



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 2017/0243 , 27 November 2017

Effect of the Government's migration policy on the economy

By Terry McGuinness,
Feargal McGuinness and
Gloria Tyler

Summary

This pack has been produced ahead of the debate on the Effect of the Government's Migration Policy on the Economy, to be held in Westminster Hall on Wednesday 29 November 2017 at 9.30am, and led by Rt Hon Mark Harper MP.

This briefing provides detail on trends in migration and their economic impacts, current migration policy, and migration policy after Brexit.

Contents

1.	Overview of current migration policy	3
2.	Migration policy after Brexit	5
3.	Concerns expressed by sectors about migration policy after Brexit	7
4.	Summary of economic impacts of immigration	8
5.	Migration trends	11
6.	Background reading	14
7.	Press Articles	16
8.	Parliamentary material	18

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

Contents

1.	Overview of current migration policy	3
1.1	Migration from the rest of the EU/ EEA	3
1.2	Migration from outside the EEA	3
	The points-based system	3
	Reducing net migration to the 'tens of thousands'	4
2.	Migration policy after Brexit	5
2.1	A White Paper and new immigration bill	5
2.2	MAC research on the economic and social impacts of Brexit	5
2.3	Leaked Home Office paper	6
3.	Concerns expressed by sectors about migration policy after Brexit	7
4.	Summary of economic impacts of immigration	8
4.1	Employment	8
4.2	Wages	9
4.3	GDP per capita	9
4.4	Public finances	10
5.	Migration trends	11
5.1	Number of people coming to and leaving the UK	11
5.2	Employment of non-UK nationals	13
6.	Background reading	14
6.1	Library briefing papers	14
6.2	Prime Minister's speeches	14
6.3	Migration Advisory Committee research on labour market impacts of Brexit	14
6.4	Submissions to the MAC	15
6.5	Research summaries	15
7.	Press Articles	16
8.	Parliamentary material	18
8.1	Parliamentary reports	18
8.2	Parliamentary questions	18
8.3	Debates	23

1. Overview of current migration policy

1.1 Migration from the rest of the EU/ EEA

For as long as the UK remains a member state of the European Union, it is subject to laws guaranteeing EU citizens the right to free movement throughout the Union. Free movement is central to the concept of EU citizenship. It is a right enjoyed by all citizens of the Union (those with nationality of any of the 28 Member States), as well as Swiss nationals and those of EEA member states. For an overview of EU free movement law, see section 2 of the Library briefing paper [Brexit: what impact on those currently exercising free movement rights?](#) (11 July 2017).

1.2 Migration from outside the EEA

The points-based system

Non-EEA migration to the UK is governed by the points-based system introduced by the last Labour Government. It was launched in phases between March 2008 and March 2009 through successive Statements of Changes to the Immigration Rules.

Writing the foreword to the then Labour Government's Five Year Strategy for asylum and immigration, [Controlling our Borders: Making migration work for Britain](#), then Home Secretary Charles Clarke explained the then Government's aim:

The system we have at present works well but it is complex and difficult to understand. We will bring all our current work schemes and students into a simple points based system designed to ensure that we are only taking migrants for jobs that cannot be filled from our own workforce and focussing on the skilled workers we need most like doctors, engineers, finance experts, nurses and teachers.

(...) We will set up an independent body to advise us on labour market needs. The system will be flexible and employer-led. This is what our economy needs, not a rigid, arbitrary quota.¹

The Library briefing paper [The UK's points-based system for immigration](#) (CBP 7662, 18 July 2016) explains the operation of the UK system and provides an overview of points-based systems adopted in Australia and Canada.

The [Migration Advisory Committee](#) (MAC) is an independent, non-departmental public body comprised of appointed economists. Established at the same time as the points-based system, its purpose is to provide independent and evidence-based advice to the Government on migration issues. It advises on the impacts of immigration, the functioning of the points-based system and skills shortages within

¹ Home Office, *Controlling our Borders: Making migration work for Britain*, Cm 6472, February 2005, page 7

occupations. The MAC's [reports](#) and [consultations](#) on migration are available from its pages on the GOV.UK website.

Reducing net migration to the 'tens of thousands'

In its 2010 manifesto the Conservative Party promised "to take net migration back to the levels of the 1990s – tens of thousands a year, not hundreds of thousands."² This became known as the 'net migration target'.

A number of policies were adopted by the Coalition and Conservative Governments to meet this target. As EU free movement law precluded restrictions on the entry of EU citizens and nationals of EEA member states, these measures targeted migration from outside the EEA. They included:

- Limiting the number of visas available to skilled workers with a job offer, and introducing stricter criteria to determine who is eligible to stay permanently in the UK.
- Closing the visa allowing highly skilled workers to come to the UK without a job offer, but creating some more selective visa provisions for high skilled/'high value' migrants (such as investors, entrepreneurs and those with 'exceptional talent').
- Amending student visa conditions in order to deter abuse, including by re-introducing visa interviews and limiting international students' rights to work and bring family members to the UK, and subjecting education providers to more demanding requirements.
- Closing the post-study work visa and replacing it with more limited provisions.
- Introducing new family visa eligibility criteria, such as the £18,600 'minimum income' requirement for partner visas, in order to encourage integration and protect public funds.
- Legislating for the *Immigration Act 2014*, to make it easier to remove people refused permission to stay in the UK (by reducing the scope to appeal and simplifying the removal process) and to create a more 'hostile environment' for people living in the UK without a valid immigration status.
- Introducing a £35,000 salary requirement to settle in the UK.

The Coalition and Conservative Governments introduced a series of measures to try to reduce net migration to tens of thousands

Despite these measures net migration remains at a level similar to that in June 2010. The net migration estimate for the year ending March 2017 was 246,000.

