Births in England and Wales by parents' Country of Birth, 2010

Coverage: England and Wales
Date: 25 August 2011
Geographical Area: Local Authority and County
Theme: Population

Births in England and Wales by Parents' Country of Birth, 2010

- A quarter of births (25.1 per cent) in 2010 were to mothers born outside the UK.
- The total fertility rates have risen to 1.88 for UK born women and 2.45 for non-UK born women.
- Poland became the most common country of origin for non-UK born mothers.
- Pakistan remains the most common country of origin for non-UK born fathers.
- Newham was the local authority with the highest proportion of births to non-UK born women (76.4 per cent).

Summary

This bulletin presents statistics on births in England and Wales in 2010 by parents' country of birth.

Live births to UK and non-UK born women

The total number of live births in England and Wales rose to 723,165 in 2010 compared with 706,248 in 2009 (an increase of 2.4 per cent). This increase in births (16,917) resulted from a rise in the number of births to UK born mothers (9,275 more in 2010 than in 2009) and a continuation of the rise in the number of non-UK born mothers (7,653 more in 2010).

The number of births to UK born mothers rose to 541,321 in 2010 from 532,046 in 2009 (a rise of 1.7 per cent). There were 181,827 live births in England and Wales to mothers born outside the UK, compared with 174,174 in 2009 (a rise of 4.4 per cent). Consequently, births to non-UK born mothers accounted for 25.1 per cent of all live births in 2010, compared with 24.7 per cent in 2009. 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. 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 2000 the proportion of births to non-UK born mothers was 15.5 per cent.

According to estimates derived from the Annual Population Survey (APS), the population of UK born women of child-bearing age fell by 0.8 per cent between 2009 and 2010 while the population of foreign born women of child-bearing age (15 to 44) rose by 4.2 per cent. If the number of non-UK born women of child-bearing age who are living in England and Wales increases, then it follows that the number of births to these women is likely to increase.

**Percentage of live births to mothers born outside the United Kingdom, 1969 to 2010**

England and Wales

![Chart showing percentage of live births to mothers born outside the United Kingdom, 1969 to 2010](chart.png)

Source: Office for National Statistics

Download chart

[XLS format](chart.xls) (15.5 Kb)

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 immigrants are likely to constitute an increasing share of the UK born population.¹

The rise in the number of births to UK born women reasserts the trend of rising numbers of births to UK born women since 2002 (490,711 live births) and follows 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.

**Estimated fertility rates for UK and non-UK born women**

In 2010 the estimated Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in England and Wales for women born in the UK was 1.88 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 2.45 children per woman in 2010.

Estimates based on the APS indicate that non-UK born women are making up an increasing share of the childbearing population in England and Wales. Between 2004 and 2010 the proportion of women of child-bearing age who were born outside the UK grew from 13 per cent to 18 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, even though their fertility is fairly stable.

The majority of women of child-bearing age living in England and Wales were born in the UK (82 per cent in 2010, down from 83 per cent in 2009). Therefore UK born women make the largest contribution to the overall TFR. By comparing the overall TFR of 2.00 in 2010 with the TFR for women born in the UK (1.88), it can be inferred that the overall TFR was 0.12 higher than it would be without the contribution of non-UK born women. The TFR depends on the female population of child-bearing age and the number of births. Despite a 0.8 per cent decline in the UK born female population of child-bearing age, the TFR for UK born women rose from 1.85 in 2009 to 1.88 in 2010, due to the increased number of births. This represents an increase of 9,275 births to UK born women whereas a constant TFR for UK born women would have yielded 4,256 fewer births than in 2009.

Overall, the estimated TFR for women born in the UK increased from 1.69 in 2004 to 1.88 in 2010. 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 2.00 over the same period. In contrast, the estimated TFR for women born outside the UK has been fluctuating between 2.42 and 2.54 over the seven-year period.

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 in census years. Rates based on the 2001 Census for England and Wales\(^2\) show that women born in certain countries tend to have higher fertility than others. For example, the TFR for UK born women 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.\(^3\)

**Country of birth of foreign born mothers**

In England and Wales in 2010, births to mothers born in the EU, excluding the UK, represented 7.3 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 this (4.7 per cent of all live births). Mothers born
in the Middle East and Asia contributed 9.2 per cent of all live births while mothers born in Africa contributed 5.5 per cent.

In 2010 the three countries with the highest number of births to mothers from outside the UK were Poland, Pakistan and India. Between 2001 and 2006 Pakistan, India and Bangladesh were consistently the three most common countries of birth for non-UK born mothers. 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 19,762 in 2010.

Between the year ending December 2003 and the year ending September 2010 the Polish born population of the UK increased from 75,000 to 521,000. In contrast the Indian born population in the year ending September 2010 was estimated to be 684,000. The age-sex structure of the foreign born population will impact on the number of babies born to foreign born women. There are no estimates available of the childbearing population but of the Polish-born population in the UK in the year ending September 2010, 85 per cent were aged 16 to 64, compared with the mid-2010 estimate of 65 per cent of the UK population as a whole. 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. It should be noted that when you look at the populations of the A8 countries that joined the EU in 2004 (Poland, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia) Poland accounts for more than half of the total population of those countries, which goes some way to explaining why the Polish born population in the UK has increased so much more than other countries.

On the whole the top 10 non-UK countries of birth of mother have remained fairly similar across the 10-year period since 2001, with only four countries entering into the top 10: Poland, Ghana, Sri Lanka and China. China subsequently left the top 10, along with Ireland, Jamaica and the United States of America. Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Somalia, Germany and South Africa remained in the top 10 throughout this period. Ireland, Jamaica and the United States of America most likely left the top 10 due to births to mothers from Irish, Jamaican and American communities being to second and third generation mothers who were born in the UK.

