

Emigration - A Short Story, November 2011

Coverage: **UK**

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Geographical Area: **Other**

Theme: **Population**

Emigration - A Short Story

This article summarises the main findings of analysis into the characteristics of emigrants.

Introduction

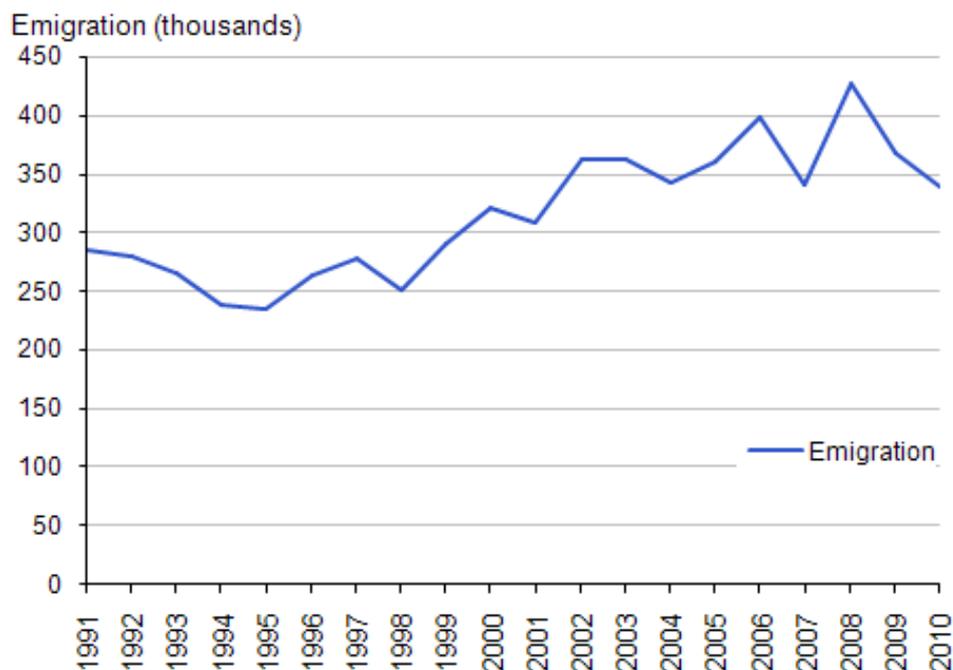
Long term international migration estimates have shown a recent increase in the levels of net migration. Whilst the general level of immigration has remained steady, declining emigration has been the main driver in this increase of net migration. This article summarises the main findings of analysis into the characteristics of emigrants, looking at; what the main patterns of emigration are; who is emigrating; where they are emigrating to and; why they are emigrating.

This summary uses Long Term International Migration (LTIM) estimates and International Passenger Survey (IPS) estimates to provide commentary on emigration from the UK. A migrant is defined as someone who changes their country of residence for a period of 12 months or more.

1. What are the main patterns seen in emigration from the UK?

Figure 1 shows that the level of emigration appears to have been rising from 1998 to 2008 and recently has been decreasing. Recent emigration levels for all migrants leaving the UK show a sharp decline after reaching a peak in 2008 of 427,000 to 339,000 in 2010. This year to year decrease is similar to that seen between 2006 and 2007, when the number of emigrants dropped from 398,000 to 341,000. Figure 1 shows the level of emigration is now at a similar level as that last observed in 2007 (341,000).

Figure 1: Long-Term International Migration Estimates of Emigration from the UK, 1991 to 2010



Source: Office for National Statistics

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(24 Kb)

Notes

1. Long-term International Migration (LTIM) is the most comprehensive measure of long-term international migration and relate to those migrants changing their country of residence for 12 months or more. These estimates are based mainly on data from the International Passenger Survey (IPS), supplemented with data on flows to and from Northern Ireland. Other data sources are used to make adjustments for asylum seekers and their dependants not counted by the IPS and for switchers (people who change their intentions and, therefore, their migratory status). Estimates based only on the IPS allow a more detailed analysis of the characteristics of international migrants. This report includes data from both sources.

Further information on [LTIM and the IPS](#) can be found in the Background Notes.

