

# Population by Country of Birth and Nationality, Scotland, July 2020 to June 2021



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This report summarises the number of non-British nationals and non-UK born people living in Scotland, using estimates from the Annual Population Survey.

## Important

A new weighting method has been introduced to the data used in this publication. For this reason, breakdowns of population estimates below the EU and non-EU level are less reliable. Comparisons over time, except with the reweighted mid-2020 estimates, are also less reliable. More information can be found in the background information section of this report.

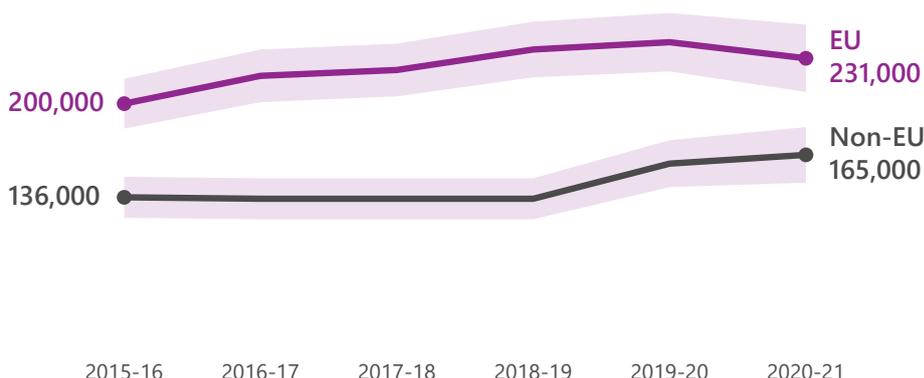
**In the year ending June 2021, there were around 397,000 non-British nationals living in Scotland**

This remained broadly stable from the previous year.

Of all non-British nationals, 58% were EU nationals and 42% were non-EU nationals.

Number of non-British nationals

Estimate ( — ) and 95% confidence interval ( — )

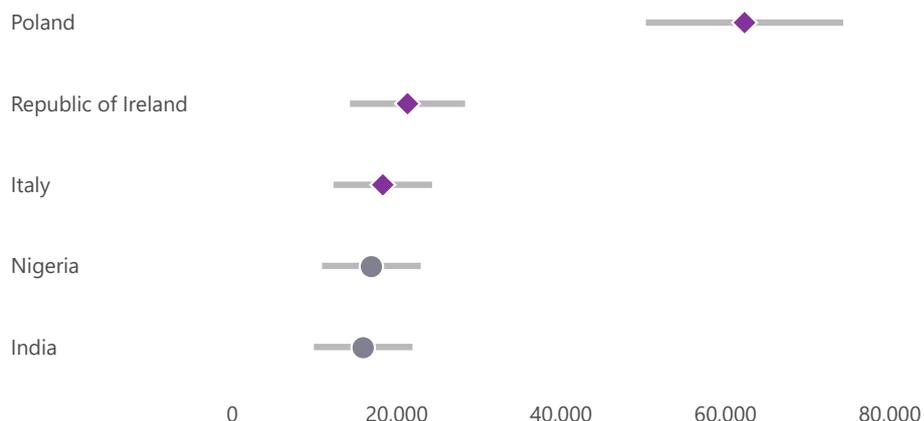


**Polish was the most common non-British nationality**

Polish was the most common non-British nationality in Scotland with 62,000 nationals.

Most common non-British nationalities in Scotland, 2020-21

Estimate for EU ( ◆ ) and non-EU ( ● ) and 95% confidence interval ( — )



Percentage of non-British nationals by Scottish council area and RESAS classification, 2020-21

Estimate (●) and 95% confidence interval (■)

7.4% of the population are non-British



Population of non-British nationals varies across council areas

In the year to June 2021, cities had the largest proportion of non-British residents.

The highest were in City of Edinburgh (20%), Aberdeen City (18%), Dundee City (12%), and Glasgow City (12%).

Estimates of EU and non-EU nationals living in council areas are available on the [NRS website](#).

\* Confidence intervals are reported to the nearest thousand. For Na h-Eileanan Siar the lower limit rounds to zero.

† Estimates for Orkney Islands have been removed to minimise the risk of disclosing personal information.

