



Home Office

Fourth report on statistics being collected under the exit checks programme

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Contents

Introduction	2
Acknowledgements	2
Executive Summary	3
Chapter 1 Updated compliance results	4
Chapter 2 Updated Quality metrics	9
Glossary	14

Introduction

This experimental statistics report provides updated results on the proportion of non-EEA nationals who departed before their visa expired, as well as updated data quality metrics for data collected under the exit checks system. A description of the methods used to produce the data, and supplementary information on detailed quality issues, and Appendix reference tables for financial years 2016/17 to 2018/19 are included in the separate “User Guide to the Home Office statistics on exit checks”.

Coverage

Note: The analysis excludes the majority of visitors to the UK who do not need a visa, such as UK and other EU nationals living overseas who visit the UK, as well as ‘non-visa’ nationals, such as US citizens, who do not normally need a visa to visit the UK. It only covers individuals who are identified as having entered the UK on a visa on or after April 2015 (the exit checks data collection commenced on 8 April 2015). This report presents the latest results, for financial year 2018/19, with reference tables covering financial years 2016/17 to 2018/19 in the separate User Guide as indicated above.

Estimation and interpretation

The analysis is based on matching data from multiple administrative datasets, and the figures included in this report are therefore experimental *estimates*. Compliance in this report refers only to whether individuals appear to have departed (i.e. whether individuals have a matched departure event) before or on the date their visa expired – and not other aspects of compliance with the immigration rules.

Improved methods, producing updated results

The data used in this report is based on more recent extracts, thereby taking account of further information, where received, about individuals’ travel. Therefore, figures presented in this report for 2017/18 and 2016/17 replace those presented in the “Third report on statistics being collected under the exit checks programme” published in August 2018. The results are broadly consistent with the messages in the August 2018 and previous reports.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks are due to a wide range of experts within the Home Office who have contributed their analytical and operational expertise to the development of this report, the analysis of the data and the development of the statistical systems used, and to colleagues at the Office for National Statistics. Last but not least, we acknowledge the support of all our data suppliers.

Executive Summary

1. The exit checks programme was designed primarily for operational immigration control rather than to produce statistics. The results are derived by combining and matching data from carriers, from passport examinations, and from immigration records. The high level of compliance indicated is encouraging, and quality metrics show high levels of coverage. However the methods are still being developed and hence these statistics are classified as 'Experimental Statistics'.
2. The latest results show the vast majority (96.3%) of non-EEA nationals with visas expiring in 2018/19, that is, who were due to leave, departed in time (*corresponding figures for 2017/18 and 2016/17 of 97.4% and 96.8% respectively*, although for reasons explained below, small changes between years do not imply any change in the overall trend or alter the key finding of high levels of compliance).
3. The analysis excludes i) the majority of visitors to the UK who do not need a visa, such as UK and other EU nationals living overseas who visit the UK, ii) 'non-visa' nationals, such as US citizens who don't normally need a visa to visit the UK iii) nationals of Gulf states visiting under the Electronic Visa Waiver scheme iv) the minority of visit visa holders who have long term visit visas, allowing multiple visits each of up to six months v) those who extended their stay in the UK and other people who arrived prior to the introduction of exit checks and who remain in the country. It is therefore, an analysis of relatively recent cohorts of visa holders with expired leave but may not be representative of all those issued visas, now or in the past.

Identified compliance results

4. These statistics show those people who have been clearly identified as departing on or before their visa expires, along with some identified as leaving late. The remainder are not necessarily non-compliant – some may have left via the Common Travel Area or may not have been matched departing (yet). We therefore refer to the headline figures as 'identified' compliance, rather than total compliance. As noted above, small changes between years do not imply any change in the overall trend or alter the key finding of high levels of compliance). Data are provisional and based on a snapshot of the latest data (extract at 11 June 2019).
5. In the latest analysis the main findings are:
 - i) Identified compliance rates remain high amongst those due to leave with 96.3% departing in time for 2018/19 expiries. (*The figures for 2017/18 and 2016/17 expiries were 97.4% and 96.8%*).
 - ii) For the 1.82m visa expiries in 2018/19, approximately 96.3% departed in time, before their visa expired, 0.4% departed late, after their visa expired, and 3.3% were not initially identified as departing, e.g. may have not been successfully matched, left via Common Travel Area, or overstayed. (*The figures for 2017/18 were 1.72m, 97.4%, 0.6%, and 2.0%*).
 - iii) For visitor, study, and work visas expiring in 2018/19, the proportions departing in time were also high, 96.9%, 97.5% and 95.7%, respectively. (*The figures for 2017/18 were 98.2%, 98.0%, and 96.5%*).

