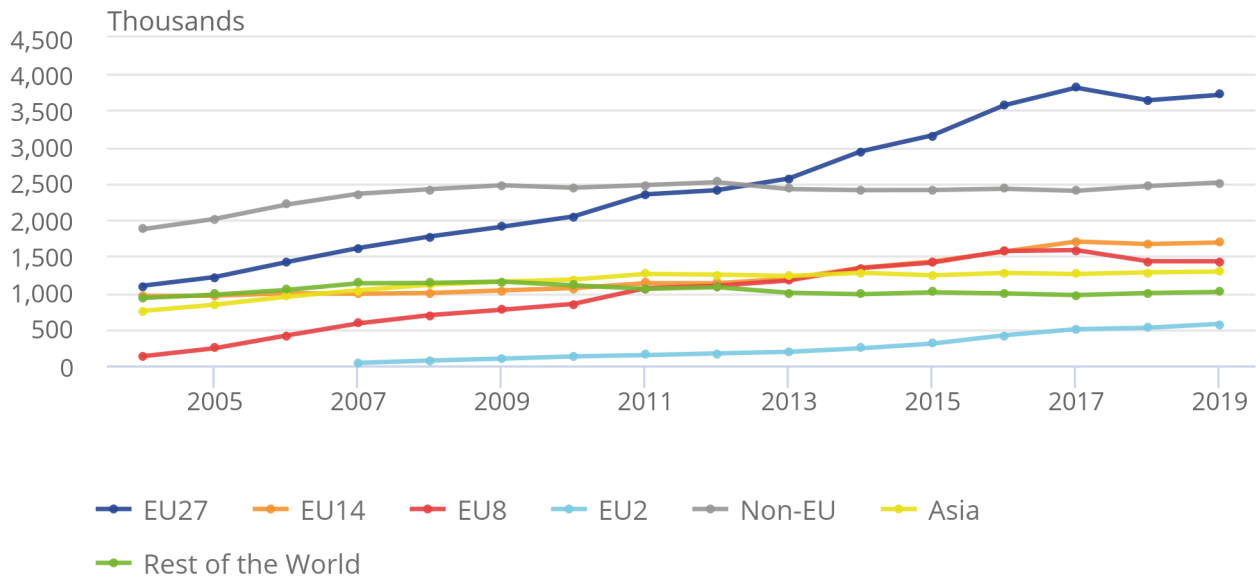
1. EU27 is the sum of EU14, EU8 and EU2, plus Malta, Cyprus and Croatia (from 1 July 2013). These three countries are not shown on the chart separately.
2. Non-EU is the sum of Asia, the Rest of the World and the rest of Europe. The rest of Europe grouping is not shown on the chart.

### Figure 3: Both non-EU and EU national populations remained broadly similar to 2018 levels

Estimates of the non-British resident population of the UK by nationality, 2004 to 2019

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Estimates of the non-British resident population of the UK by nationality, 2004 to 2019



Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

#### 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.

In 2019, India became the most common non-UK country of birth (863,000), with Poland as the second most common (818,000). This change was first noted using mid-year data in our [November 2019 statistical bulletin](#), and it continued to be the case using 2019 calendar data. This was the first time since 2015 that Poland was not the most common non-UK country of birth. However, Polish has continued to be the most common non-British nationality in the UK since 2007 (900,000).

When looking at year-on-year change, caution should be taken when comparing with international migration flows data. Our recent work on [understanding different migration data sources](#) shows our latest understanding on the coherence of these data sources and the steps we are taking to adjust our survey estimates.

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

## 4 . Non-UK populations vary across the UK

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

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

Percentage of non-UK-born and non-British national populations in Great Britain, by local authority, 2019

[Data download](#)

### London has the highest proportion of non-UK populations

In 2019, the largest proportion of non-UK populations were in London. The region saw the highest proportion of non-UK-born residents, at 37%, and non-British residents, at 22% (Figure 4).

As in 2018, there was one local authority where just over half of the population were born outside of the UK: Brent, at 52%. Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster, and Harrow all had just under half (49%) of the population not born in the UK.

Full details of definitions can be found in [International migration — terms, definitions and frequently asked questions](#).

## 5 . Measuring the data

Estimates of the population of the UK by country of birth and nationality are based on data from the [Annual Population Survey \(APS\)](#). The APS is a survey of households in the UK, so it does not include most communal establishments and will exclude non-UK students in halls of residence.

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.