Non-British nationals are more likely to live in larger cities

The [RESAS classification](#) groups areas of Scotland into four levels of rurality.

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## Main Points

- The non-British population of Scotland was 397,000 (7.4%) in the year to mid-2021. The non-UK born population was 523,000 (9.7%).
- Numbers of non-British nationals and non-UK born people remained broadly stable compared to the previous year.
- Of all non-British nationals in Scotland, 231,000 (58%) were EU nationals and 165,000 (42%) were non-EU nationals.
- Of all non-UK born people living in Scotland, 258,000 (49%) were born in the EU and 265,000 (51%) were born outside the EU.
- Polish was the most common non-British nationality and Poland was the most common non-UK country of birth in Scotland.



A [new weighting method](#) has been introduced to the data used in this publication. For this reason, breakdowns of population estimates below the EU and non-EU level are less reliable. Comparisons over time, except with the reweighted mid-2020 estimates, are also less reliable. More information can be found in the [background information](#) section of this report.

## 1. Introduction

This report summarises the latest estimates of Scotland's population by country of birth and nationality, for the year to mid-2021. These estimates are produced using the Annual Population Survey (APS) carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). They differ from our [mid-year population estimates](#) which are produced using a separate methodology.

The APS estimates the numbers of non-British nationals and non-UK born living in Scotland at a particular point in time, regardless of when they moved. **Country of birth** refers to the country in which a person was born, and it cannot change. **Nationality** refers to the nationality a person stated when they were interviewed for the survey. This can change. For example, an individual might apply for British citizenship.

To assess changes in the population, this report includes comparisons with the data from mid-2020, as both sets of data use the same redesigned survey methods introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic. More information on this can be found in the [Background Information](#) section.

These estimates are also broken down by Scottish council area and urban-rural classification. They can therefore be used to understand the profile of the population living in different areas, and are often used by central and local government for planning and monitoring service delivery.

### What are you looking for?

The data used in this report

The figures used in this report

Data for Scottish council areas

Data for individual countries of origin for Scotland and UK areas

Analysis at the UK level

### Where is it?

[Data](#)

[Charts](#)

[Data](#)

[ONS tables](#)

[ONS report](#)

## 2. Population by nationality

Table 1 summarises Scotland's population by nationality group. In the year to mid-2021, there were an estimated **397,000 non-British nationals living in Scotland**, which represented around 7% of Scotland's population. This remained broadly stable from the previous year.

The population of non-British nationals living in Scotland **remained stable**.

Over half (58%) of non-British people were EU nationals (231,000) while 42% were non-EU nationals (165,000).

**Table 1: Population of Scotland by nationality, mid-2020 to mid-2021**

Nationality	mid-2020	mid-2021	Change over year
All	5,395,000	5,394,000	-1,000
British	4,991,000	4,997,000	6,000
Non-British	401,000	397,000	-4,000
EU	242,000	231,000	-11,000
Non-EU	159,000	165,000	6,000

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS), Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Note: All estimates rounded to the nearest thousand. Totals may not add exactly due to this rounding.

