

**Population by Country of Birth and
Nationality Estimates
Frequently Asked Questions**

August 2015

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1.0 What is being released and where can I find it?

1.1 What are the latest estimates released?

The latest available estimates, released on 27 August 2015, are for the period January 2014 to December 2014. Also released on 27 August 2015 are estimates for 12-month periods covering March 2000 to February 2004. On 2 July 2015, reweighted estimates for calendar years 2004 to 2013, based on results of the 2011 Census, were also released.

1.2 What is available?

Estimates derived from the Annual Population Survey (APS) provide data on the population by country of birth and nationality; available from 2004 at national and sub-national levels. Estimates for 2000 to 2003, derived from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), are also available.

1.3 Where can I find it?

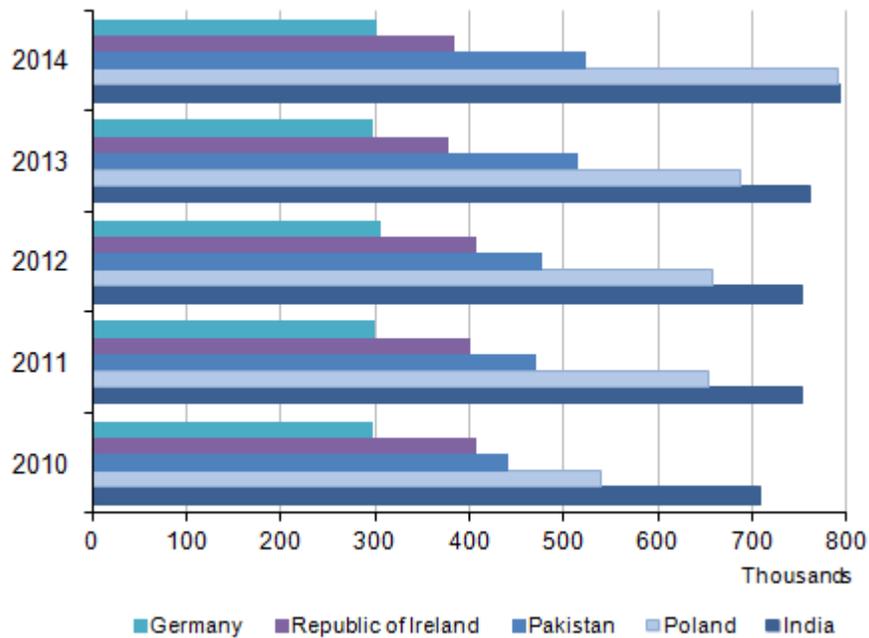
All estimates can be found in the data section on the [Population by Country of Birth and Nationality webpage](#).

2.0 Current trends of migration

2.1 What are the most common overseas countries of birth/nationalities resident in the UK?

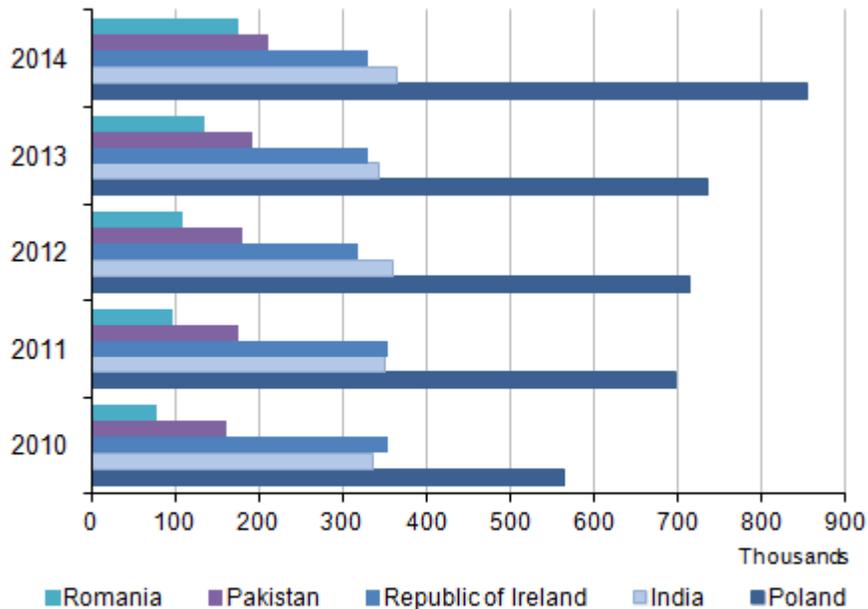
The latest data for year ending December 2014, show the most common non-UK country of birth was India (793,000 Indian-born residents), and the most common non-British nationality in the UK was Polish (853,000 Polish nationals). Figures 1 and 2 show the overall patterns for calendar years.

