

Article

Quarterly update on population and migration statistics: May 2025

Latest article on improvements to how we estimate UK population and migration, providing an update on our progress and plans.

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1 . Overview of population and migration statistics progress and plans

The UK Statistics Authority (the Authority) published their [Strategic business plan: April 2025 to March 2026](#) in April 2025. In-line with this, the clear priority for the Office for National Statistics is to continue publishing the core outputs required from us as the UK's national statistics institute and ensuring their quality. We will be streamlining our ad-hoc outputs to focus on publishing our regular population and migration statistics. Our priorities, identified in the Authority's business plan, are:

- official annual population estimates
- official migration statistics
- official demographic statistics and analysis
- official statistics on births and deaths, including the release of annual births and deaths statistics
- an assessment of the benefits of the 2021 Census
- the Authority's recommendation on the future of population and migration statistics

Our plans are shaped by ongoing feedback and discussions with our stakeholders, across various forums. This helps us to build strong relationships, capture a wide range of user needs, and stay responsive to evolving requirements. So that population and migration statistics are fit for purpose for our users, we will continue to ensure we meet the priority on effective engagement as set out in Professor Denise Lievesley's [Independent report on the 2025 UK Statistics Assembly](#).

2 . Admin-based population estimates

We will publish official population estimates for England and Wales in summer 2025. These will be the mid-year estimates (MYEs) for mid-2024, along with revised estimates for mid-2022 and mid-2023. The methodology will be unchanged from our last publication, as outlined in our [Population estimates for England and Wales, mid-2023: methods guide](#). We intend to reassess the criteria again in spring 2026, with the aim of the admin-based population estimates (ABPEs) becoming the official estimates of the population in summer 2026.

ABPEs will be the methodology used for official mid-year estimates in the future. Our intention for this year is to publish updated admin-based population estimates for mid-2022 to mid-2024. This is to inform users, allow comparison, and seek feedback as part of our transformation of population statistics. ABPEs do not currently replace official mid-year population estimates or international migration estimates. They should not be used for policy or decision making.

In January we published our [Criteria for moving to ABPEs as official estimates of population article](#). We would use these criteria to assess when ABPEs should be accepted as the official estimates for population estimates of England and Wales. Our progress, and where there is further work needed to meet some criteria, are described in our [Assessment of criteria](#) for moving to admin-based population estimates as official estimates of population article.

We are confident that these will be the best method for population estimates in the future. Comparisons between our current methodology and ABPEs, which use a population stock derived independently for each year from a wide range of administrative data, are discussed in our [ABPEs: local authority case studies, England and Wales, mid-2023 article](#). The ABPE methods balance the population stocks and flows over time, accounting for the uncertainty associated with them.

To ensure robust external assurance, we have now established a specific sub-group of the [Methodological Assurance Review Panel](#) to review the Dynamic Population Model, which is used to produce ABPEs. This expert panel will provide independent guidance on the methods used to produce official population estimates.

We are aware of the wide-ranging uses of population estimates. We are committed to working with users, particularly where there may be impacts on funding models at national and local level, as described in our updated [ABPEs, England and Wales engagement plan 2024 to 2025](#). We will offer support to analyse and understand the impact of changing methodology. Our work with selected local authorities continues to inform our understanding of local challenges and local data sources.

3 . International migration and decision on additional estimates that exclude students

We will publish our UK [long-term international migration, provisional estimates](#) for year ending (YE) December 2024 on 22 May 2025. The methods and data sources used for [EU+ and non-EU+](#) will be largely unchanged from our previous release in November 2024. These groups make up around 95% of total immigration to the UK.

Our International Passenger Survey (IPS) no longer collects arrivals information that we have used to estimate British national immigration until now. This means that an interim solution based on rolling IPS data forward will be used for estimating the smallest element of net migration: British nationals. We are continuing to work on new methods. When these have been fully quality assured, we will introduce them to replace this interim solution.

We will publish new provisional data for YE December 2024, as set out in Section 3: Regular revisions of our [Publication schedule for admin-based population and migration statistics](#). There will be regular revisions for YE June 2024 (first updated) and YE December 2023 (second updated).

Users will have a chance to hear more about the statistics due to be released on 22 May 2025 in our [The population in numbers – what's changing? webinar](#) on 3 June 2025.

Alongside the official net migration estimates, we will publish an update to our [Reason for international migration, international students update: November 2024 article](#)

To understand the user need for an additional estimate of international net migration excluding students, we also held a [detailed engagement exercise](#) held earlier this year. The exercise provided mixed feedback on the need for this additional estimate, highlighting some potential benefits but also a range of concerns around providing it. It also identified insights into other research topics on international students that would be most beneficial to users.

Therefore, we have decided not to publish an additional estimate of international net migration excluding students. We will focus on continuing to develop additional analysis relating to both students and other migrant groups. We will review how we can implement suggestions made by users in this engagement exercise.

