

# Births in England and Wales by Parents' Country of Birth, 2011



Coverage: **England and Wales**

Date: **30 August 2012**

Geographical Area: **Local Authority and County**

Theme: **Population**

## Key Findings

- A quarter of births (25.5 per cent) in 2011 were to mothers born outside the UK which was a slight increase from 2010 (25.1 per cent).
- The Total Fertility Rate for UK born women has risen slightly to 1.90 in 2011 compared with 1.88 in 2010.
- The Total Fertility Rate for non-UK born women has fallen to 2.29 in 2011 compared with 2.45 in 2010.
- Poland remains the most common country of birth for non-UK born mothers in 2011.
- Lithuania and China moved into the top ten most common countries of origin for non-UK born mothers, replacing Ghana and Sri Lanka, in 2011.
- Pakistan remains the most common country of birth for non-UK born fathers in 2011.
- Newham remains the local authority with the highest proportion of births to non-UK born women (77.0 per cent) in 2011.

## Summary

This bulletin presents statistics on live births in England and Wales in 2011 by parents' country of birth. In particular, it reports the ten most common countries of birth for non-UK born mothers and fathers, the age of mothers by country of birth as well as estimated Total Fertility Rates 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 births registration data which include all live births occurring in England and Wales in each year.

This is the first time that 2011 annual detailed statistics on parents' country of birth in England and Wales 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 [first release of births data](#) in July 2012.

## Live Births to UK and Non-UK Born Women

The total number of live births in England and Wales rose slightly to 723,913 compared with 723,165 in 2010 (an increase of 0.1 per cent). This increase in births resulted solely from a rise in births to non-UK born mothers (2,702 more in 2011 than in 2010), as births to UK born mothers fell (1,957 fewer in 2011).

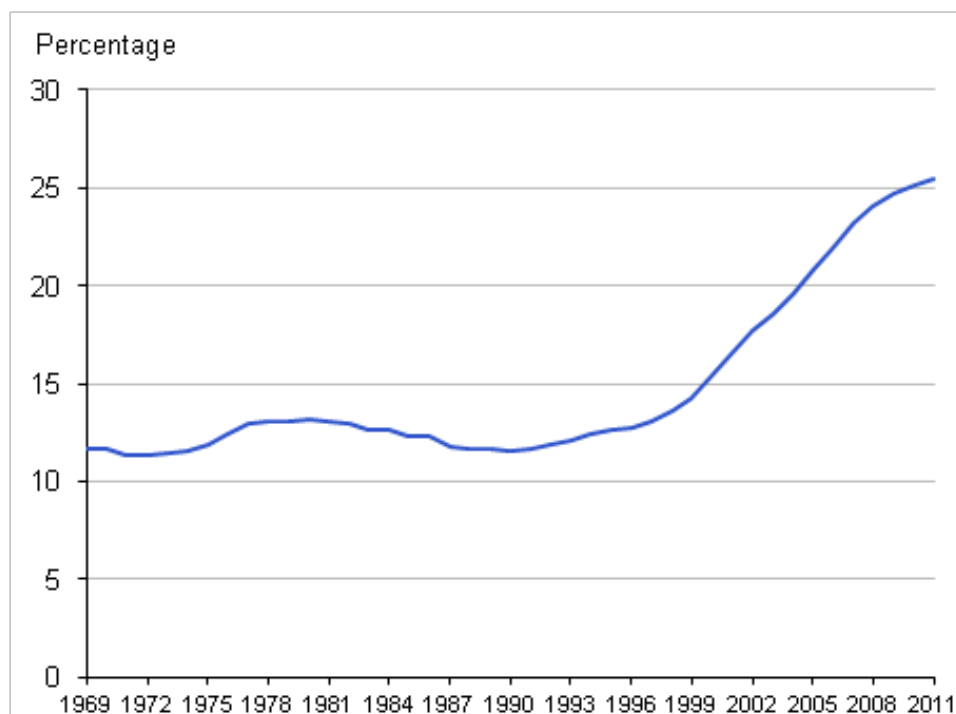
The number of births to UK born mothers decreased slightly by 0.4 per cent from 541,321 in 2010 to 539,364 in 2011. In contrast, the number of births to non-UK born mothers increased by 1.5 percent from 181,827 in 2010 to 184,529 in 2011 (see background note 8). Consequently, births to non-UK born mothers accounted for 25.5 per cent of all live births in 2011, compared with 25.1 per cent in 2010.