Figure 1: 5 most common non-UK countries of birth in the United Kingdom in 2014, calendar years 2010 to 2014



Source: Annual Population Survey (APS), ONS

Figure 2: 5 most common non-British nationalities in the United Kingdom in 2014, calendar years 2010 to 2014



Source: Annual Population Survey (APS), ONS

Romania is now the fifth most common non-British nationality in the UK. In 2013 Lithuania had

been the fifth most common.

2.2 Does being at the top of the country of birth and nationality tables indicate a recent large immigration into the UK?

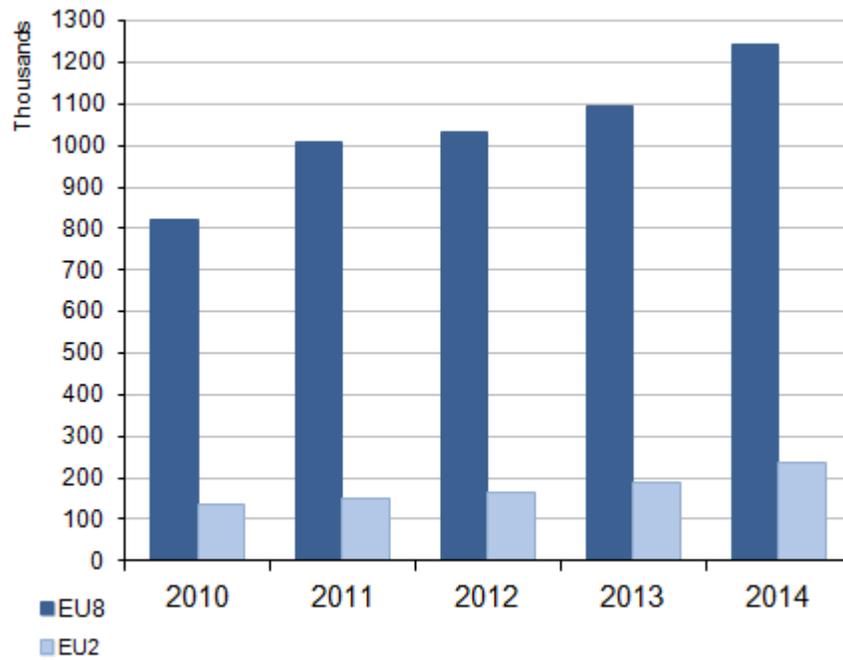
Not necessarily. These estimates provide an insight into the resident population of the UK by country of birth and nationality. Changes from one reference period to another reflect not only immigration, but also emigration and death.

2.3 How has the EU Accession impacted on the size of the migrant population in the UK?

For the year ending December 2014 there were an estimated 1,242,000 EU8 (Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia) born residents in the UK. This was an increase of 150,000 from year ending December 2013 (1,092,000). This increase is statistically significant.

A further two countries; Romania and Bulgaria (EU2), joined the EU on the 1 January 2007. Migrants from Bulgaria and Romania coming to the UK had been subject to transitional employment restrictions. These restrictions ended on 1 January 2014, which may have impacted on migration flows to the UK from Bulgaria and Romania. For the year ending December 2014, there are an estimated 235,000 Romanian and Bulgarian born residents in the UK. The margin of error (or confidence interval) surrounding this figure is +/-21,000. See [Section 4.2](#) for more information on confidence intervals. This represents a 24% increase of 46,000 residents since year ending December 2013 (189,000). This increase is statistically significant. Figure 3 shows the overall patterns for calendar years.