We are also establishing a new [National Statistician's Advisory Panel](#) to provide independent advice on the quality and utility of migration statistics. Together with the new [Methodological Assurance Review Panel sub-group on Migration Statistics](#) and user group, we are confident that we will have the appropriate channels for expert external assurance and keeping users informed.

4 . Alternative populations

We are reassessing alternative definitions of the population. Our first aim is to produce population estimates for people living in an area for a period that does not result in a change of usual residence. Specifically, short-term or temporary residents are those living in an area for less than 12 months. We are investigating two kinds of short-term residents.

First, international temporary mobility refers to international migrants who are not counted in our definition of long-term international migration (LTIM) and stay in the UK for less than a year. Our proof of concept, using the same administrative data sources as LTIM, was published in our [Population and migration estimates – exploring alternative definitions: May 2023 article](#). We are building on this work by estimating the size of circular and repeat temporary migrants to the UK, and the difference this makes when they are included in the statistics. We are also exploring methods to disaggregate estimates by local authority.

Second, we are looking at usual residents who are temporarily living somewhere else within the UK. We are exploring which administrative data sources we can already access that might accurately reflect these short-term temporary moves. We may need to consider alternative data sources if these moves are not reflected accurately.

5 . Our plans for the next 12 months

Summer 2025

- Long-term international migration (LTIM) estimates will be released for year ending (YE) December 2024 on 22 May 2025.
- We will publish our official statistics in development in our [Reason for international migration, international students update: May 2025](#) on 22 May 2025.
- Our [Sub-national population projections: 2022-based](#) for England is provisionally scheduled to publish on 24 June 2025.
- We will publish our mid-2024 population estimates for England and Wales; this will include revisions to mid-2022 and mid-2023 estimates, as well as internal and international migration estimates.
- We will carry out research to develop the proof of concept for international temporary mobility and analysis, to see if short-term moves within the UK are captured in administrative data sources used for internal migration.
- We will continue to research data sources and methods for producing estimates of the population by country of birth and nationality, including our [Transformed Labour Force Survey \(TLFS\)](#).
- We are aiming to provide an update on how we are [improving our travel and tourism statistics](#) in mid-June; this will be published alongside our [Overseas travel and tourism, provisional estimates](#) for July to September and October to December 2024, released as official statistics in development.
- We will publish our [Census-based statistics: UK 2021 release in June or July 2025](#); this will be published alongside more detailed guidance to creating and comparing data across the UK, described in our [Combining and comparing census figures across the UK article](#).
- We will release the second version of the admin-based census into the Integrated Data Service (IDS) for researcher feedback, including indicators of ethnicity and veteran status.
- The Office for National Statistics's (ONS's) website will be gradually redesigned, resulting in improvements to the look and structure of our publications.

Autumn 2025

- We will release our long-term international migration (LTIM) for YE June 2025 in November 2025.
- We will publish a research article on estimating EU+ and British national migration, ahead of the release of LTIM statistics in November; this follows our update in [our International migration research, progress update: February 2025 article](#).
- We will publish small area estimates for 2023 and 2024 in September/October, using the same method as our previous [Population estimates by output areas, electoral, health and other geographies, England and Wales: rebased mid-2012 to mid-2020 bulletin](#); we will also revise our 2022 estimates in line with England and Wales estimates.
- We plan to publish a research paper on the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, following on from Census 2021.
- We will publish our [Household projections: 2022 based](#) in August to September 2025.
- We will publish our mid-2024 population estimates for the UK.
- We aim to communicate our plans for future cycles for national and subnational population projections and input data, based on user feedback to give users more clarity.
- We aim to update our response to the Office for Statistics Regulation's (OSR's) assessment of admin-based population estimates (ABPEs) by autumn, depending on progress with stakeholders.

Winter 2025/26

- We intend to publish provisional population estimates for mid- 2025, which provide an early indication and will be updated in Summer 2026.
- We are working towards accredited official statistics designation for our LTIM statistics, depending on progress with improving methods and data sources for EU+ and British nationals.
- We aim to publish a research paper that includes early estimates from the admin-based household estimates (ABHEs) by the end of 2025.

Spring 2026

- We will publish electoral statistics before May 2026, ensuring a coherent set of definitions.
- We intend to reassess the criteria, with the aim of ABPEs becoming official estimates in summer 2026.

6 . How to find out more

For updates on publications and events, including our planned new programme of webinars on population and migration statistics, please [sign up to our monthly newsletter](#).

We are committed to updating this article on a quarterly basis, as development and analysis progresses. This article supports our ongoing commitment to engage with users as we develop our outputs, in line with best practice for continuous improvement on statistical outputs. We will continue to engage with our users in a range of ways, such as bilateral conversations, user engagement groups, and conferences.

User feedback plays an essential part in our ability to improve our statistics. Please email pop.info@ons.gov.uk with any questions or feedback.

7 . Cite this article

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