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 (see Figure 1). This proportion has increased every year since 1990, when it was just under 12 per cent, with a marked rise over the last decade. In 2001 the proportion of births to non-UK born mothers was 16.5 per cent.

The slight fall in the number of births to UK born women is a reversal of the previous trend of rising numbers of births to UK born women since 2002 (490,711 live births) although there was a small decline between 2008 and 2009. 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 child-bearing age (15 to 44) fell by 1.7 per cent between 2010 and 2011 while the population of foreign born women of child-bearing age rose by 7.2 per cent. If the number of non-UK born women of child-bearing age who are living in England and Wales has increased, then it is also likely that the number of births to these women will have increased.

**Figure 1: Percentage of live births in England and Wales to mothers born outside the United Kingdom, 1969–2011**



Source: Office for National Statistics

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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 1960s 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](#)).

### Estimated Fertility Rates for UK and Non-UK Born Women

In 2011 the estimated Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in England and Wales (see background notes 3 and 5) 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 2011.

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 2011 the proportion of women of childbearing age who were born outside the UK grew from 13 per cent to 19 per cent. 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.

The majority of women of childbearing age living in England and Wales were born in the UK (81 per cent in 2011, down from 82 per cent in 2010). Therefore UK born women make the largest contribution to the overall TFR. By comparing the overall provisional TFR of 1.98 in 2011 (see background note 4) with the TFR for women born in the UK (1.90), it can be inferred that the overall TFR was 0.08 higher than it would be without the contribution of non-UK born women.

The TFR depends on the female population of childbearing age and the number of births. The TFR for UK born women rose from 1.88 in 2010 to 1.90 in 2011. This is because the number of births to UK born women only fell slightly (0.4 per cent) in comparison to the decrease in the UK born female population of childbearing age (1.7 per cent).

Overall, the estimated TFR for women born in the UK increased from 1.69 in 2004 to 1.90 in 2011. This is in line with the trend for the overall TFR for all women living in England and Wales, which rose from 1.78 to 1.98 over the same period. In contrast, the estimated TFR for women born outside the UK decreased from 2.54 in 2007 to 2.29 in 2011 after small fluctuations from 2.50 in 2004.

The number of births to non-UK born women has been increasing but the non-UK born female population of childbearing age has increased at a higher rate, which explains why the estimated TFR has decreased.

The diverse fertility levels of migrants from different countries of birth are important when analysing the impact of migration on fertility in recent years. Fertility rates for individual countries are only available for census years (see background note 9). Rates based on the 2001 Census for England and Wales (see [Table 5: Total fertility rates: country of birth of mother, 1991 and 2001 \(560.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)) show that women born in certain countries tend to have higher fertility than others.

For example, the TFR for UK born women in 2001 was 1.6 children per woman, compared with 4.7 for women born in Pakistan and 3.9 for women born in Bangladesh. In contrast some countries have rates closer to those of women born in the UK; these include women born in EU countries, East Africa, old Commonwealth countries, China and Hong Kong ([Dunnell, 2007](#)).