Figure 3: EU Accession population resident in United Kingdom, by country of birth, calendar years 2010 to 2014

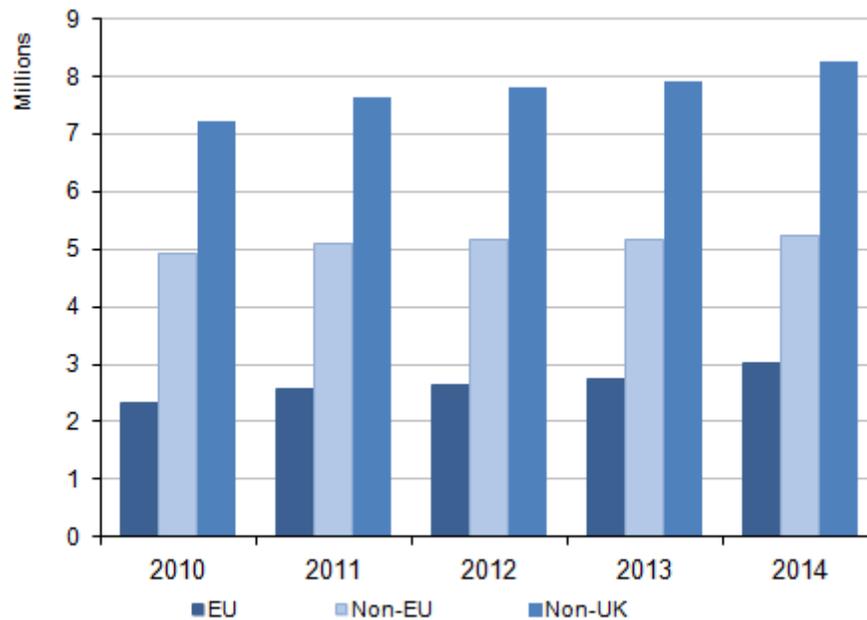


Source: Annual Population Survey (APS), ONS

2.4 What proportion of the population was born outside the UK?

Latest figures for year ending December 2014 show the number of UK residents who were born abroad was 8.3 million. This accounts for 13% of the current UK resident population as recorded by the APS and represents an increase of 3.0 million since 2004. A total of 5.3 million came from outside the EU and the remaining 3.0 million from within the EU.

Figure 4: Non-UK born population resident in the United Kingdom, calendar years 2010 to 2014



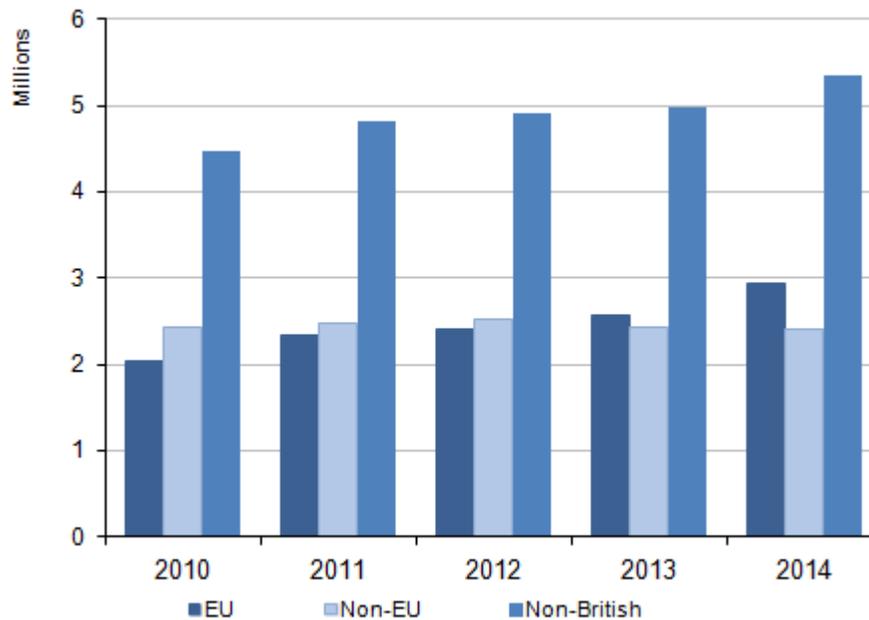
Source: Annual Population Survey (APS), ONS

Please note that non-UK born is the sum of EU born and non-EU born.

2.5 What proportion of the population are non-British nationals?

Latest figures for year ending December 2014 show the number of UK residents who are non-British nationals was 5.3 million. This accounts for 8% of the current UK resident population as recorded by the APS and represents an increase of 2.4 million since 2004. A total of 2.4 million are nationals of countries outside of the EU, and 2.9 million are nationals of countries within the EU.