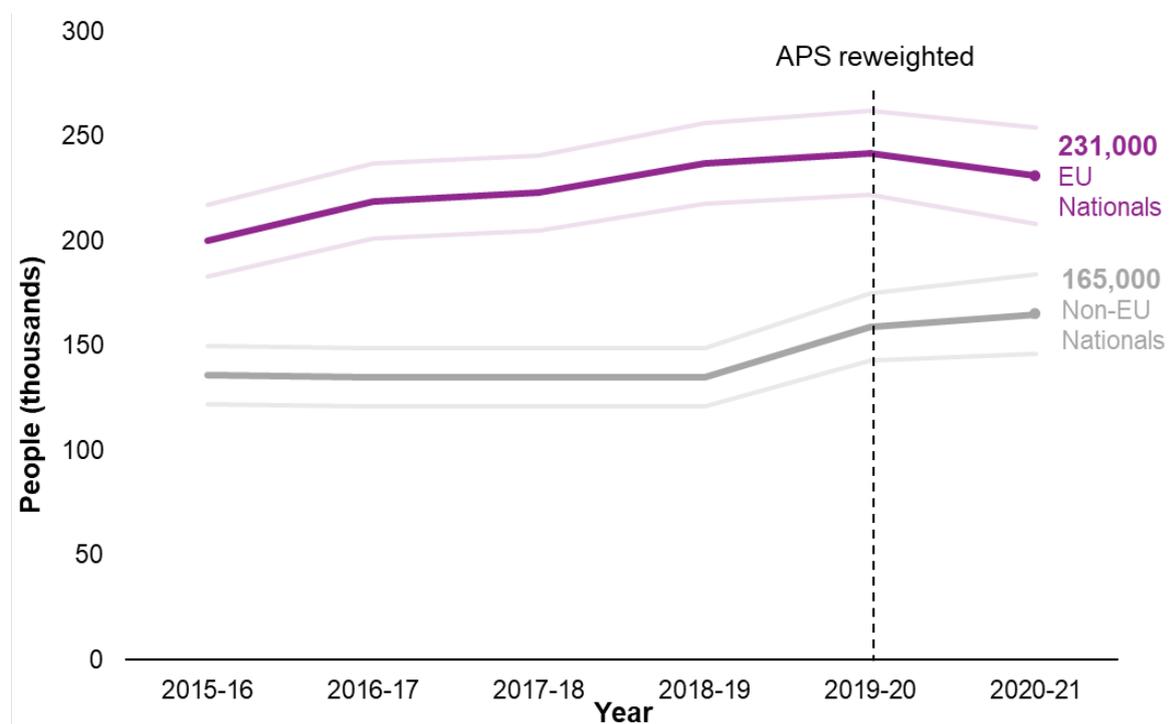


Because of the **new weighting method**, breakdowns of population estimates below the EU and non-EU level are less reliable.

The change in the number of non-British nationals in Scotland from the year to mid-2016 to mid-2021 is shown in [Figure 1](#). It suggests that the numbers of EU and non-EU nationals have remained broadly stable over time. However, the population of EU nationals has been consistently higher than non-EU nationals.

Due to the [APS reweighting](#) first introduced for the mid-2020 data, the two most recent years of data are less comparable with earlier years due to methodological differences.

**Figure 1: Non-British population of Scotland by nationality, mid-2016 to mid-2021**



Note: Lighter lines represent the 95% confidence interval on these estimates

**Other findings on population by nationality include:**

- Polish was the most common non-British nationality in Scotland with 62,000 nationals (16% of the non-British population).
- The council areas with the largest proportion of residents with a non-British nationality were City of Edinburgh (20%), Aberdeen City (18%), Dundee City (12%), and Glasgow City (12%).
- 58% of non-British nationals lived in larger cities, compared with 25% of the British population.

### 3. Population by country of birth

Table 2 summarises Scotland's population by country of birth. In the year to mid-2021, there were an estimated **523,000 people living in Scotland who were born outside the UK**, which represented around 10% of Scotland's population.

The number of non-UK born people in Scotland remained broadly stable.

Just under half (49%) of the non-UK born population were born in the EU (258,000), while 51% were born outside the EU (265,000).

The population of non-UK born living in Scotland remained stable.

**Table 2: Population of Scotland by country of birth, mid-2020 to mid-2021**

Country of birth	Mid-2020	Mid-2021	Change over year
All	5,395,000	5,394,000	-1,000
UK	4,887,000	4,869,000	-18,000
Non-UK	505,000	523,000	18,000
EU	256,000	258,000	2,000
Non-EU	249,000	265,000	16,000

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS), Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Note: All estimates rounded to the nearest thousand. Totals may not add exactly due to this rounding.