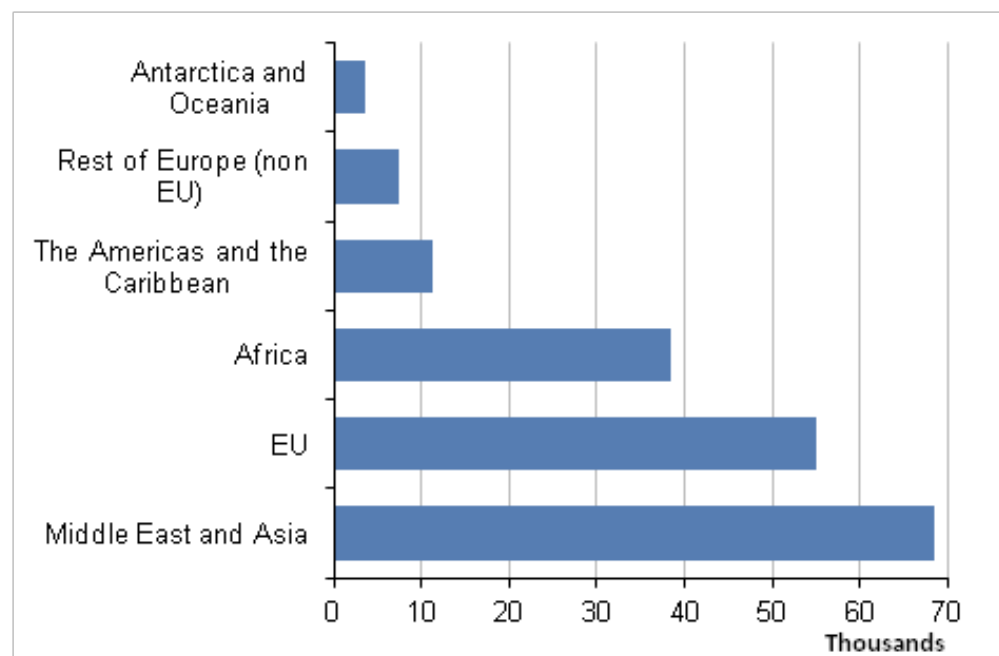
## Country of Birth of Foreign Born Mothers

In England and Wales in 2011, births to mothers born in the European Union (EU), excluding the UK, represented 7.6 per cent of all live births. Births to mothers born in one of the 12 countries that have joined the EU since April 2004 represented the majority of these births (5.1 per cent of all live births). Mothers born in the Middle East and Asia contributed 9.5 per cent of all live births while mothers born in Africa contributed 5.3 per cent.

In 2011, Poland, Pakistan and India were the three most common countries of birth for non-UK born mothers. 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 first appeared in the top 10 most common countries of birth for non-UK born mothers in 2005 when it was ninth. In 2001 there were 896 live births in England and Wales to Polish born mothers, compared with 1,830 in 2004 when Poland joined the EU and 20,495 in 2011.

**Figure 2: Number of live births in England and Wales to mothers born outside the United Kingdom, by country group, 2011**



Source: Office for National Statistics

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Between the year ending December 2003 and the year ending December 2011 the estimated Polish born population of the UK increased from 75,000 ([ONS, 2011a](#)) to 643,000 ([ONS, 2012a](#)). The age-sex structure of the foreign born population will impact on the number of babies born to foreign born women.

There are no recent published estimates available of the population of childbearing age by country of birth. However, of the Polish-born population in the UK in the year ending December 2010, 86 per cent were aged 16 to 64 ([ONS, 2011a](#)), compared with the mid-2010 estimate of 65 per cent of the UK population as a whole ([ONS, 2011b](#)). This situation is very different from 2003, before Poland joined the EU, when only 55 per cent of Polish-born people in the UK were aged 16 to 64 ([ONS, 2011a](#)).

It should be noted that Poland accounts for more than half of the total population of the A8 countries (see background note 7) that joined the EU in 2004 (see international comparisons within [Vital Statistics: Population and Health reference tables](#)). This partially explains why the Polish-born population in the UK has increased so much more than other A8 countries.