Figure 5: Non-British national population resident in the United Kingdom, calendar years 2010 to 2014



Source: Annual Population Survey (APS), ONS

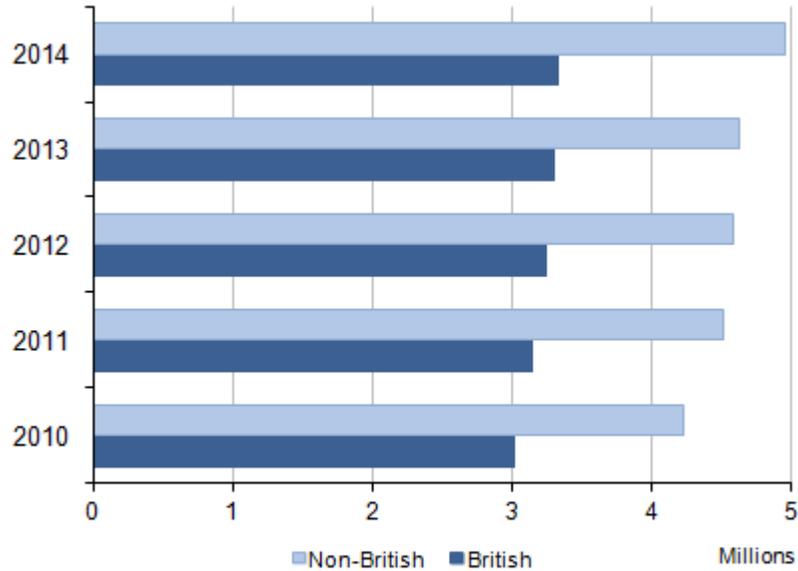
Please note that Non-British nationals are the sum of EU nationals and non-EU nationals.

It should be noted that calendar year 2014 is the second year in a row where the number of EU nationals resident in the UK is higher than the number of non-EU nationals. Prior to 2013 this had not occurred since the APS began in 2004.

2.6 How many UK residents with a non-UK country of birth have British nationality?

In 2014 there were 3.3 million British nationals whose country of birth was outside the UK. This represents 40% of the non-UK born population in the UK. It should be noted that this estimate will include both those that have moved to the UK and applied to become British nationals, as well as those that were born abroad but had British nationality at birth (for example people whose parents were in the military services and were based abroad when they were born).

Figure 6: Nationality of non-UK born residents in the United Kingdom, calendar years 2010 to 2014



Source: Annual Population Survey (APS), ONS

3.0 Definitions, methods and coverage

3.1 What are these estimates based on?

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a survey of households living at private addresses in the UK. Its purpose is to provide information on the UK labour market but it also includes other variables, such as country of birth and nationality that can be used to produce these estimates. The APS combines results from the LFS and the English, Welsh and Scottish Labour Force Survey boosts.

Each quarter's LFS sample of 40,000 households is made up from 5 "waves", each of approximately 8,000 households. Each wave is interviewed in 5 successive quarters, such that in any 1 quarter, 1 wave will be receiving their first interview, 1 wave their second and so on, with 1 wave receiving their fifth and final interview. Interviews from waves 1 and 5 are included in the APS so that there is no sample overlap.

In some areas of the UK the boost makes up the bulk of the APS dataset, with a smaller contribution from the main LFS. The boost has a 4 year wave structure instead of the 5 quarter wave structure in the main LFS; after the initial interview, sampled households are interviewed 3 more times on an annual basis. Therefore the boost for these areas may be slower to react to a change in migration patterns than the main LFS and the speed with which the APS sample responds to changes in the household population may vary across the UK.

APS datasets are produced quarterly with each dataset containing 12 months of data. There are approximately 320,000 persons per dataset. More robust estimates are available from the APS than from the main LFS.

3.2 Is the whole population sampled by the Annual Population Survey (APS)?

The LFS and the APS are household surveys. As such they do not cover most people living in communal establishments, some NHS accommodation, or students living in halls of residence who have non-UK resident parents. For a more comprehensive estimate of the population, please refer to ONS' [mid-year population estimates](#).

3.3 What is the difference between nationality and country of birth?

Nationality refers to that stated by the respondent during the interview. Country of birth is the country in which they were born. It is possible that an individual's nationality may change, but the respondent's country of birth will always remain the same. This means that country of birth gives a more robust estimate of change over time.

There are 2 main reasons for differences between nationality and country of birth:

- a) As those born abroad remain in the UK they often apply to become British nationals.
- b) Some people born abroad have British nationality at birth. For example, this may be the case for people whose parents were in the military services and were based abroad when they were born.