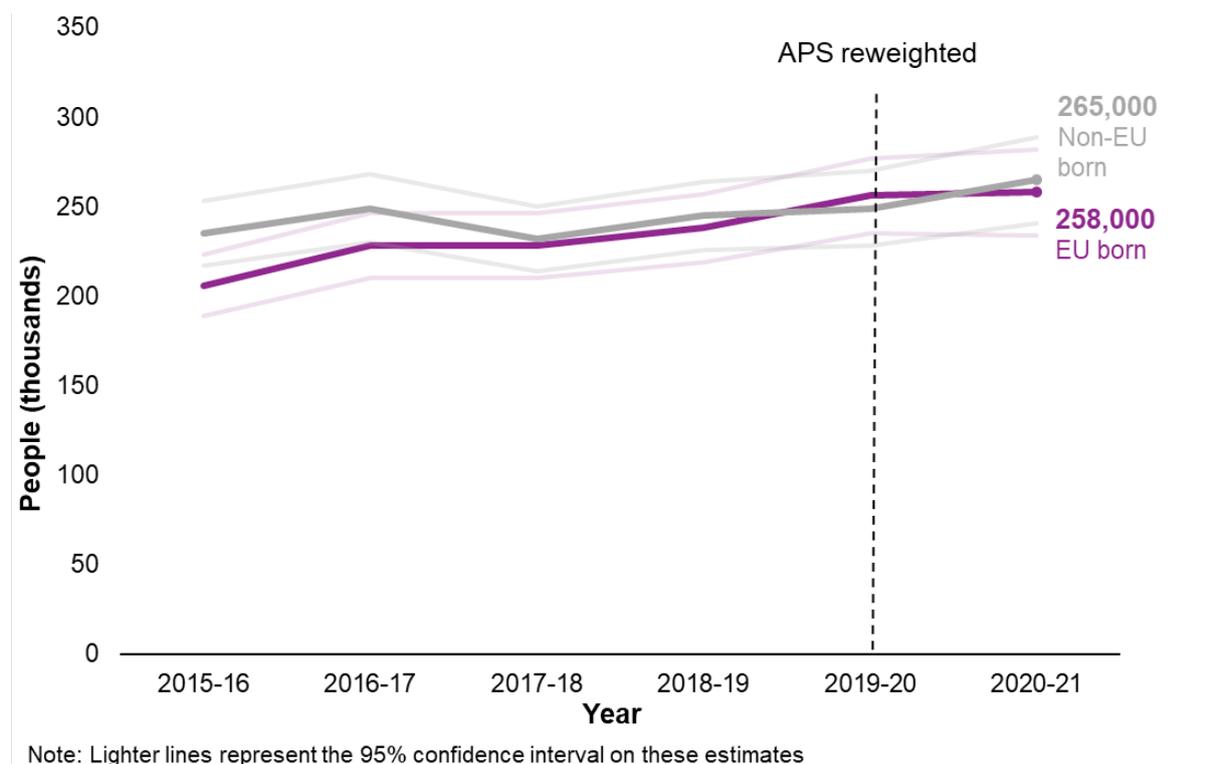


Because of the [new weighting method](#), breakdowns of population estimates below the EU and non-EU level are less reliable.

The change in the non-UK born population in Scotland from the year to mid-2016 to mid-2021 is shown in [Figure 2](#). The numbers of EU and non-EU born people have remained broadly stable over time. These two groups also make up very similar proportions of the non-UK born population.

Due to the [APS reweighting](#) first introduced for the mid-2020 data, the two most recent years of data are less comparable with earlier years due to methodological differences.

**Figure 2: Non-UK born population of Scotland by country of birth, mid-2016 to mid-2021**



**Other findings on population by country of birth include:**

- Poland was the most common non-UK country of birth in Scotland with 61,000 people being born there (12% of the non-UK born population).
- The council areas with the largest proportion of residents born outside of the UK were City of Edinburgh (24%), Aberdeen City (22%), Glasgow City (14%), and Dundee City (12%).
- 54% of the non-UK born population lived in larger cities, compared with 25% of the UK-born population.

## 4. Links to related statistics

Other statistical publications that use the Annual Population Survey (APS), and other publications about population and migration in Scotland, can be found at the links below.

**Population by country of birth and nationality, UK (ONS)** – uses data from the APS to estimate the non-British national and non-UK born populations of the UK as a whole

**Non-UK nationals in Scotland's Workforce (Scottish Government)** – uses data from the APS to provide insight into labour market characteristics of non-British nationals

**Mid-Year Population Estimates, Scotland (NRS)** – headline population and migration statistics for Scotland, as at mid-year (30 June)

**Migration flows, Scotland (NRS)** – measure the number of people moving to and from an area over a specific period of time

## 5. Background Information

### What is the Annual Population Survey?

The latest statistics in this report come from the Annual Population Survey (APS), carried out by the Office for National Statistics, covering the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021. The APS uses data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) plus a number of sample boosts. The boost for Scotland is funded by the Scottish Government. The APS had a sample size of around 214,000 respondents across the UK for July 2020 to June 2021, with 24,000 respondents in the Scotland sample.