In 2011, Lithuania and China moved into the top ten non-UK countries of birth of mother, replacing Ghana and Sri Lanka. Ghana first entered the top ten in 2004 and Sri Lanka in 2007. This is the first time that Lithuania has appeared in the top ten with a gradual increase in the rankings over the last decade. China first entered the top ten in 2009 but moved into eleventh place in 2010.

On the whole the top ten 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 ten in 2004 while United States left in 2005 and Ireland in 2007.

## Country of Birth of Foreign Born Fathers

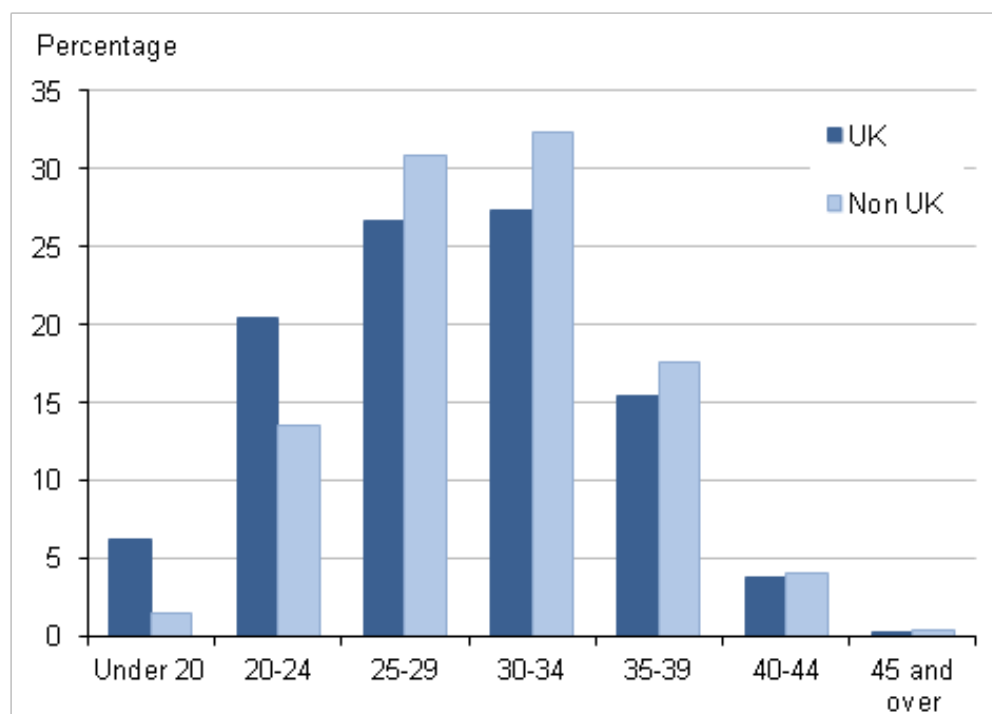
In 2011 there were 171,702 babies born to non-UK born fathers which represents 23.7 per cent of all live births. A smaller proportion (18.1 per cent) of babies born had both parents born outside the UK. Information for fathers is not available for births registered solely by the mother (5.8 per cent of all live births in 2011).

The top ten most common countries of birth of non-UK born fathers have been the same since 2008. Pakistan is the most common, followed by Poland, India and Bangladesh. The top 10 countries of birth of non-UK born fathers in 2011 are similar to those of non-UK born mothers, with the inclusion of Ghana rather than Lithuania and some differences in ranks.

## Age of Mother

In 2011, the most common age group of both UK born mothers (27.3 per cent) and non-UK born mothers (32.4 per cent) was 30-34 (see figure 3). A much higher proportion of UK born mothers were aged under 25 (26.7 per cent) in comparison to foreign born mothers (14.9 per cent). This is a similar pattern to 2010. 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 in England and Wales, by age of mother, 2011**



Source: Office for National Statistics

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## Mother's Area of Usual Residence

In 2011 the region with the highest percentage of live births to mothers born outside the UK was London (56.7 per cent). The North East had the lowest percentage of live births to mothers born outside the UK (9.6 per cent). London and the North East have consistently, since 2001, been the regions with the highest and lowest percentages respectively of live births to mothers born outside the UK.