3.4 How do these data relate to estimates of Long-term International Migration?

Estimates of the UK population by country of birth and nationality are not directly comparable to estimates of long-term international migration. This is mainly because of the definitional differences between the two surveys used to estimate migrant flows (International Passenger Survey, IPS) and the foreign resident population (Annual Population Survey, APS).

A discussion on the differences between international migration data from the LFS/APS and IPS/LTIM can be found in the report: '[Estimating International Migration: An exploration of the definitional differences between the Labour Force Survey, Annual Population Survey, International Passenger Survey and Long-Term International Migration](#)' which is available on the Office for National Statistics website.

3.5 How do these data relate to the population estimates?

The mid-year population estimates (MYEs) do not contain a breakdown of the population by country of birth or nationality, but are used to weight the APS sample results to produce estimates of the household population.

The MYEs cover the usually resident population; namely those who have lived in the UK for 12 months or more and includes those in communal establishments, whereas the APS does not include those in communal establishments and includes those who have been here for less than 12 months. The MYEs are point in time estimates, whilst the APS is an annual rolling quarterly estimate based on the Labour Force Survey. For these reasons the sum of those born in the UK and outside the UK may not agree with the MYEs.

3.6 Have all the published tables been revised according to the latest mid-year population estimates?

In October 2014 and March 2015 respectively the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey (APS) were reweighted based on results of the 2011 Census. In July 2015 ONS released [reweighted datasets for calendar years 2004 to 2013](#). In August 2015 a [research report](#) was published comparing the pre- and post-reweighted data and how it has affected the estimate of the population of the UK. The reweighting exercise led to an increase in the estimate of the population of the UK between 2004 and 2013 of 538,000.

3.7 Have results from the 2011 Census been compared to the country of birth and nationality publication?

It is important to note that all figures contained in the population by country of birth and nationality publication refer to estimates from the APS and do not refer to any data collected as part of the 2011 Census. However, ONS have released a report on [detailed country of birth and nationality analysis from the 2011 Census of England and Wales](#). Findings from this report are similar to findings from the APS data. The census report stated that 13.0% of the usually resident population of England and Wales was born abroad, and 7.4% were non-British nationals. It also stated that the most common non-British nationality is Polish.

Further data from the 2011 Census is available on the [Census Data](#) section of the ONS website.

3.8 Have any provisions been made for migrants staying illegally?

Anyone who enters or stays in the UK illegally may not be sampled by the Labour Force Survey

(LFS)/Annual Population Survey (APS) unless they opt to take part upon being approached. However, the survey does not ask information on the respondent's legal status so therefore we do not hold statistics on illegal migrants. No government has ever been able to produce an accurate figure for the number of people who are in the country illegally.

By its very nature it is impossible to quantify accurately the number of people who are in the country illegally. For this reason ONS does not produce estimates on the size of the illegal migrant population. In June 2005, the Home Office published the outcome of an assessment of whether methods used in other countries to estimate the size of the illegal population could be applied to the UK. The outcome estimated that the total unauthorised migrant population living in the UK in 2001 was 430,000. Please see the following reports for more information: [29/05 - Sizing the unauthorised \(illegal\) migrant population in the United Kingdom](#) and [58/04 - Sizing the illegally resident population in the UK](#).

A more recent report has been written by the London School of Economics, "[Economic impact on the London and UK economy of an earned regularisation of irregular migrants to the UK](#)", which estimates that in 2007 the number of "irregular" migrants was 533,000.

3.9 What measures are available on estimating the legally resident population?

The APS provides data on the population by country of birth and nationality of the UK resident population, but information on the current immigration status of the population is not available. [Immigration statistics](#), which provide information on applications to live, work, and study in the UK are published by the Home Office, however there is no information available on whether those granted visas are resident in the UK. Therefore, there is no measure that directly records the legally resident population.

3.10 How does the size of the migrant population compare to other countries?

For information on other countries in the European Union please see the [Eurostat](#) website.

3.11 Do you have data on the numbers of UK migrants living abroad?

No. The data published contain estimates of the UK population broken down by country of birth and nationality.

For more information about UK migrants abroad, please see the IPPR Report; '[Brits Abroad: Mapping the scale and nature of British emigration](#)'.

Alternatively, for information on other countries in the European Union please visit the [Eurostat](#)

website.

4.0 Reliability

4.1 Why should the public have confidence in these population estimates by country of birth and nationality?

The Annual Population Survey (APS) is the largest household survey in the UK (other than the Census and Census Coverage Survey), and is the most reliable source of data on the UK population when split by country of birth and nationality.