² The Conservative Party, '[Invitation to join the government of Britain: the Conservative manifesto 2010](#)', page 21

2. Migration policy after Brexit

2.1 A White Paper and new immigration bill

Both the Government's paper on Brexit of February 2017 and the 2017 Queen's Speech promised legislation 'establishing new national policy on immigration'.³ The Home Secretary told the House:

...[the bill] will allow the Government to end the EU's rules on free movement of EU nationals in the UK, ensuring that we have the flexibility to create a fair and controlled immigration system. It will give us control over the numbers of people who come to the UK from the EU while welcoming those with the skills and expertise to make our nation better. What these rules look like will depend on the needs of the UK, and we are considering all the options of our future system very carefully. It is imperative that we understand what the impact could be on different sectors of the economy and the labour market, and that we make sure that businesses and communities have an opportunity to contribute their views on any future system. As now, new immigration rules will be subject to scrutiny by Parliament.⁴

The Government says future rules on entry from the EU will take account of the views of business and other sectors

The Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, David Davis, said in answer to a recent Parliamentary Question that the immigration bill will be brought before Parliament before a withdrawal agreement is finalised with the EU.⁵

A White Paper on future immigration policy was expected in early October. However at the start of that month the Immigration Minister, Brandon Lewis, told an Institute for Government fringe meeting at the Conservative Party conference that it would not be published until "late autumn".⁶ Responding to a Parliamentary Question on 21 November 2017, Mr Lewis said the Government's proposals will be published in "due course".

2.2 MAC research on the economic and social impacts of Brexit

On 27 July 2017 Home Secretary Amber Rudd commissioned advice from the Migration Advisory Committee on the impacts on the UK labour market of the UK's exit from the European Union and how the UK's immigration system should be aligned with a modern industrial strategy.

In her [commissioning letter to the MAC](#) Ms Rudd wrote:

We have therefore committed to introduce to Parliament an Immigration Bill to repeal the current EU-derived free movement provisions so as to be able, on our exit from the EU, to bring EU citizens fully within the scope of UK law. This will mean that, in future, we will be able to apply different immigration rules and

³ HM Government, [The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union](#), Cm 9417, February 2017; [Queen's Speech 2017](#), 21 June 2017

⁴ [HC Deb 28 June 2017 cc610-1](#)

⁵ [HC Deb 26 October 2017 c452](#)

⁶ ['Post-Brexit immigration white paper delayed until late autumn'](#), *Guardian*, 2 October 2017

requirements according to the UK's economic and social needs at the time, and reflecting our future deep and special partnership with the EU, including on any implementation arrangements following the UK's departure.

[...]

The Government will want to ensure that decisions on the long-term arrangements are based on evidence. The commission that we are now asking the MAC to undertake is very much part of this. I very much hope that in undertaking its work the MAC will want to consult widely and that those affected will take the opportunity to make sure their voices are heard.

Alongside that, the Government will be undertaking its own extensive programme of engagement and evidence gathering with all interested parties including business, industry, trades unions, educational institutions and many others, to ensure we strike a balance on future EU migration arrangements. It is important that those affected contribute to the design of future arrangements and start to consider how they might adapt to a future immigration system.

She emphasised that only when such research is completed and considered will the Government decide the future long-term immigration rules for EU citizens. She requested that the MAC report by September 2018.

2.3 Leaked Home Office paper

On 5 September 2017 the *Guardian* newspaper published online an [82 page Home Office paper](#), marked as extremely sensitive and dated August 2017, setting out proposals for a post-Brexit UK immigration policy.⁷ If implemented, the proposals in the leaked paper would make the rules to be met by prospective EU migrants much closer to those currently applied to migrants from outside the EEA.

The *Guardian* reported the paper had "already provoked rows between cabinet ministers" and the *Financial Times* said it had been "disowned" by both the Home Secretary and the Chancellor.⁸

A leaked Home Office document suggests the Government envisages much tighter controls on migration from the rest of Europe

⁷ '[Leaked document reveals UK Brexit plan to deter EU immigrants](#)', *the Guardian*, 5 September 2017

⁸ 'A cold shower for British business', *Financial Times*, 7 September 2017

3. Concerns expressed by sectors about migration policy after Brexit

The *Financial Times* reported a “furious” response from British business to the above leaked Home Office paper. The draft was described as potentially “catastrophic” by the British Hospitality Association and as risking “massive disruption to the entire food chain” by the National Farmers Union.⁹

In a letter to the Immigration Minister, Ufi Ibrahim, chief executive of the British Hospitality Association, warned:

If migratory flows for workers from the EU and beyond are severely curtailed, particularly non-highly skilled routes, the hospitality industry will be forced to contract, costing jobs and economic growth. Automation is not a viable alternative in our sector.¹⁰

The UK agriculture and horticulture sectors have long relied on migrant labour and fear labour shortages once EU free movement law no longer applies in the UK. The sectors’ concerns and calls for a new Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme are summarised in the Library briefing paper [Migrant workers in agriculture](#) (CBP 7987, 4 July 2017).

In its response to the Migration Advisory Committee’s call for evidence, the CBI explained that “the prospect of new immigration rules and uncertainty about the status of EU workers are among the issues most frequently raised by CBI members since the UK’s decision to leave the EU”.¹¹ Its submission warned that uncertainty over post-Brexit immigration policy “is undermining long-term confidence and [...] is already damaging the ability of companies to recruit and retain key workers”. It called for a change in the tone of the debate:

The current language being used within the immigration debate and constant focus by politicians about reducing migration is having a detrimental impact on the attractiveness of the UK as a place to work. It is causing workers of all skill levels – and most acutely the highly skilled – to hesitate about coming to the UK due to anxieties about feeling undervalued and unwelcome. If the UK is to remain a globally attractive destination for people to come and work, the language and tone which Government uses in the public debate must reflect the important contributions migrants make to this country.

The CBI said its members are as concerned about future EU migration rules as they are about new terms of trade

⁹ ‘Business reacts with fury to UK immigration plan’, *Financial Times*, 6 September 2017

¹⁰ BHA, ‘[Scheme to avert Brexit staff crisis will come too late, warns BHA](#)’, 6 October 2017

¹¹ CBI, ‘[Brexit and industrial strategy: CBI response to Migration Advisory Committee’s call for evidence](#)’, 17 November 2017

4. Summary of economic impacts of immigration

The impact of immigration on employment, wages, the public finances and other economic indicators depends on the characteristics of immigrants and the extent to which their skills complement those of existing workers. It may also depend on current economic performance and how this affects firms' demand for workers.