Quality of the data

6. The quality of the ISA system data has been improving, for example:
 - i) the route coverage¹ (i.e. whether systems were in place to collect data on that route) for passenger arrivals has increased, reaching 100% for the in-scope outbound routes by the end of June 2015 and 89% for all inbound routes from June 2017 onwards, including 100% for arrivals by air and cruise liner. Whilst coverage is lower for rail and ferry inbound travel, its impact on the ISA system data is mitigated by passport examinations data. In particular, all inbound rail passengers and most inbound ferry passengers arriving from Belgium or France must present passports for examination (at UK's juxtaposed border controls²).
 - ii) Aviation voyage level completeness for the underlying Advance Passenger Information (API) data is now very high, averaging over 99% in June 2019 (measured by at least one Passenger Check-in message received for inbound data, at least one Passenger Departure confirmation message received for outbound data)
 - iii) The quality of data matching for information about individual passengers has improved. For 2018/19, immigration records were found and matched for 95.3% of inbound travel movements (API only) of 'visa nationals'³ where an identity was created (excluding trips of under 48hours).

Next steps and further exploitation of the data

7. This report forms part of a larger cross Government Statistical Service (GSS) transformation plan to put administrative data at the core of migration statistics, reported [here](#), The data has also been used as part of examining the compliance of students in the [Tier 4 pilot evaluation](#).

¹Route coverage relates to there being arrangements in place to collect data on routes, not that data collection is complete. For inbound travel, the data provided by the carriers and port operators is further supplemented by the additional data captured as part of the regular immigration checks at the border, which is used to mitigate the any shortfall.

²<https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2017/07/11/fact-sheet-the-uks-juxtaposed-border-controls/>.

³See the Glossary for definition of 'visa nationals' and 'non visa nationals'.

Chapter 1 Updated compliance results

Background

This is the fourth report on the data collected on travellers departing from and arriving in the UK as part of the Home Office exit checks programme. It provides updated experimental statistics relating to the identified compliance of those passengers required to obtain a visa, as well as updates and reporting of further data quality investigations.

This chapter provides an update to results presented in the “Third report on statistics being collected under the exit checks programme” (Home Office, 2018). It explains some of the important issues and caveats connected with the production of the figures that need to be taken into account, when interpreting the data. In particular, missing departure information for any individuals may result in significantly inaccurate statistical estimates of numbers not departed.

Policy context

Since 2010 a range of measures have been implemented to improve compliance with the UK’s immigration system. These policy changes have, for example, contributed to the rise in the proportion of visas being granted from 73% in 2010 to 97% in 2018 for non-EEA sponsored students (Tier 4), and from 88% in 2010 to 95% in 2018 for visas granted to non-EEA nationals on work routes. These changes suggest that the more recent cohorts of visa holders (whose compliance rates are presented in this report) may be more compliant than those whose visas expired in earlier years. Further information on the policy changes from 2010 onwards is included in the separate “User Guide to the Home Office statistics on exit checks”.

Statistical system development challenges

The data now collated by the Home Office in its border systems, provides a more comprehensive picture than has ever been available on those entering and leaving the United Kingdom. However, this data is new, only having commenced on 8th April 2015, and as ‘experimental’ data, it poses a number of statistical challenges, including:

- Coverage – the extent to which systems are in place to collect data for all routes.
- Data receipt at voyage level (previously referred to as ‘completeness’) – the extent to which at least one departure confirmation message is provided by carriers for every flight or voyage.
- Matching - The extent to which data on travel movements collected by airlines and other carriers can be matched to immigration system records. Reasons why a person’s record may not be matched include, for example, if they are dual nationals and do not use a single document for travel or if different data systems have captured their name or other details differently.