The estimates published are deemed 'National Statistics'. They are produced in accordance with the [National Statistics Code of Practice](#), the principles of which can be found on the UK Statistics Authority website.

4.2 How robust are these estimates? What are confidence intervals and standard errors?

A confidence interval provides an estimated range of values in which an actual data value is likely to fall. The confidence interval provided is a 95% interval. This means that, across the dataset as a whole, the confidence intervals are expected to contain the true values around 95% of the time.

Previously, standard error and the coefficient of variation expressed as a percentage had been used to indicate the reliability of the estimates. Confidence intervals and standard errors are mathematically related. It is obtained as: $1.96 \times$ standard error.

4.3 Why are methods of disclosure control and data suppression used?

Cells in a table based on a small number of respondents are more likely to breach confidentiality. The same cells are also likely to be unreliable. Confidentiality protection is provided by releasing only weighted estimates and by suppressing the values for unsafe cells. Information on the exact number of sample respondents is restricted.

The effect of disclosure control on the quality of data that can be released is very small because data that is disclosive is generally also of low quality. Footnotes are supplied to advise users to be cautious when making inferences from estimates with large confidence intervals.

5.0 Data availability and future publications

5.1 How do I obtain data for previous years that are not currently published on the international migration landing page?

The data section of the [population by country of birth and nationality webpage](#) has estimates for calendar years January to December 2004 to 2014, based on the Annual Population Survey, as well as estimates for 12-month periods covering March 2000 to February 2004, based on the Labour Force Survey.

To obtain data prior to 2000 please contact the Labour Force Survey (LFS) data service (socialsurveys@ons.gsi.gov.uk) who can assist with time series requests.

5.2 How often are the Annual Population Survey (APS) data published, and what is published?

ONS consulted on several aspects of our [international migration outputs](#), including the publication frequency of the Population by Country of Birth and Nationality tables. As a result, the publication has been moved to an annual publication accompanied by a statistical report. Table 1 below shows the timeframe for planned publications.

Table 1: Release dates of Population by Country of Birth and Nationality tables

Release date	APS data to be released
27 August 2015	January 2014 to December 2014 March 2000 to February 2001 March 2001 to February 2002 March 2002 to February 2003 March 2003 to February 2004
25 August 2016	January 2015 to December 2015

The latest release, for calendar year 2014, provides more detail in the publication tables than previously available. The following additional information is now provided:

- Estimates based on residents aged 16 to 64 by UK, country, region of England, and local authority
- Estimates for the EU2 grouping (Bulgaria and Romania) included in tables by UK, country, region of England, and local authority
- Estimates for all 348 local authorities in England and Wales
- Estimates by sex for the 60 most common non-UK countries of birth and non-British nationalities

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- Estimates of non-UK born residents by main reason for migration to the UK
 - Estimates of the top 60 most common non-UK countries of birth by nationality held, and top 60 most common non-British nationalities by country of birth

5.3 Is it possible to obtain a further breakdown of data?

From the August 2012 release onwards, accompanying the published tables, ONS have released underlying datasheets that are used to produce the Population by Country of Birth and Nationality tables. These datasheets provide data on UK residents broken down by country of birth and nationality to a lower geographical level. This consists of UK regions, counties, London boroughs, metropolitan districts, unitary authorities, and non-metropolitan districts. These data are often less robust, but are accompanied by relevant footnotes to explain the limitations of the data. The datasheets can be accessed from the [Country of Birth and Nationality webpage](#).

Further breakdowns, by age for example, are not published on the website. To obtain these data please contact migstatsunit@ons.gov.uk providing details of the data you require; stating the variables, breakdowns, groupings, and time period, along with its intended use.

Providing this information will ensure that we are in the best position to deal with your request effectively.

More complex requests may incur a charge, but please contact migstatsunit@ons.gov.uk for further information about this.

5.4 The country I am looking for does not appear in the most common countries of birth and nationalities tables

As mentioned above, ONS now release underlying datasheets that are used to produce the published tables, which will enable users to view data for countries that do not appear in the most common countries of birth and nationality tables.

6.0 Relevant links

[International Migration Theme Page](#)

[EU8 Migration to the UK since Accession](#)

[Internal Migration](#)

[Population Estimates](#)

[Improving Migration and Population Statistics](#)

[Consultation on International Migration Statistical Outputs Response](#)

[2011 Census](#)