**Country of birth of foreign born fathers**

In 2010 there were 169,393 babies born to non-UK born fathers. This represents 23.4 per cent of all live births, while 17.7 per cent of babies born had both parents being born outside the UK. Babies born to families where only one parent was born outside the UK constituted 12.0 per cent of all live births. Information for fathers is not available for births registered solely by the mother (5.9 per cent of all live births in 2010).

The top 10 most common countries of birth of non-UK fathers consisted of the same countries since 2008. Pakistan is the most common, followed by Poland, India and Bangladesh. The top 10 countries of birth of non-UK fathers in 2010 are the same countries as in the top ten countries of birth of non-UK mothers with some differences in ranks.
**Age of mother**

In 2010 women aged 45 and over had the highest percentage of births to foreign born mothers (31.6 per cent, compared with 30.7 per cent in 2009) while women aged under 20 had the lowest percentage (7.4 per cent, compared with 8.1 per cent in 2009). The percentage of births to non-UK born mothers grew between 2009 and 2010 in all age groups for women aged 25 and over. In contrast the percentage of births to non-UK born mothers fell between 2009 and 2010 for women aged under 25.

Over the last three years in England and Wales, the greatest increase in the percentage of births to foreign born women was for those aged 35 to 39, increasing from 23.3 per cent in 2008 to 26.7 per cent in 2010. The next largest increase was among women aged 40 to 44 which rose from 23.5 per cent in 2008 to 26.3 per cent in 2010. In contrast, the percentage of births to foreign born mothers aged under 20 and 20 to 24 have declined year on year since 2008.

**Percentage of live births to mothers born outside the UK, by age of mother, 2008 to 2010**

England and Wales

![Bar chart showing percentage of live births to mothers born outside the UK, by age of mother, from 2008 to 2010](chart)

Source: Office for National Statistics

**Download chart**

[XLS format](chart) (21 Kb)
Mother's area of usual residence

In 2010 the region with the highest percentage of live births to mothers born outside the UK was London (56.3 per cent). The North East had the lowest percentage of live births to mothers born outside the UK (10.3 per cent). London and the North East have, since 2001, consistently shown 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 (76.4 per cent, up from 75.7 per cent in 2009). Outside of London, Slough UA had the highest percentage of live births to mothers born outside the UK (58.9 per cent), followed by Luton UA (50.0 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 2009. The area with the lowest percentage of births to mothers born outside the UK in 2010 was Cannock Chase in Staffordshire, with 3.1 per cent; in 2009 the local authority with the lowest percentage of births to non-UK born mothers was South Staffordshire with 3.2 per cent.

In Wales, the percentage of live births to foreign born mothers was 10.4 per cent. Of the local authorities in Wales, Cardiff had the highest percentage of births to mothers born outside the UK (25.8 per cent) and Torfaen had the lowest (2.7 per cent), this is similar to 2009 when Cardiff and Torfaen had the highest and lowest proportions of live births to non-UK born mothers.

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.

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 offer 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.
Further information

- [Tables on live births by parents’ country of birth including by area of residence in England and Wales](#) are available on the ONS website
- [Births metadata (332.6 Kb Pdf)](#) is available which provides information on data quality, legislation and procedures relating to birth statistics
- A [Summary Quality Report for births (257.9 Kb Pdf)](#) provides information on statistical quality and methods used to compile the data

The next release of 2010 birth statistics will take place on 15 September 2011. The following packages will be released on that day:

- Live births by area of usual residence of mother and
- Characteristics of births 1

Statistics on births in Northern Ireland are available on the [NISRA website](#)

Statistics on births in Scotland are available on the [General Register Office Scotland website](#)

References

1. Tromans N, Natamba E and Jefferies J (2009), [Have women born outside the UK driven the rise in UK births since 2001 (2.08 Mb Pdf)](#)? Population Trends 136, pp 28–42
2. ONS (2011), [Parents’ country of birth tables, table 6](#)
3. Dunnell K (2007), [The changing demographic picture of the UK: National Statisticians article on the population (902.5 Kb Pdf)](#), Population Trends 130, pp 9–21
4. ONS (2010), [Estimates of the UK population by country of birth and nationality](#)
5. ONS (2011), [Polish people in the UK](#)

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. The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is the average number of live children that a group of women would 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.

3. 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 (for example Toulemon L (2004), Fertility among immigrant women: new data, a new approach,
Population and Societies, 400, INED, Parris). 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.

4. 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. Further information on the APS can be found in the Labour Force Survey User Guides.

5. 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.

6. For more detail on the impact of foreign born women on the number of live births and fertility patterns in the UK between 2001 and 2008 see 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.

7. EU figures are based on the EU as constituted in 2009 for comparability.

8. When 2011 Census data become available detailing population by country of birth, ONS intends to produce 2011 TFRs for women born in specified country groups.

9. 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:

Vital Statistics Outputs Branch
Health and Life Events Division
Office for National Statistics
Segensworth Road
Titchfield
Fareham
Hampshire PO15 5RR

Tel: 01329 444 110

Email: vsob@ons.gsi.gov.uk

10. 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.
11. Follow ONS on Twitter and Facebook.

12. The launch of the new ONS website on 28 August 2011 will bring changes to the design and format of statistical bulletins. The bulletin main body will be in html and pdf format but detailed data tables will be available as Excel spreadsheets only. The new website will improve the way users can access our statistics but many existing bookmarks and links will no longer work and users will need to update them. Find out more on the web development pages.

13. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the Media Relations Office.

14. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

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Next publication:
August/September 2012

Issued by:
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15. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html or from the Media Relations Office email: media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk

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