How the results are produced

The Initial Status Analysis (ISA) system combines data into identities that link an individual’s travel in or out of the country with their immigration history, such as visa type and periods of leave granted. The event history is used in combination with agreed business rules in the assessment of an individual’s immigration status. The system assigns a status to individuals based on this history, most commonly, those known to be compliant, late departures and those with no departure matched on the ISA system.

Coverage and completeness

There are millions of travel movements and data is received from hundreds of carriers. As with all large complex data collections based on administrative data, the data received may not always be complete and fully accurate - either for individual returns or for individual items of data within a return, or due to data issues in the underlying administrative records from which the returns are produced. There are also a number of ways in which a traveller’s departure may legitimately not be initially identified or recorded by the system, e.g. where outward travel is by the Common Travel Area (CTA), or when a traveller unfortunately dies in the UK.

Data is based on live operational systems which change continually as new information is added. Additionally, the ISA system is still under development. Both changes to the ISA system as development continues, and to the underlying information recorded on operational systems, may result in future revisions to the figures quoted in this report.

Who is included in the results

The statistics reported below look at when non-EEA nationals departed compared to their visa expiry date, looking at those on short term visit visas, and those on longer term routes such as work or study.

The analysis includes only those people who had both valid leave after April 2015 (the date when the full exit checks system was launched) and were identified as entering the UK from April 2015 onwards – this includes both people granted visas after April 2015 and people returning to the UK on an existing valid visa.

The analysis excludes:

- the majority of visitors to the UK, who don't need a visa - UK and other EU nationals living overseas who visit the UK as well as 'non-visa' nationals (e.g. USA) who don't normally need a visa to visit the UK
- the minority of visit visa holders who have long term visit visas (longer visas allowing multiple visits, each of up to six months) and those whose visa expired in earlier years before the introduction of exit checks
- those whose entry clearance visa expired but who obtained settlement or other leave allowing them to continue to stay whilst in the UK, who were therefore compliant. Consequently, the results presented understate true compliance levels, particularly for routes where a significant proportion obtain settlement or other leave allowing them to stay in the UK
- individuals who were not matched to a visa or leave to remain at the point of their last entry into the UK.
- visitors who are nationals of Gulf States whose journey was under an Electronic Visa Waiver Scheme, and those non-visa nationals who were granted visit visas
- Crew

Interpreting the results

Any resultant estimates for those whose departure is unclear from automatic matching will not provide a full picture of the potentially resident illegal population, whose number is unknown. The statistics reported here are *estimates* and for reasons explained in previous reports, are likely to indicate minimum levels of compliance. Further investigations looking at data in more detail, reported previously, indicate that some of those not initially identified as having departed the UK, were in fact compliant.

For the small minority of individuals when there is no record of their departure initially identified, there are known – and potentially significant uncertainties within the immigration system, impacting the assignment of statuses. Key sources of uncertainty include coverage and completeness of travel data, data being provided but of insufficient quality, data not pulled into the Initial Status Analysis (ISA) system, and effectiveness of matching identities to bring together travel and immigration events.

Whilst some routes were not in scope for the introduction of exit checks, most notably travel within the Common Travel Area (CTA), we have assessed that the proportion of non-EEA travellers overall whose departure would not be counted in this way is likely to be low.

The ISA system is still under development. Changes to the ISA system as development continues will change the figures quoted in this report. It is also reliant on the quality of data that it draws upon. Data quality issues and data entry lags in Home Office administrative systems, such as CID and CRS will have an impact on the details of identities held within the ISA system.

Compliance in this report refers only to whether individuals appear to have departed before or on the date their visa expired – and not other aspects of compliance with the immigration rules e.g. whether individuals complied with any other conditions associated with their visa.