However, the degree to which impacts are positive or negative for those already in the UK will vary for different groups of workers in different places. A rise in migrant labour might have a positive impact on employment and wages in certain sectors of the economy, but less so in others. Geographically, we may expect the largest effects to be felt in areas that see the largest growth in immigrant numbers, at least in the short term. These areas may also see greater pressure on public services or social impacts besides the impacts on employment and wages discussed here. Effects are also likely to evolve over time: immediate effects may dissipate as the economy gradually adjusts and responds to changes in demand for goods and services caused by an expanding (or contracting) migrant workforce.

Research evidence on the impacts on employment, wages, GDP per capita and the public finances is briefly summarised below. The evidence is discussed in greater depth in the Library's briefing paper on [Impacts of immigration on population and the economy](#).

4.1 Employment

Most studies looking at the impact of immigration on UK employment have found that, on average, effects are small or ambiguous.

There may, however, be some displacement of workers during an economic downturn when there is greater competition for jobs. A 2012 study by the Migration Advisory Committee found some evidence that a rise in migrant numbers from outside the EU during periods of economic weakness could be associated with a decline in native employment. It also found that immigrants who had lived in the UK for over five years were not associated with any displacement of existing workers, suggesting displacement effects dissipate over time.¹²

Increases in the number of immigrant workers will obviously increase total employment. Looking ahead, the Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts that around three quarters of the rise in total employment between 2017 and 2022 is attributable to net inward migration.¹³ (This is based on a scenario where net inward migration falls to 165,000 a year by 2023, in line with the latest population projections from the Office for National Statistics).

¹² Migration Advisory Committee, [Analysis of the Impacts of Migration](#), January 2012

¹³ OBR, [Economic and Fiscal Outlook](#), November 2017, p67

4.2 Wages

Most of the literature finds a rise in the number of migrant workers has little effect on wages on average, but adverse effects tend to be focused on low-skilled workers. Adverse effects are likely to be greatest for migrants already living in the UK – new immigrants tend to be closer substitutes in terms of skills for previous immigrants than they are for UK-born workers.

Dustmann et al (2013) found that, over the period 1997-2005, immigration appeared to depress pay for the 20% lowest paid UK-born workers, but to increase pay for the other 80%.¹⁴ Nickell and Salaheen found an increase in the share of immigrants relative to the native population had a slight negative impact on average wages of all workers over the period 1992-2014, although larger negative effects were observed in the unskilled and semi-skilled service sector.¹⁵

4.3 GDP per capita

Evidence from the previous Labour Government to the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee 2008 inquiry, [The Economic Impact of Immigration](#), estimated that migration contributed 0.15% per year to the GDP per capita of the native population in the decade to 2006.¹⁶ Research by the National Institute for Economic and Social Research (NIESR) found a small positive impact on the UK's GDP per capita of migration from the EU8 countries to the UK between 2004 and 2009, which after adjusting for age and education levels of migrants, amounted to 0.2% in the long run.¹⁷

Analysis published since the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU indicates that falls in net migration over the coming years are likely to have a negative impact on GDP per capita.

- Portes and Forte (2016) estimate that in a scenario where net EU migration falls by 91,000 by 2020 and then stays flat, GDP per capita could be around 0.9-3.4% lower by 2030.¹⁸
- The Centre for Economic and Business Research (CEBR) estimates that a fall in total net migration to 73,000 by 2027 would reduce GDP per capita by 1.9% in 2030, or by 2.7% if the fall in net migration occurs over a shorter time span.¹⁹
- Modelling by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC, 2017) suggests that if migration from the EU was to fall to half its current level, UK GDP would be around 0.2% lower on a per capita basis.²⁰

¹⁴ Dustmann, C., Frattini, T. and Preston, I., [The Effect of Immigration along the Distribution of Wages](#), 2013

¹⁵ Nickell, S. and Salaheen, J., [The impact of immigration on occupational wages: evidence from Britain](#), Bank of England Staff Working Paper No 574, December 2015

¹⁶ House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs, [The Economic Impact of Immigration](#), 1 April 2008, HL 82-I, 2007-08

¹⁷ NIESR Discussion Paper 379, [Labour mobility within the EU - impact of enlargement and transitional arrangements](#), August 2011

¹⁸ Portes, J. and Forte, G., [The Economic Impact of Brexit-induced Reductions in Migration](#), December 2016

¹⁹ McWilliams, D., [CEBR Special Report- Economic Consequences of Limiting Migration](#), May 2017

²⁰ PwC, [UK Economic Outlook](#), November 2017

These projections are inevitably speculative: we do not know yet what the UK immigration system will look like in the future, how this will affect the skill levels of immigrants coming to the UK and what impacts this might have on UK productivity. The PwC research notes that on the one hand, reduced migration could mean reduced pressure on public services, but on the other hand migration helps staff those services; these potential effects are not included in the modelling.

4.4 Public finances

Existing research suggests the overall effect of immigration on the public finances is small, although impacts appear to vary for migrants from inside or outside the EU and for recent migrants compared to those who have been in the UK for longer. Results will depend on various key assumptions, including how public spending on particular items is allocated between immigrant and 'native' populations (and just who should be counted as an immigrant).