Of the local authorities in England, the London borough of Newham recorded the highest percentage of live births to mothers born outside the UK (77.0 per cent, up from 76.4 per cent in 2010). Outside of London, Slough Unitary Authority (UA) had the highest percentage of live births to mothers born outside the UK (59.9 per cent), followed by Luton UA (53.2 per cent).

These were also the two local authorities outside of London with the highest percentage of live births to non-UK born mothers in 2010. The area with the lowest percentage of births to mothers born outside the UK in 2011 was Redcar and Cleveland UA, with 3.2 per cent; in 2010 the local authority with the lowest percentage of births to non-UK born mothers was Cannock Chase with 3.1 per cent.

In Wales, the percentage of live births to foreign born mothers was 10.7 per cent. Of the local authorities in Wales, Cardiff had the highest percentage of births to mothers born outside the UK (25.1 per cent) and Rhondda Cynon Taff had the lowest (4.4 per cent). Cardiff also had the highest proportion of live births to non-UK born mothers in 2010 while Torfaen had the lowest.

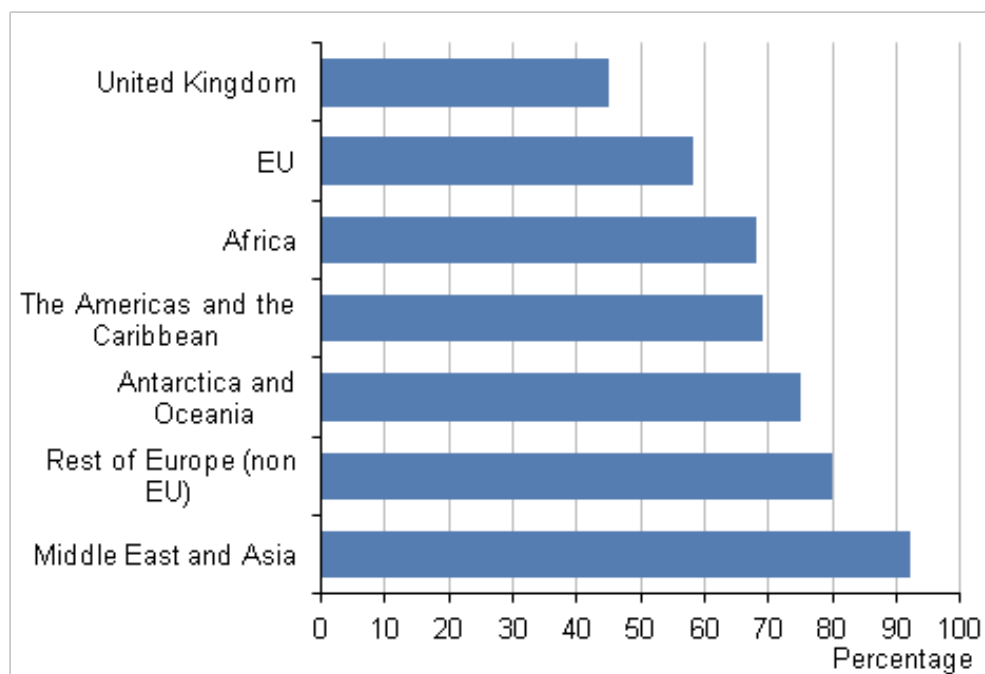
Geographical variations in the proportion of births to mothers born outside the UK are to be expected, due to local differences in the proportion of people born outside the UK. In addition, the composition of the foreign born population, in terms of individual countries of birth, will vary considerably between local authorities. This can be seen in the indicators of migration at local authority level ([ONS, 2012b \(6.6 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

## Births within Marriage/Civil Partnership

In 2011, a much higher proportion of births to non UK-born women took place within marriage/civil partnership (75 per cent) than for UK-born mothers (45 per cent). 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 per cent of births to mothers born in North Africa took place within marriage/civil partnership in 2011 in comparison to 38 per cent of births to mothers born in the Caribbean (see figure 4). These variations reflect different societal expectations between cultures, for example, the acceptability of cohabitation.