Identified departure rates for non-EEA nationals granted visas, by type

Results from analysis of those visa holders whose leave expired in 2018/19 had the following statuses recorded on the ISA system:

- **96.3%** were recorded as having left in-time (e.g. before their leave expired)
- 3.7% were not recorded as leaving before their visa expiry date, of whom 0.4% departed late i.e. after their leave had expired and 3.3% had leave expired but no departure was initially identified

Corresponding information for those visitors within scope, work migrants and students showed:

- **Visitors: 96.9%** of those who arrived as a visitor were recorded as having left in-time.
- **Students: 97.5%** of those who arrived for study were recorded as having left in-time.
- **Workers: 95.7%** of those who arrived for employment were recorded as having left in-time.

Of the remainder, some may have left but not been identified for the reasons explained above, others will have left late, and some may have overstayed.

Table 1.1 Expiries and departures - non-EEA nationals granted visas*, by category - 2018/19

Visa Category	Volume of expiries*	Percentage with known departure in time**
Visiting the UK***	1,369,159	96.9%
Study	283,376	97.5%
Work	114,916	95.7%
Other****	49,546	73.1%
Total	1,816,997	96.3%

* Or in-country extensions of leave to remain. Excludes a small number of cases where there is specific additional evidence of further leave or that a person has left the UK or evidence of an application in progress.

** Excludes cases where departure data is not found due to known gaps in the ISA system, and late departures. Reasons why a person's record may not be matched and therefore not identify a departure may include, for example, if they are dual nationals and do not use a single document for travel or if different data systems have captured their name or other details differently.

*** Excludes non-visa nationals (who don't normally require a visa to visit the UK e.g. US nationals).

****After visitors, study and employment, the most common type of visas granted are family-related. Visas relating to family and resettlement in due course often lead to settlement grants (indefinite leave to remain). Where settlement grants occur, these cases are not included in this analysis as such individuals would not then be expected to depart the UK. Consequently this 'Other' category understates the true level of compliance of individuals granted family and resettlement visas and records a lower in-time departure rate than the true level of compliance.

Identified departure rates for non-EEA nationals granted work and study visas

The figures for work visas can be further broken down to show the comparable rates for skilled sponsored workers (Tier 2), youth mobility and temporary workers (Tier 5), the exceptional talent and entrepreneurial visas (Tier 1) and others. The identified departure rate for the main Tier 2 visas is 96.1%, and 96.3% for Tier 5. The rate was slightly lower for smaller categories of work routes outside the Points Based System (95.4%), mostly the domestic worker category, and for Tier 1 visas (83.5%) – which have now become a relatively small category following the closure of the post-study and general categories. It is possible that travellers on the Overseas Domestic Workers visa or with a Tier 1 visa were more likely to depart using less common routes. The lower rate for Tier 1 may also reflect that a relatively high proportion of such cases extend their stay in-country and go on to settlement (and would therefore, not be included in these rates).

Table 1.2 Work: Expiries and departures for non-EEA nationals granted visas*, by detailed category - 2018/19

Visa Category	Volume of expiries*	Percentage with known departure in time**
Skilled work (Tier 2)***	56,123	96.1%
Youth mobility & temporary (Tier 5)***	37,231	96.3%
Other Employment	18,412	95.4%
- of which Overseas Domestic Workers	15,101	96.4%
High value (Tier 1)***	3,150	83.5%
Total Work	114,916	95.7%

Similarly, the figures for study visas can be further broken down to show comparable rates for sponsored (Tier 4) study, and for the short-term study category, both of which show high compliance rates of 96.9% and 98.5%, respectively.

Table 1.3 Study: Expiries and departures - non-EEA nationals granted visas*, by detailed category - 2018/19

Visa Category	Volume of expiries*	Percentage with known departure in time**
Sponsored study (Tier 4)***	175,977	96.9%
Short term study	107,399	98.5%
Total Study	283,376	97.5%

* Or in-country extensions of leave to remain. Excludes a small number of cases where there is specific additional evidence of further leave or that a person has left the UK or evidence of an application in progress.