OBR estimates suggest that higher net migration scenarios are in the longer term likely to lead to lower public sector net debt. This is based on the assumption that immigrants are more likely to be of working age than the existing UK population, and thus are likely to boost tax receipts without adding much to age-related spending.²¹

Dustmann and Frattini (2014) found that over the period 1995 to 2011, immigrants from countries in the European Economic Area (EEA) contributed more to the public finances than they received in benefits and transfers. Both the native population and immigrants from non-EEA countries, on the other hand, made a negative net contribution.²² However, their results were criticised by Migration Watch, a think tank, as "the best case scenarios" and that alternative methodologies indicate lower revenues for recent migrants.²³ Rowthorn (2014) considered Migration Watch's criticisms and concluded that "depending on the method of estimation, recent EEA migrants to the UK have either paid their way or generated a modest surplus", but pointed out the aggregate effect is still very small as a share of GDP.²⁴

²¹ OBR, Fiscal Sustainability Report, January 2017, pp79-81

²² Dustmann, C. and Frattini, T., [The Fiscal Effects of Immigration to the UK](#), 2014

²³ Migration Watch, [Response to UCL paper on the fiscal effects of immigration to the UK](#), December 2014

²⁴ Rowthorn, R., [The Costs and Benefits of Large-scale immigration: Exploring the economic and demographic consequences for the UK](#), December 2015

5. Migration trends

5.1 Number of people coming to and leaving the UK

Net migration to the UK was 246,000 in the year ending March 2017, down 81,000 from the previous year.²⁵

The fall in the net migration level reflected both a decrease in the number of people coming to the UK (down 50,000) and an increase in the number of people leaving the UK (up 31,000).

Net migration of EU nationals (not including UK nationals) fell by 51,000 compared to the previous year, to 127,000. The number of people from other EU countries emigrating from the UK increased by 33,000, while the number immigrating to the UK was down 19,000. In particular, this reflected a sharp fall in immigration and a sharp increase in emigration among nationals of the EU8 countries²⁶ and Romania and Bulgaria.

Net migration of non-EU nationals was 179,000, down 14,000 on the year before. Net migration of British nationals to the UK decreased by 17,000 over the same period.

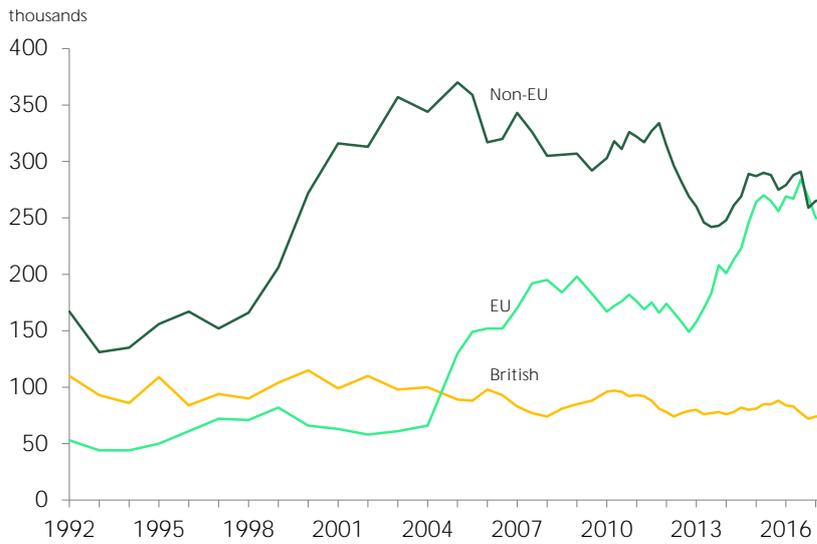
The charts below show the trend in immigration and emigration to the UK by nationality, over the past 25 years. Although recent estimates for net migration of EU nationals appear substantially higher than in the past, it is possible that it reached similar levels during the period 2005-06: data from the 2011 Census indicates that net migration during the mid-2000s was substantially higher than indicated by these estimates.

More information on immigration and emigration to and from the UK can be found in the Library's briefing paper on [Migration Statistics](#).

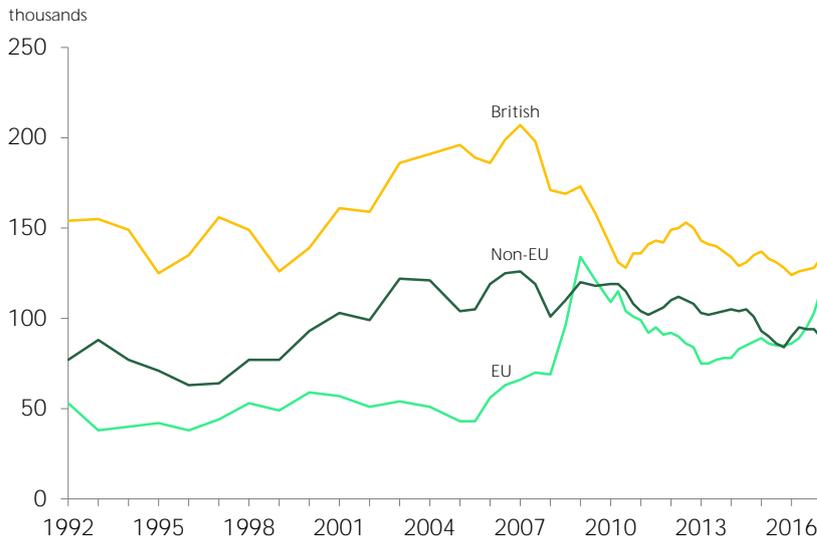
²⁵ Office for National Statistics, [Migration Statistics Quarterly Report: August 2017](#), 24 August 2017

²⁶ The EU8 consists of the Eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