**Figure 4: Percentage of live births in England and Wales within marriage/civil partnership, by country group, 2011**



Source: Office for National Statistics

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## 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 or concerns over current levels of immigration. For example, the National Childbirth Trust offers advice to new and expectant parents (including access to maternity services) and lobby for improved maternity care. The media also report on key trends and statistics.



## Planned Changes to Birth Outputs

The provisional 2011 Total Fertility Rate will be revised in October/November 2012 after the 2011 population estimates based on the 2011 Census become available. The estimated TFRs for women born in the UK and outside the UK will not be revised at this time as they are based on APS data.

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 (including Table 8 of this release) and [proposals for changes](#) to outputs for 2012 and 2013 data are available on the ONS website. Feedback from users is welcome.

Changes to the tables included within [Live Births by socio-economic status of father](#) are also being considered including the possible implementation of 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 will be available on the ONS website alongside the release of 2011 data.

## Further Information

More [detailed data \(560.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) on live births by parents' country of birth for 2011 are available on the ONS website.

A [Quality and Methodology Information note \(257.9 Kb Pdf\)](#) for births is available on the ONS website. Further information on data quality, legislation and procedures relating to births is available in [births metadata \(332.6 Kb Pdf\)](#).

Further [birth statistics](#) for England and Wales are available on the ONS website.

ONS is intending to publish a report on fertility among UK and non-UK born mothers in the UK in October 2012.

[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.

## References

[Dunnell K \(2007\)](#) 'The changing demographic picture of the UK: National Statisticians article on the population', Population Trends 130, pp 9–21.

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

ONS (2011b). Population estimates for UK, mid-2010.

[ONS \(2012a\)](#). Migration Statistics Quarterly Report, August 2012.

[ONS \(2012b\)](#). [\(6.6 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) Local Area Migration Indicators data, August 2012.

[Toulemon L \(2004\)](#) 'Fertility among immigrant women: new data, a new approach', Population and Societies 400, Institut National d'Etudes Demographiques: 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.

## 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 (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 2011 TFR within this release is provisional, calculated using 2011 population projections. The rate for 2011 will be finalised in October/November 2012 after the 2011 population estimates based on the 2011 Census are published. The estimated TFRs for women born in the UK and outside the UK will not be revised at this time as they are based on APS data.
5. 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 for more information.
6. Estimated TFRs for UK and non-UK born women will be sensitive to changes in the timing of fertility 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.

7. EU figures are based on the EU as constituted in 2009 for comparability. The 27 countries in the EU are listed below, by the year they joined:

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

The A8 countries were eight of the ten countries that joined the EU in 2004: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia.

8. 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 2011 there were 20 records where the mother's country of birth was not stated.
9. When 2011 Census data become available detailing population by country of birth, age and sex, ONS intends to produce 2011 TFRs for women born in specified country groups.
10. 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 \(257.9 Kb Pdf\)](#) document for births.
11. 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 2011 \(43.8 Kb Pdf\)](#). The rules and principles which govern pre-release access are featured within the [Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Order 2008](#).
12. Special extracts and tabulations of births data for England and Wales are available to order for a charge (subject to legal frameworks, disclosure control, resources and agreements of costs, where appropriate). Such enquiries should be made to:

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Health and Life Events Division

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E-mail: [vsob@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:vsob@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

The [ONS charging policy](#) is available on the ONS website.

13. We would welcome feedback on the content, format and relevance of this release. The [Health and Life Events user engagement strategy](#) is available to download from the ONS website. Please send feedback to the postal or email address above.
14. Follow ONS on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).
15. Next publication date: August 2013.
16. 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; and
- 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.

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