** Excludes cases where departure data is not found due to known gaps in the ISA system, and late departures. Reasons why a person's record may not be matched and therefore not identify a departure may include, for example, if they are dual nationals and do not use a single document for travel or if different data systems have captured their name or other details differently.

***including pre-PBS equivalents.

Identified departure rates for non-EEA nationals granted visas, by nationality

The following table presents a breakdown of results for the top ten nationalities of those issued a visa which expired in 2018/19. These numbers will mostly relate to those on normal visit visas (either tourist or family visits). As noted above, the analysis excludes those on long-term visitor visas⁴ and those visitors who don't need a visa (non-visa nationals such as US nationals). It does include both visa nationals and non-visa nationals for study, work and other categories where they obtain visas.

Table 1.4 Expiries and departures for non-EEA nationals granted visas*, by nationality - 2018/19

Nationality	Volume of expiries*	Percentage with known departure in time**
India	429,300	96.3%
China	246,832	95.1%
- of which non-ADS	160,082	97.4%
- of which ADS	86,750	90.7%
Russia	118,579	98.8%
Saudi Arabia	94,081	98.7%
South Africa	80,353	97.7%
Turkey	79,986	97.5%
Thailand	69,523	98.3%
Philippines	57,893	92.9%
Indonesia	51,935	97.9%
Pakistan	51,535	94.7%
Other	536,980	95.5%
All non-EEA nationals	1,816,997	96.3%

*Excludes a small number of cases where there is specific additional evidence of further leave or that a person has left the UK or evidence of an application in progress.

** Excludes cases where departure data is not found due to known gaps in the ISA system, and late departures. Reasons why a person's record may not be matched and therefore not identify a departure may include, for example, if they are dual nationals and do not use a single document for travel or if different data systems have captured their name or other details differently.

⁴ If individuals can prove they need to visit the UK regularly over a longer period, they can apply for a visa that lasts 2, 5 or 10 years. These allow individuals to stay for a maximum of 6 months on each visit. Hence in such cases, assessing compliance in the same way, against the final visa expiry date (which may be in the future) would not provide a full measure of compliance.

The top ten nationalities together accounted for 70% of the visas that expired in 2018/19. For eight of these nationalities, the proportions departing in time were fairly similar, ranging between 98.8% (Russia) and 95.1% (China), with slightly lower figures for Pakistanis (94.7%) and Filipinos (92.9). Further investigations documented in previous reports have suggested there were some reasons why particular groups might be showing a lower proportion departing in time, which can include behaviours and data issues that may not relate to non-compliance.

For example, the rate for Chinese nationals is the lowest among the top eight but this reflects known issues in coverage for four groups whose visa has been arranged through the approved destination status (ADS) agreement (see previous reports for more information). Further data on travel of those using the ADS route is anticipated to improve the compliance rate for this group, but the additional information has yet to be fully incorporated in the results shown due to data lags. Excluding the ADS cases increases the rate for Chinese nationals from 95.1% to 97.4%. Additionally, it should be noted that, due to the introduction of a two year Chinese visit visa, a large majority of Chinese visit visas issued in 2018/19 were long term visit visas⁵ so are not covered by this analysis.

The Filipinos estimate (92.9%) was slightly lower than the average. This is accounted for by a small number on a "JOINING SHIP" transit visa indicated as departing late. The 92.9% estimate may understate the true level of those departing on time, in part because this group are likely to leave the UK by General Maritime routes, where there is lower coverage compared to aviation data. Excluding those on such transit visas, the Filipinos estimate was 96.9%.

The lower proportions identified departing in time for some nationalities may reflect how well the immigration records get matched (some nationalities' names may be more difficult to match than others, for example).

As indicated above, part of the variation in the proportions identified as departing in time is accounted for by differences by nationality, and part of the variation is accounted for by differences in visa category. This is likely to reflect both differences in how individuals in different visa categories and different nationalities behave.