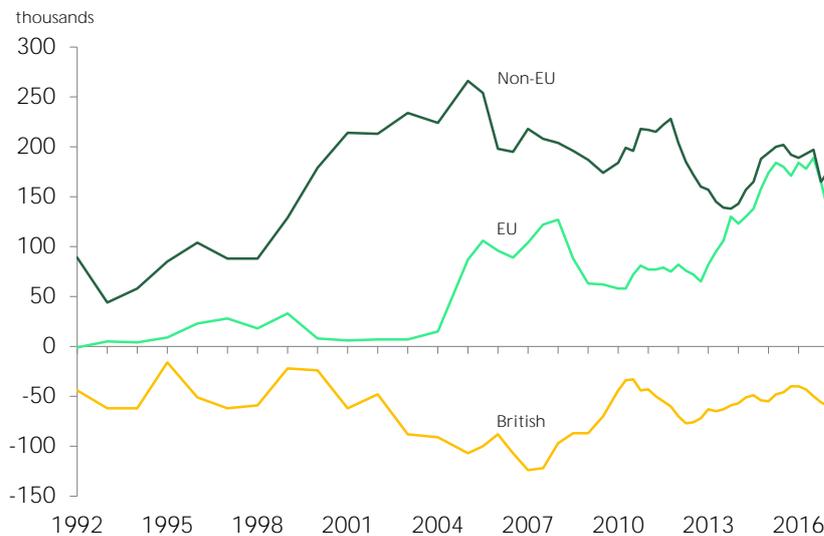
Immigration to the UK by nationality



Emigration from the UK by nationality



Net migration in the UK by nationality



Note: Years ending each quarter. Sources: [ONS Long-Term International Migration Estimates 2 series \(LTIM calendar year\)](#); [ONS Migration Statistics Quarterly Report, August 2017](#)

5.2 Employment of non-UK nationals

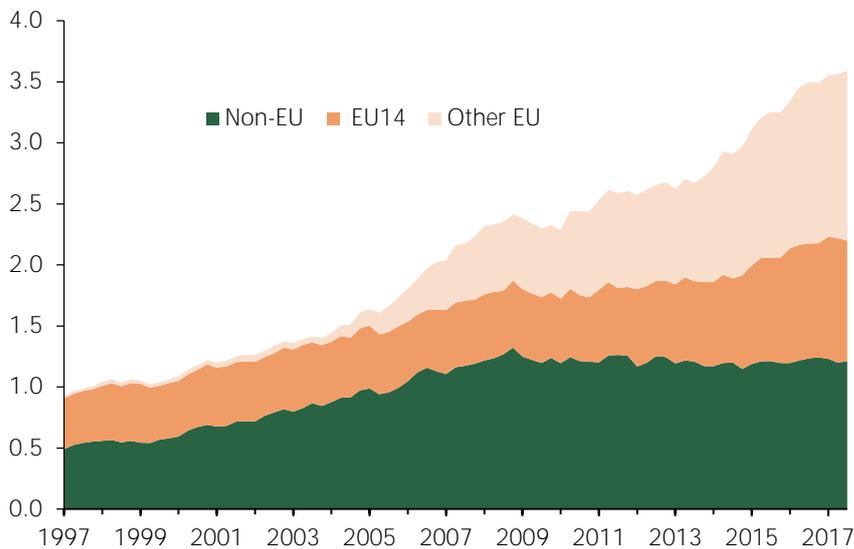
The number of non-UK nationals working in the UK increased by 89,000 over the year to July-September 2017, to 3.59 million.

Employment of EU nationals increased by 112,000 but there was a fall of 23,000 in the number of non-EU nationals working in the UK.²⁷

Over the same period, employment of UK nationals increased by 183,000 to 28.55 million.

As well as looking at nationality, we can also look at employment by country of birth. The number of people in employment who were not born in the UK increased by 132,000 in the year to July-September 2017, to 5.71 million. Employment of UK-born workers increased by 146,000 to 26.43 million.

Number of non-UK nationals working in the UK, 1997-2017
Millions, not seasonally adjusted



The number of EU nationals working in the UK doubled between 2004 and 2010, reflecting a sharp increase in the number of workers from the A8 countries following their accession to the EU.

Between 2010 and 2017, the number of EU nationals in the UK doubled again. Again there was strong growth in numbers of A8 nationals, but the increase is also explained by a large rise in workers from EU14 countries whose numbers had increased only slightly between 2004 and 2010. More recently, there has been faster growth in the number of Romanian and Bulgarian nationals working in the UK following the removal of transitional restrictions on free movement in January 2014. The number of non-EU nationals in employment has been roughly unchanged since 2009, having grown steadily between 1997 and 2008.

For further information, see the Library's briefing papers on [Employment by country of birth and nationality](#) (headline trends) and [Employment of other EU nationals in the UK](#) (more detailed analysis).

²⁷ ONS, *UK Labour Market, November 2017*, Table EMP06

6. Background reading

6.1 Library briefing papers

- [Migration Statistics](#)
SN06077, 10 October 2017
- [Employment of other EU nationals in the UK](#)
CBP-8069, 3 August 2017
- [Employment by country of birth and nationality](#)
SN07056, 23 November 2017
- [Brexit: what impact on those currently exercising free movement rights?](#)
CBP-7871, 11 July 2017
- [Migrant workers in agriculture](#)
CBP-7987, 4 July 2017
- [Statistics on Migrants and benefits](#)
CBP-7445, 28 March 2017
- [Impacts of immigration on population and the economy](#)
CBP-7659, 25 July 2016

6.2 Prime Minister's speeches

[The government's negotiating objectives for exiting the EU](#)

10 Downing Street, 17 January 2017

[PM's Florence speech: a new era of cooperation and partnership between the UK and the EU](#)

22 September 2017

6.3 Migration Advisory Committee research on labour market impacts of Brexit

- [Home Secretary's letter to Professor Alan Manning](#), chair of the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC), commissioning the MAC to examine the role EU nationals play in the UK economy and society, July 2017
- Migration Advisory Committee, [EEA-workers in the UK labour market – briefing note to accompany call for evidence](#)
August 2017
- Migration Advisory Committee, [International students – briefing note to accompany call for evidence](#)
August 2017

6.4 Submissions to the MAC

- [CBI submission to the Migration Advisory Committee](#)
17 November 2017
- [The Contribution of EEA Citizens to Scotland: the Scottish Government's Response to the Migration Advisory Committee Call for Evidence on the Role of EEA Workers in the UK Labour Market - Evidence Annex](#)
8 November 2017
- [TUC submission to Migration Advisory Committee: EEA workers in the UK labour market](#)
1 November 2017
- [Nursing and Midwifery Council submission to Migration Advisory Committee's Call for evidence](#)
1 November 2017
- [London Chamber of Commerce and Industry response to Migration Advisory Committee call for evidence](#)
27 October 2017
- [Consultation response: submission to the Migration Advisory Committee](#)
Royal Society, 26 October 2017
- [EEF response to MAC call for evidence on EEA workers in the UK labour market](#)
EEF, The Manufacturers' Association, 27 October 2017

Please note, there are many more submissions than can be included here. This is therefore a selective rather than a comprehensive list.