2. Who is emigrating from the UK?

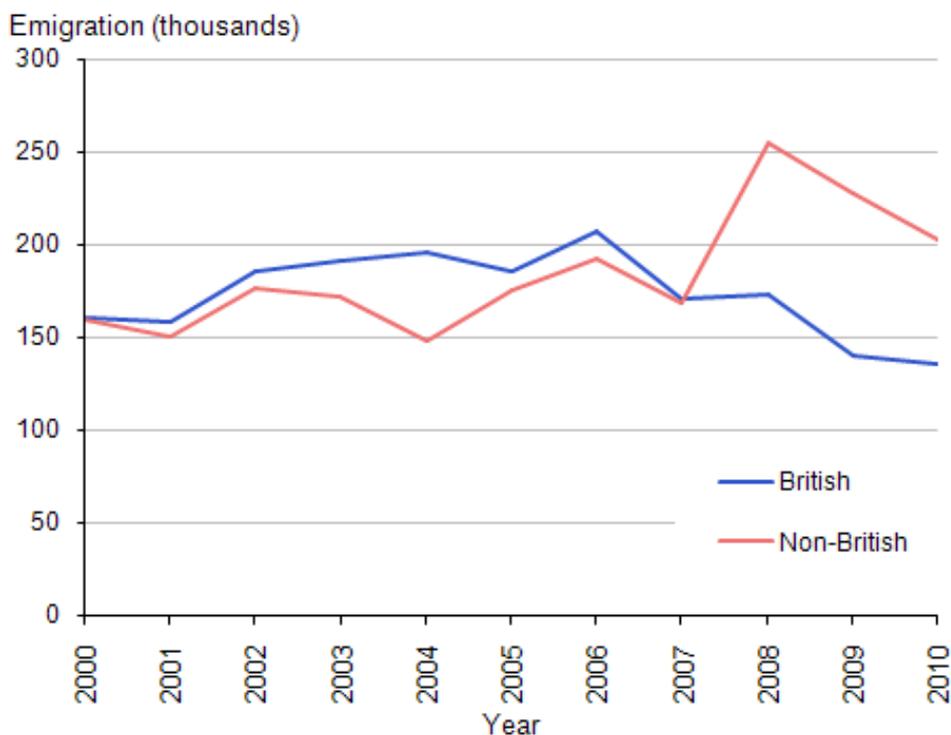
Long term emigration of both British and Non-British citizens has decreased at a similar rate since 2008 (by 20 per cent). Final LTIM figures show that the peak in emigration in 2008 (427,000), was due in part to an increase in EU citizens returning home to their country of origin. This was particularly true of Polish citizens returning to Poland.

In 2008, emigration of Non-British citizens was at its highest level recorded. Almost half (202,000) of all emigrants left the UK for the EU, with twice the number of EU citizen leaving the UK in 2008 (134,000) compared to 2007 (69,000). Of these 134,000 EU citizens, just over half were from the A8 countries.

Figure 2 shows British emigrants now make up 40 per cent of all migrants leaving the UK for twelve months or more accounting for 136,000 of a total 339,000 emigrants, with EU and Non-EU citizens contributing 30 per cent each (99,000 and 104,000 respectively).

British long term emigration levels have been declining since they reached a peak of 207,000 in 2006. The number of British migrants leaving the UK in 2010 (136,000) is now at it's lowest for over a decade, since 1998 (126,000), although recent provisional IPS rolling annual migration estimates have indicated this decreasing trend has stabilised over the past couple of quarters.

Figure 2: Long-Term International Migration Estimates of Emigration by British/Non-British from the UK, 2000 to 2010



Source: Office for National Statistics

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(18 Kb)

LTIM figures show that the proportion of all long term emigrants of working age leaving the UK has increased over the last 5 years. In 2005, 86 per cent of emigrants were of working age (311,000 of 361,000), whereas in 2010, this had risen to 93 per cent (316,000 of 339,000). The number of migrants of existing retirement age has decreased over this same time period from 21,000 in 2005 to 6,000 in 2010. The latter directly relating to fewer British citizens retiring abroad.

IPS figures for 2010 show that just over a third of migrants leaving the UK had professional or managerial occupations prior to migration (113,000) and just over half of these emigrants are British citizens (60,000).

Notes

1. In May 2004, 8 countries joined the European Union (EU). These countries were: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. These countries are known as the A8 countries.