We are transforming our migration statistics, making use of all available data to provide a richer and deeper understanding of migration. We have revised our approach for transformation because of the current situation around the coronavirus (COVID-19). More information is available in our latest update report on [population and migration statistics transformation](#) published on 21 May 2020.

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



## 6 . Strengths and limitations

The Annual Population Survey (APS) is a household survey and so does not cover most people living in communal establishments, some NHS accommodation, or students living in halls of residence who have non-UK-resident parents. As a result, the population totals used in APS estimates are not directly comparable with mid-year population estimates, which refer to the entire UK population. The APS is weighted to be representative by age, sex and region and as such has no control totals for country of birth and nationality. The APS sample frame also means there is a longer time lag.

All estimates produced are subject to sampling variability — [confidence intervals](#) are used as a measure of the precision of the estimate. As the number of people available in the sample gets smaller, the variability of the estimates that we can make from that sample size gets larger. Estimates for small groups, which are based on smaller subsets of the APS sample, are less reliable and tend to be more volatile than for larger aggregated groups. Therefore, users are advised to be cautious when drawing conclusions from estimates that are broken down to smaller groups, for example, by country, nationality, age or local authority.

### Caution comparing migration estimates from different survey sources

The APS is not designed to measure long-term international migration flows but does give insights into changes in our population. As part of our transformation programme, a number of differences have been identified when making comparisons between migration data from the APS, Labour Force Survey (LFS) and International Passenger Survey (IPS). Our report into the [coherence of migration data sources](#) discusses the differences in what each survey tells us about migration flows and provides a better understanding of the reasons for these in the wider context of our transformation work. The [adjusted Long-Term International Migration \(LTIM\) and IPS estimates](#) are our best available estimates of migration flows.

### Caution comparing population by country of birth and nationality estimates with administrative data sources

Not all data sources are comparable, and users should be aware of this before drawing any conclusions. As part of the [Government Statistical Service \(GSS\) Migration Statistics Transformation Programme](#), we are continuing to improve our understanding of how administrative data can be used to measure migration, the limitations of doing this and how different data sources compare.

Before drawing conclusions based on comparisons between different sources, users should carefully consider the coverage of each source (that is, all people, all people living in households and all applications for a specific service); the date to which the sources refer; and information about the quality of the source. In February 2020, we published an [article](#) outlining why the population estimates by country of birth and nationality cannot be directly compared to figures from the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS). For further information on the differences between these two datasets, please refer to this article.

## 7 . Related links

### [Transformation of the population and migration statistics system: overview](#)

Article | Updated 21 May 2020

Latest update on our population and migration statistics transformation journey.

### [Home Office, Immigration Statistics, year ending March 2020](#)

Web page | Released 21 May 2020

Quarterly and annual statistics relating to those: coming to the UK, extending their stay, gaining citizenship, applying for asylum, and being detained or removed, as well as immigration for work, study and family reasons.

### [Home Office, Migrant Journey 2019 report](#)

Report | Released 21 May 2020

This release is part of an annual series of publications that explore changes in migrants' visa and leave status within the UK's immigration system.

### [Home Office, EU Settlement Scheme statistics](#)

Collection | Updated 21 May 2020

This page brings together documents relating to published statistics on the EU Settlement Scheme.

### [Department for Work and Pensions, National Insurance number allocations to adult overseas nationals: January 2002 to March 2020](#)

Released | 21 May 2020

National Insurance number allocations to adult overseas nationals entering the UK to March 2020.

### [International migration statistics preliminary adjustments update and feedback: February 2020](#)

Article | Updated 27 February 2020

This background note provides an update of the progress with the preliminary adjustments for long-term international migration statistics so far and summarises our main areas for further research and development.

### [Note on the difference between ONS population estimates by nationality and Home Office European Union Settlement Scheme \(EUSS\) statistics](#)

Article | Released 24 February 2020

This note covers the comparison of Office for National Statistics (ONS) population estimates by nationality to European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS) applications data published by the Home Office. It explains why caution is needed in comparing these two sets of statistics and sets out what is happening within the ONS to improve our understanding of international migration.

### [Understanding different migration data sources: August 2019 progress report](#)

Article | Released 21 August 2019

Examines the issues with comparing the UK's various migration data sources. This is our follow-up report to explain the differences between these sources.

### [International migration -- table of contents](#)

Dataset | Released 21 May 2020

Tool to locate the datasets for all ONS international migration outputs.