6.5 Research summaries

- [How immigrants affect public finances.](#)
Full Fact, 5 June 2017
- [The Fiscal Impact of Immigration in the UK](#)
Migration Observatory, May 2017
- [The Labour Market Effects of Immigration](#)
Migration Observatory, February 2017
- [Impacts of migration on UK native employment: an analytical review of the evidence](#)
Department for Business, Innovation & Skills and Home Office, 6 March 2014

7. Press Articles

[Business frets over Brexit migration rules as much as trade deal: CBI says substantial new barriers to free movement likely to damage economy](#)

Robert Wright
Financial Times, 16 November 2017

[Winnowing EU migrants means rotting crops](#)

Scheherazade Daneshkhu
Financial Times, 14 November 2017

[The Brexit impact studies must be released in full: Ministers claim that disclosing the 58 reports could harm the national interest. But the government lost the vote so now we have to be told the truth](#)

Gina Miller
The Guardian, 3 November 2017

[Some key EU workers should be exempt from post-Brexit immigration controls, suggests Iain Duncan Smith](#)

Ashley Cowburn
The Independent, 24 October 2017

[Horticulture bodies respond to Migration Advisory Committee on seasonal workers](#)

Matthew Appleby
Horticulture Week, 16 October 2017

[Farmers reject SNP call for Scots immigration system after Brexit](#)

Hamish Macdonell
The Times, 3 October 2017

[Fact Check: does immigration have an impact on wages or employment?](#)

The Conversation, 13 September 2017

[The Home Office makes huge profits from immigrants. So where is the money going to?](#)

Thom Brooks
The Independent, 13 September 2017

[Post-Brexit Britain 'will restrict entry to low-skilled Europeans'](#)

Alison Little
The Express, 6 September 2017

[Theresa May defends new EU immigration controls after Brexit leak](#)

Heather Stewart and Peter Walker
The Guardian, 6 September 2017

[EU commentators excoriate leaked Home Office Brexit plans](#)

Jon Henley
The Guardian, 6 September 2017

[What to make of Home Office leak on immigration policy?](#)

James Blitz

Financial Times, 6 September 2017

[Here's all you need to know about the leaked Home Office post-Brexit migration plans](#)

Asa Bennett

The Telegraph, 6 September 2017

[Controlling migration need not harm EU citizens or damage the economy](#)

Brandon Lewis

The Times, 27 July 2017

[UK Government migration target 'could cause considerable damage to economy'](#)

Kevin Schofield

Holyrood Magazine, 21 July 2017

[Explaining Britain's immigration paradox](#): Migration is good for the economy. So why are the places with the biggest influxes doing so badly?

The Economist, 15 April 2017

8. Parliamentary material

8.1 Parliamentary reports

- House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee, [Brexit and the Labour Market](#), July 2017
- House of Lords European Union Committee, [Brexit: UK-EU movement of people](#), March 2017
- APPG on migration, [Brexit: Beyond the highly skilled – the needs of other economic stakeholders](#), September 2017

8.2 Parliamentary questions

[Migrant Workers: EEA Nationals](#): Written question - 114931

Asked by Christine Jardine (Edinburgh West)

Asked on: 21 November 2017

Home Office

Migrant Workers: EEA Nationals

114931

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, following the announcement that the number of exceptionally talented migrant visas is to be doubled, what assessment she has made of the potential damage caused by the loss of free movement of EEA nationals on the digital technology, science and arts sectors.

Answered by: Brandon Lewis

Answered on: 23 November 2017

The current Exceptional Talent demonstrates our commitment to continuing to attract top international talent in the digital technology, science and arts sectors.

We are building an immigration system that works in the national interest, and will continue to support these sectors and the wider economy. There are a range of options for the future immigration system and it is important that we understand the impacts on the different sectors of the economy and the labour market.

On 27 July, the Government commissioned the independent Migration Advisory Committee to gather evidence on patterns of EU migration and the role of migration in the wider economy, ahead of our exit from the EU. The MAC will report in September 2018 and its findings will help shape the government's decisions on the future immigration system.

[Seasonal Workers: Immigration Controls:](#)

Written question - 113364

Asked by [Sue Hayman](#) (Workington)

Asked on: 15 November 2017

Home Office

Seasonal Workers: Immigration Controls

113364

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether seasonal workers are included in the Government's target to reduce migration.

Answered by: [Brandon Lewis](#)

Answered on: 21 November 2017

For the time being, the United Kingdom remains a part of the European Union and the latest labour market statistics continue to show an increased number of EU citizens entering into the UK labour force. However, the Government has committed to keeping the position under review and we will continue to engage with the agricultural sector.

The Government has commissioned the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to assess the impact of leaving the EU and the subsequent needs of the UK economy, including the rural economy. We will outline our future immigration proposals in due course.

Net migration includes all persons coming to the UK for 12 months or longer.

[Rural Areas: Migrant Workers:](#)

Written question - 113263

Asked by Sue Hayman (Workington)

Asked on: 15 November 2017

Home Office

Rural Areas: Migrant Workers

113263

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that rural businesses are able to recruit the workers they require from countries within the EU and elsewhere.

Answered by: Brandon Lewis

Answered on: 21 November 2017

For the time being, the United Kingdom remains a part of the European Union and the latest labour market statistics continue to show an increased number of EU citizens entering into the UK labour force.

However, the Government has committed to keeping the position under review and we will continue to engage with the agricultural sector.