3. Where are people emigrating to?

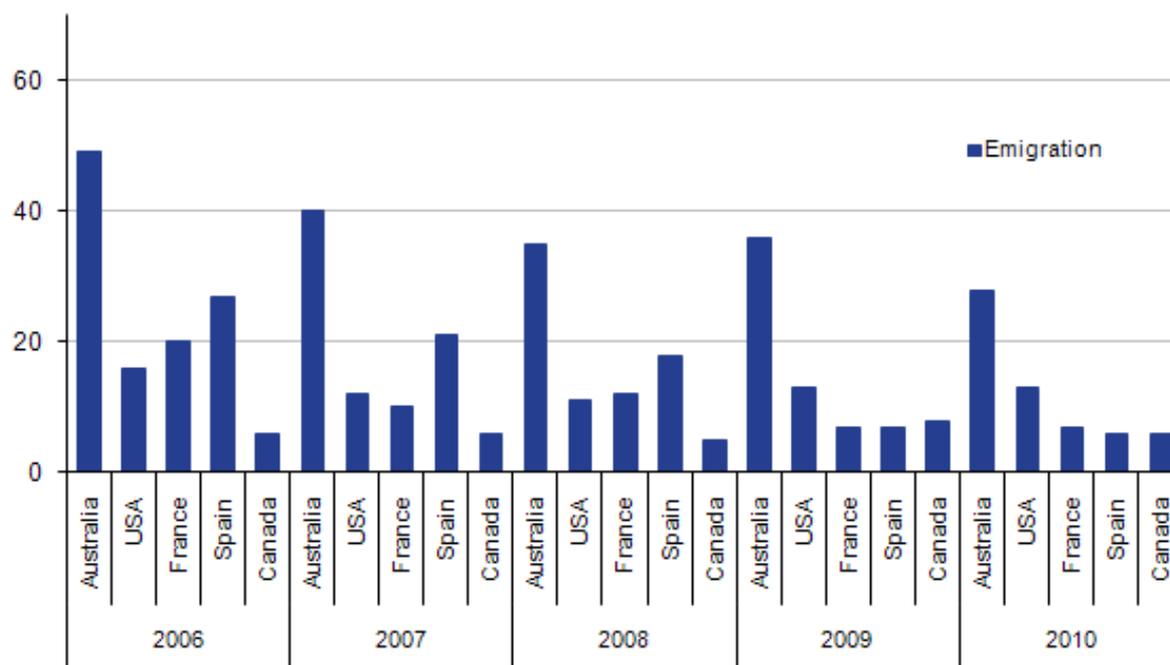
There are a number of differences between the migration destinations of British citizens and Non-British citizens.

IPS figures show that a third of all British citizens (41,000) leaving the UK for 12 months or more go to Old Commonwealth countries (Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa) and this pattern has remained fairly steady over the last 5 years. In 2010, just a quarter of British citizens (34,000) took advantage of the freedom of movement between European Union state opportunities and moved to these countries, compared to just over 40 per cent in 2005 (74,000).

Figure 3 shows the top 5 destinations of British migrants over the last 5 years. Australia remains the favourite destination. Spain and France have become less popular destinations over the last two years. This reflects the declining trends of British emigrants retiring overseas and may also reflect the down turn in the economic climate of the EU.

Figure 3: Emigration by British citizens to the top 5 2010 countries of next residence, 2006 to 2010.

Emigration (thousands)



Source: International Passenger Survey (IPS) - Office for National Statistics

Download chart

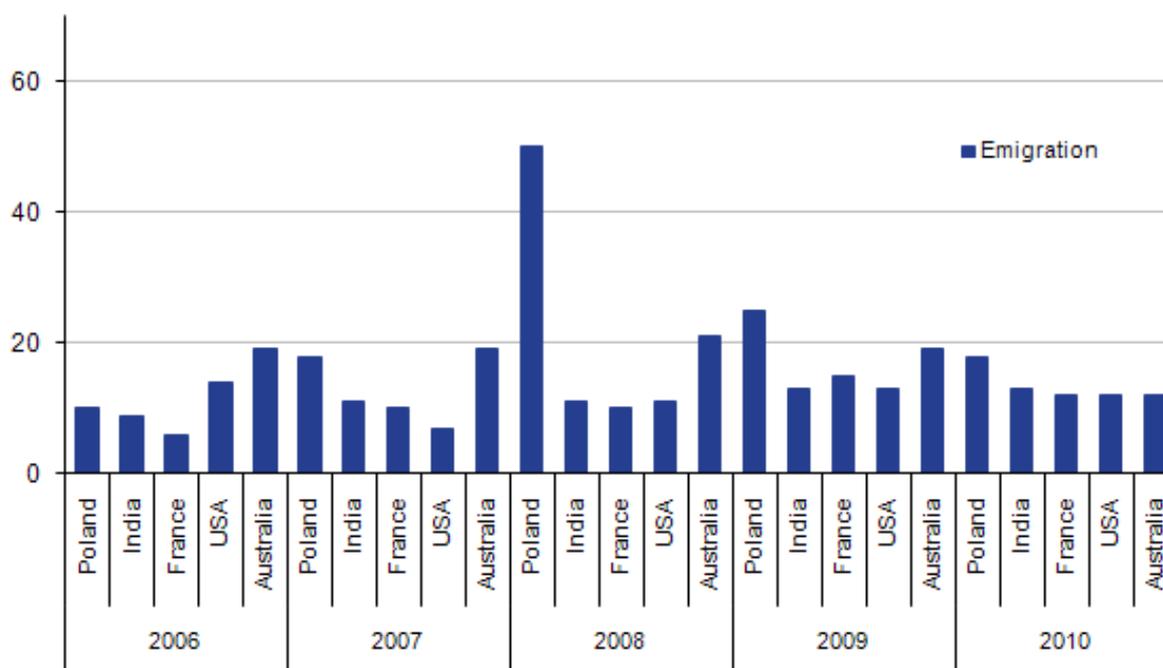
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(32 Kb)