### How has the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic impacted these estimates?

COVID-19 introduced new challenges in how population and migration statistics are produced. The methods used in previous versions of this publication relied on population projections to account for the size and distribution of the population. These population projections predated the pandemic and are not able to reflect the demographic and structural impact the UK has faced.

The coronavirus pandemic meant that all face-to-face interviewing for the LFS was suspended on 17 March 2020 and replaced with telephone interviewing. This change resulted in higher non-response from those who rent their accommodation and those with a non-UK country of birth or nationality, leaving them less well-represented in

the sample. Therefore, changes were made to the LFS including a new [weighting methodology](#).

All estimates in this release use the new LFS weighting methods. The estimates published in the [mid-2020 report](#) did not use this reweighting, but updated tables for mid-2020 using the new methods were subsequently published on the [NRS website](#). Comparisons that are made in this report between the mid-2021 and mid-2020 estimates refer to the reweighted data.

More information on the impact of COVID-19 and the reweighting methodology can be found in ONS' [Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality: mid-2021](#) release.

### **How does the APS compare with the mid-year population estimates?**

The APS is a household survey. It does not cover most people living in communal establishments such as care homes, prisons and student halls of residence. The mid-year population estimates (MYE) cover the entire population, meaning that the population totals from the APS will be different from the official mid-year population estimates. The MYE provide estimates of the population by sex and age while the APS provide population estimates by country of birth and nationality.

### **Can changes in migrant stocks be compared against changes in migration flows?**

Changes in the number of people living in Scotland who are non-UK born/non-British nationals are not directly comparable with estimates of long-term international migration (such as the estimates of migration used in the mid-year population estimates). There are a few reasons for this:

- Non-UK born/non-British nationals could move to Scotland from other parts of the UK, and not be included in estimates of long-term international migration (but will instead be included in cross border migration).
- There are definitional differences between the International Passenger Survey (which is mainly used to estimate long-term international migration) and the APS:
  - The APS is a survey of residential addresses and does not include most communal establishments, whereas the International Passenger Survey includes people who live in communal establishments.
  - The APS measures the total resident population (“stock”) so captures people who may have moved to Scotland many years ago, whereas the long-term international migration estimates (“flows”) measure people moving over a specific period.

## What is 'statistical significance'?

All population estimates produced from the Annual Population Survey (APS) are subject to sampling variability and depending on which sample we choose, an estimate can vary slightly. **Confidence intervals** are used as a measure of the precision of the estimate and to show the range in which the true data value is likely to fall. Most commonly, 95% confidence intervals are used.

When two estimates are very close, sometimes their confidence intervals overlap and it is hard to say if there is a real difference. For example, the difference may be due to sampling error or chance. In this case, the difference between the numbers is **not statistically significant**. Statistical tests are also used to confirm this.

When the confidence intervals for two estimates do not overlap, the difference between the estimates is considered **statistically significant**. A statistically significant difference is one that is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance and likely reflects a real difference.

## 6. Notes on Statistical Publications

### National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in line with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics (available on the [UKSA](#) website). National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is National Records of Scotland's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss our concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

### Information on background and source data

Further details on data source(s), timeframe of data and timeliness, continuity of data, accuracy, etc. can be found in the 'Metadata' document that is published alongside this publication on the [NRS website](#).

## National Records of Scotland

We, the National Records of Scotland, are a non-ministerial department of the devolved Scottish Administration. Our aim is to provide relevant and reliable information, analysis and advice that meets the needs of government, business and the people of Scotland. We do this as follows:

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Recording the present – At our network of local offices, we register births, marriages, civil partnerships, deaths, divorces and adoptions in Scotland.

Informing the future – We are responsible for the Census of Population in Scotland which we use, with other sources of information, to produce statistics on the population and households.

You can get other detailed statistics that we have produced from the [Statistics](#) section of our website. Scottish Census statistics are available on the [Scotland’s Census](#) website.

We also provide information about [future publications](#) on our website. If you would like us to tell you about future statistical publications, you can register your interest on the Scottish Government [ScotStat website](#).

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## Enquiries and suggestions

Please get in touch if you need any further information, or have any suggestions for improvement.

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