The Government has commissioned the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to assess the impact of leaving the EU and the subsequent needs of the UK economy, including the rural economy. We will outline our future immigration proposals in due course.

Net migration includes all persons coming to the UK for 12 months or longer.

[Immigration: Skilled Workers: Written question](#) - 112965

Asked by Siobhain McDonagh (Mitcham and Morden)

Asked on: 14 November 2017

Home Office

Immigration: Skilled Workers

112965

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with Ministers from other Departments on the value to the UK economy of mid-level skills or those skills at Standard Occupational Classification levels 2 and 3; and what plans her Department has to ensure that any future changes to immigration policy allow businesses to continue to access those mid-level skills necessary for growth and employment in the UK.

Answered by: Brandon Lewis

Answered on: 17 November 2017

We are considering a range of options for our future immigration arrangements and are clear that we must manage the process properly so that the system serves the national interest.

On 27 July 2017, we commissioned the independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to advise on the economic and social impacts of the UK's exit from the European Union and also on how the UK's immigration system should be aligned with a modern industrial strategy. As part of this, the MAC has been asked to consider a number of factors including skill level.

They are due to report on their findings in September 2018.

Full details about the MAC commission can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/migration-advisory-committee>

[Agriculture: Seasonal Workers: Written question](#) - 112039

Asked by Mr Alister Jack (Dumfries and Galloway)

Asked on: 07 November 2017

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Agriculture: Seasonal Workers

112039

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on a new migration system which will allow farmers to employ seasonal workers from other countries.

Answered by: George Eustice

Answered on: 13 November 2017

Defra Ministers have ongoing discussions with a range of government departments, including the Home Office, about securing the workforce that the farming industry needs for the future.

The Government has commissioned the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to better understand the reliance on EU migrant workers across the economy and to consider the UK's labour market needs.

The Home Office leads on immigration, and we are working with them to ensure that the specific needs of food and farming industry are considered in our future immigration system. We will look to develop a system which works for the whole United Kingdom.

[Immigration: EU Nationals: Written question](#) - 105099

Asked by Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion)

Asked on: 14 September 2017

Home Office

Immigration: EU Nationals

105099

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to publish previously unpublished reviews, studies and reports into the effects of EU migration on UK wages and the UK economy.

Answered by: Brandon Lewis

Answered on: 16 October 2017

A number of reports on the economic impacts of migration have been published by the Government, including the report jointly published by the Home Office and then Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in 2014 titled [Impacts of migration on UK native employment: an](#)

[analytical review of the evidence](#) which provides a comprehensive summary of the research on labour market impacts of migration.

[Immigration: EU Nationals](#): Written question - 105327

Asked by Thangam Debbonaire (Bristol West)

Asked on: 14 September 2017

Home Office

Immigration: EU Nationals

105327

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what terms of reference she has set for the study of the economic and social contributions and costs of EU citizens in the UK that she has commissioned from the independent Migration Advisory Committee; and whether other studies covering social and cultural contributions will be commissioned.

Answered by: Brandon Lewis

Answered on: 10 October 2017

On 27 July, my Right Honourable Friend the Home Secretary commissioned the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to gather evidence on patterns of EU migration and the role of migration in the wider economy, ahead of our exit from the EU, as well as aligning the UK immigration system with a modern industrial strategy

We have asked the MAC to report by September 2018 but the MAC may wish to provide interim reports throughout the period. The full commission is available online at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633321/Commission_to_the_MAC.pdf

The Government will carefully consider any recommendations made to it by the MAC before finalising the details of the future immigration system for EU nationals.

[Brexit: Further Devolution](#)

25 October 2017

Volume 630 c283-6

Martyn Day

Can I, for the third time, ask the Secretary of State to name one power that is coming? If he is struggling for powers, may I suggest that he considers immigration, so that we can tackle things such as the skills immigration charge, which will be causing a skills shortage and damaging the economy in my constituency?

David Mundell

I can give the hon. Gentleman a definitive answer on the last part of his question. Immigration is not being devolved to Scotland. The Smith commission process identified those areas of responsibility to be devolved, and immigration was not one of them. The Scottish National party accepted that report and, on the basis of that, we implemented it in the Scotland Act 2016.

Gavin Newlands

I am disappointed that, after three questions, we still have not had an answer. On immigration, I am disappointed that the Secretary of State was disinclined to listen to my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow and East Falkirk (Martyn Day). Perhaps he will listen to Nobel laureate Joe Stiglitz who, over the weekend, said that Scotland should have the powers to go its own way in migration policy. He knows a bit more about this than we do, so is he right?

David Mundell

I seem to remember that Professor Joe Stiglitz supported independence for Scotland, but the people of Scotland knew a bit more than the professor and decided to keep Scotland in the United Kingdom.

8.3 Debates

[Net Migration Target: International Students](#)

20 November 2017

Volume 631 c719

Ms Diane Abbott (Hackney North and Stoke Newington) (Lab)

The Minister will be aware that the Financial Times reported on 8 November that an ally of the Home Secretary is in favour of removing international students from the Government's migration targets. Some people suspect that the unnamed ally may, in fact, be the Home Secretary herself. Whether or not that is the case, the Minister has conceded that international students make an enormous contribution not just to academia but to the economies of our university towns. Will the Government listen to voices on both sides of the House and remove international students from the migration target?

Brandon Lewis

Obviously, we are all allies, so it is quite easy for me to answer the hon. Lady's question. I direct her to have a look at the answer I gave a few moments ago. The key thing with students is that, thanks to the work

that this Government have done since 2010 in shutting down about 920 bogus colleges, students are now complying, so the effect on migration is marginal, at best.

[Leaving the EU: Immigration Rules](#)

20 November 2017

Volume 631 c711

Joanna Cherry (Edinburgh South West) (SNP)

Data analysis submitted to the MAC by the Scottish Government shows that in Scotland EU nationals who work in Scotland contribute an average of £34,400 each per annum to gross domestic product—that is more than £4.4 billion a year. Does the Home Secretary agree that that evidence shows that Brexit is putting a vital contribution to Scotland's economy at risk?