In 2010, nearly half (46 per cent) of all Non-British long term emigrants migrated to countries within the EU, this reflects the fact that nearly all EU citizens (83,000 of 91,000 based on IPS figures) migrate to EU countries. This EU dominance is reflected in Figure 4 below with Poland remaining the most popular destination for Non-British and more specifically, EU citizens, over this period. It should be noted that a large majority of emigrants going to Poland were Polish citizens (98 per cent).

Figure 4: Emigration by non-British citizens to the top 5 2010 countries of next residence, 2006 to 2010

Emigration (thousands)



Source: International Passenger Survey (IPS) - Office for National Statistics

Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)
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4. Why are people emigrating from the UK?

Latest final LTIM figures show that for the majority of migrants leaving the UK for 12 months or more, work related reasons were the main reasons stated (189,000 out of 339,000) in 2010. This does not necessarily mean this is the only reason for migrating but it is the main reason given, for example, migrants may be leaving the UK to join a relative but also aiming to work while they live there.

LTIM figures show emigration from the UK for work related reasons broadly increased between 2004 and 2008 (from 151,000 to 218,000). Since 2008 however, this number has decreased by 13 per cent to 189,000 in 2010. For every year over the last decade, emigrants stating 'definite job' as their main reason for migration have outnumbered those 'looking for work'.

Between 2003 and 2006, higher numbers of people left the UK for 12 months or more for non work related reasons (accompany/join, study, other, no reason stated) than for work related reasons, but as Figure 5 shows, since 2006 work related reasons have been the dominant reason given. The estimated number of migrants leaving the UK for 'formal study' has seen its highest figures in the

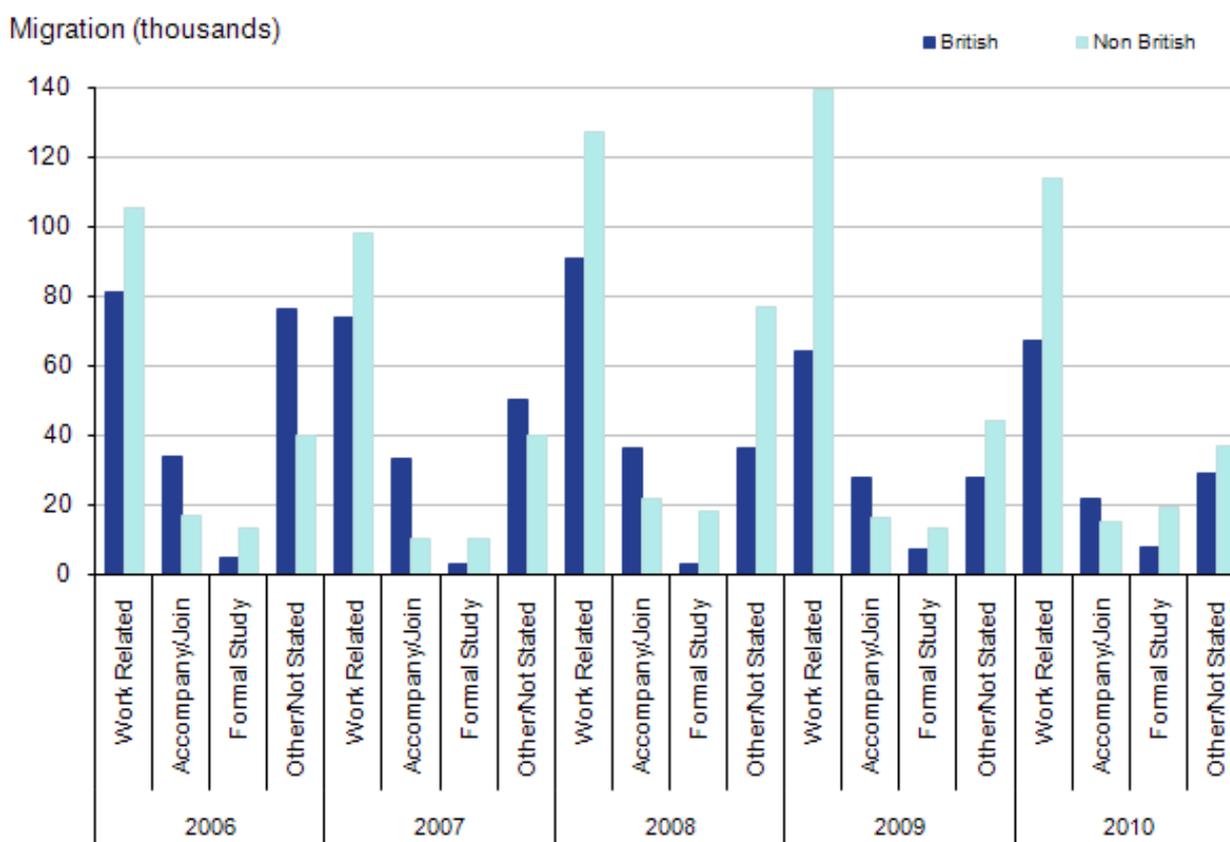
past three years, and reached 29,000 leaving the UK to study in 2010. Formal study is the only main reason stated that has increased over the last calendar year.

Using information from the IPS, British emigrants are most likely to leave the UK for a definite job with an estimated 40 per cent (49,000) of emigrants stating this as their main reason compared with around half this number (22,000) stating their main reason for migrating was to accompany or join friends or family.

Over 60 per cent of all Non-British citizens emigrating from the UK left with either a definite job to go to or to look for work (114,000), compared with just over 50 per cent of British citizens (67,000).

The latest final IPS figures (2010) show that over two thirds of non-British emigrants arrived to live in the UK within the last 5 years. A slightly larger proportion (70 per cent) of Non EU citizens lived in the UK for under 5 years than citizens of the EU (66 per cent). This could suggest migration for Non EU citizens was more likely to be temporary in nature possibly reflecting the number of migrants coming to the UK for formal study.

Figure 5: Emigration by British/non-British citizens by Reason for Migration, 2006 to 2010



Source: International Passenger Survey (IPS) - Office for National Statistics

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(32.5 Kb)

5. Conclusions

Decreasing emigration between 2008 and 2010, combined with steady immigration levels have resulted in increases in net migration over the same period.

British emigrants now represent 40 per cent of all emigrants and final LTIM data show these annual estimates of the number of British emigrants to be the lowest for over a decade.

Working age migrants leaving the UK for 12 months or more are now a higher proportion of all migrants leaving the UK than they were 5 years ago, with 93 per cent of emigrants being of working age, compared to 86 per cent in 2005.

The most popular destination for British citizens is the Old Commonwealth countries, particularly Australia. The most popular destination for Non-British citizens is Poland (majority of whom are Polish citizens returning home), with half moving to the countries within the EU. Practically all EU citizens left the UK for EU countries.

More emigrants are now leaving the UK for work related reasons than non work related reasons, however the overall numbers reflect the decrease in the level of emigration from the UK.

A large proportion (two thirds) of all Non-British citizens leaving the UK, stayed less than 5 years of arriving.

Note: The published tables referred to above can be found on the [ONS website](#).

Notes

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Background notes

1. 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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Supporting Information

Glossary

Long-Term International Migration (LTIM)

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International Passenger Survey (IPS)

The International Passenger Survey (IPS) is a survey of a random sample of passengers entering and leaving the UK by air, sea or the Channel Tunnel. Over a quarter of a million face-to-face interviews are carried out each year. The IPS is carried out by ONS.

A8

The A8 are the eight central and eastern European countries that joined the EU on 1 May 2004: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. The A8 does not include the two other countries that joined on that date: Cyprus and Malta. A8 nationals previously had restrictions on their rights to work and were required to register under the Worker Registraion Scheme, but since 1 May 2011 A8 nationals now have the same rights as other workers from the EU and EEA.

Appendices

Links to Relevant Products

1. [Provisional Long-Term International Migration, year ending March 2011 \(ONS\)](#)
2. [Provisional International Passenger Survey \(IPS\) estimates of long-term international migration, year ending March 2011 \(ONS\)](#)
3. [Population by country of birth and nationality from the Annual Population Survey: April 2010 to March 2011 \(ONS\)](#)

4. [Population by country of birth and nationality from the Annual Population Survey \(for Scottish council areas\): April 2010 to March 2011 \(NRS\)](#)
5. [Migration Statistics Improvement Programme: Quarterly Update \(ONS\)](#)