Amber Rudd

I point out to the hon. and learned Lady that we have not left the EU yet, so that labour will continue to be available until we do. I am delighted to hear that there has been an additional submission from Scotland, and I am sure the MAC will look carefully at the evidence provided.

Joanna Cherry

Scotland's demographic profile is very different from that of the rest of the UK, because over the next 10 years Scotland's population growth is projected to come entirely—100%—from migration, whereas the comparator figure for the UK is 58%. Will the Home Secretary look carefully at supporting the devolution of immigration to Scotland, in response to this strong evidence of divergence and to address concerns such as those raised by the hon. Member for Dumfries and Galloway (Mr Jack)?

Amber Rudd

The hon. and learned Lady will be aware that immigration remains a reserved matter. We will, nevertheless, be considering the needs of the UK as a whole. I recognise that Scotland has some particular circumstances and need for skilled labour. There is a Scotland-specific shortage occupation list, which will cover some of the areas she has drawn attention to, but I am sure that she, like me, will look forward with eager anticipation to the MAC's report next year.

Ms Diane Abbott (Hackney North and Stoke Newington) (Lab)

Does the Secretary of State share the concerns of the National Farmers Union, which reports a fourfold increase in the number of vacancies because of the falling number of EU workers, of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, which says that the growth of the car industry depends on access to skilled labour in Europe, and of the Nursing & Midwifery Council, which reports a 96% drop in nurse registrations from the EU? Does she not recognise that industry wants answers on these issues sooner rather than later?

Amber Rudd

What I recognise is the incredible value that EU workers and professionals provide in the UK—we are fortunate to have so many of them working here. We will make sure that the immigration policy we design as we leave the EU continues to get the best out of that, but also adds some controls; we must acknowledge the fact that, having voted to leave the EU, the public expect us to put some controls on it. We will do that, but in a way that continues to welcome EU workers, who provide such important work in areas such as hospitals and schools.

[Brexit: Agriculture and Farm Animal Welfare \(European Union Committee Report\)](#)

House of Lords

17 October 2017

Volume 785 c538-585

Lord Teverson (LD)

It is well known, and has been said many times, that 90% of our vets in abattoirs, an important part of our animal welfare programme, are non-UK EU nationals. In both food processing and agriculture, we require a large number of workers from the EU. Yes, we could replace them from other parts of the world, but that obviously will depend on our migration policy. Already we have difficulty in attracting and retaining people. An issue that came over very strongly is that agricultural workers in particular are skilled workers. The way in which they are able to harvest is very skilled but not in terms of a Home Office definition. It is an area where automation cannot substitute in the medium or short term. People are a key factor.

...

Viscount Hanworth (Lab)

Next, I turn to the restrictions on the freedom of movement of labour that are the objective of many Brexit advocates. British agriculture relies greatly on workers from the rest of the EU. There is considerable reliance on seasonal migratory labour for harvesting and fruit picking, but many permanently resident EU migrants are employed throughout the agricultural and food processing industries. Some of the facts and

figures are surprising. We have been told that 40% of staff on egg farms are EU migrants, as are 50% of workers in egg-packing factories. In poultry meat factories, the figure is 60%. In recent years, nearly half of the veterinary surgeons registering in the UK have qualified from veterinary schools elsewhere in the EU. We have been told that 90% of the vets working in slaughterhouses are EU nationals from abroad. Vets can be described as skilled workers, in contrast to fruit pickers and abattoir workers. However, our witnesses have been unanimous in declaring that it is unhelpful to make such a distinction in agriculture. Fruit pickers may not have qualifications relating to their job but they are skilled nevertheless, and they cannot be replaced readily by casual untrained labourers. Our agriculture depends on them. Whereas some Ministers recognise the truth of that, the message coming from the Government is that the immigration policy after Brexit will be based on the skill levels of immigrants.

...

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch (Lab)

We have heard this evening about the problems of recruiting vets and the fact that so many of them come from the EU. These challenges extend across other farming and food manufacturing sectors, so does the Minister understand the urgent need to give existing EU workers greater certainty about their right to stay, as well as providing for a sector-specific migration policy to provide the crucial workforce for the longer term?

[Higher Education and Research Bill](#)

House of Commons

26 April 2017

Volume 624 c1158-1185

Carol Monaghan (SNP)

In Scotland, international students make an important contribution to the economy. The UK Government have focused their migration policy on control, rather than having effective policies that allow for flexibility and support in the area of migration. The loss of the post-study work visa is a blow to many students, but also to our local economy, which is missing out on those skilled people.

...

Joanna Cherry (Edinburgh South West) (SNP)

Does she agree that without Lords amendment 156, UK universities will continue to suffer adverse effects as a result of Brexit, the Government's immigration policy, the ridiculous inclusion of international students in the net migration figures and the lack of protection for university staff from the strict immigration controls?

[Immigration Skills Charge Regulations 2017](#)

House of Lords

21 March 2017

Volume 782 c37GC – 48GC

[Welsh Affairs](#)

House of Commons

02 March 2017

Volume 622 c503-536

Nick Thomas-Symonds (Torfaen) (Lab)

The priorities are both immediate and long term. Immediately, we must secure tariff-free access to the single market. Indeed, the Welsh Government's "[Securing Wales' Future](#)" document, which was produced together with Plaid Cymru, sets out the importance of participation in the single market, and a balanced migration policy, given that over two thirds of Welsh exports go there.

About the Library

The House of Commons Library research service provides MPs and their staff with the impartial briefing and evidence base they need to do their work in scrutinising Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents.

As well as providing MPs with a confidential service we publish open briefing papers, which are available on the Parliament website.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publically available research briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing only with Members and their staff.

If you have any general questions about the work of the House of Commons you can email hcinfo@parliament.uk.

Disclaimer

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. The House of Commons or the author(s) shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice.

The House of Commons accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. This information is provided subject to the [conditions of the Open Parliament Licence](#).