The small changes observed year to year are most likely due to variation over time in the composition of visa types and nationalities, and such small changes between years do not imply any change in the overall trend or alter the key finding of high levels of compliance. The metrics on coverage, voyage level data receipt, and the proportion of identities which included immigration records (see chapter 2) do not suggest a reduction in data quality is an explanation.

⁵ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-home-office-launches-new-two-year-chinese-visa-pilot>

Chapter 2 Updated Quality metrics - coverage, voyage level data receipt, and data matching

Detailed results:-

This chapter reports updated metrics on coverage, voyage level data receipt (previously referred to as 'completeness') and coherence.

What the analysis measures

The ISA System links data from a number of Home Office systems:

- Advance Passenger Information (API) and Travel Document Information (TDI). Passenger data is submitted in advance of travel for most scheduled aviation journeys (as Advance Passenger Information or API) but only collected at the point of departure for other modes of transport (as Travel Document Information or TDI). For statistical purposes API and TDI provide essentially the same information on travel movements apart from TDI not being submitted in advance of travel.
- Case working systems relating to (out of country) entry clearance visa application casework and (in-country) casework e.g. on extensions of leave to remain (this also includes information on statuses provided by the Channel Islands and Isle of Man authorities).
- The system used to check biometric details prior to visa applications
- Inbound passport examinations collecting passport examinations (PS) data upon entry into the UK

Each individual (or identity) within the ISA system is allocated a unique identifier which consists of biographic details (such as name, passport or travel document number, date of birth, nationality and gender) and associated events (such as travel in or out of the country or periods of leave granted). This event history is used in the assessment of an individual's immigration status.

Individuals for whom there is a travel record entering the UK on or after 8 April 2015 (when Exit Checks formally began) are included in most outputs provided from the system. On account of the requirement for a recorded entry, clandestine entrants are not currently in scope for compliance assessment. Data about individuals travelling on European Economic Area or UK travel documents are not included within the ISA system (though API data is held elsewhere on such travel movements).

The ISA system contains data on both visa nationals and non-visa nationals. Visa nationals are nationals of countries, such as India, China and Russia, for whom a visa is normally required to enter the UK. Non-visa nationals are nationals of countries, such as the United States, Canada and Japan, who are currently allowed to enter the UK without a visa as visitors for a period of up to six months. There is more confidence in data on visa nationals, because more information is held on them through their visa. Therefore, the quality of data matching is believed to be higher for visa nationals and so only data relating to visa nationals is included in the match rates presented in this chapter.

Coverage

Using a coverage measure weighted by numbers of people travelling via different routes, it was estimated that at the end of 2009, the overall coverage of API/TDI collected by the Home Office for both inbound and outbound travel (combined) stood at 57%. Since then, the coverage has increased and by mid 2014, had reached 81% and has continued to increase since.

Figures for coverage are available from mid-2014 at the level of individual modes of travel (aviation, maritime, rail). The National Audit Office (NAO) report *E-borders and successor programmes*⁶ reported that by September 2015, coverage rates were 100% outbound and 86% inbound for air carriers but that the Home Office was not then receiving inbound data for the majority of ferry and rail passengers. Coverage has increased over time, reaching 100% for outbound routes by the end of June 2015 and 87% for all inbound routes by the end of June 2016, (including 100% for arrivals by air and cruise liner passengers), and has remained stable and high since (see Table 2.1 below).

⁶ See <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/home-office-e-borders-and-successor-programmes/>

Definition Coverage is a measure of the proportion of routes which are covered by the system for collecting data on border crossings; all carriers on a specified route are required to provide data for their flights, voyages or rail journeys. A calculation is then made of the estimated number of passengers who would have travelled on these routes. This is not the same as *completeness* of the API data provided in relation to flights by the carriers or the number of passengers for whom Home Office has received API data (this is discussed in the next section). As described below, outbound coverage has reached 100% and lower inbound coverage is mitigated by other data sources.

For the purposes of the exit checks system, both inbound and outbound API provide information on travel to and from the UK in order to build up information held in the ISA. Additionally, for inbound travel movements Passport Examinations and other information are collected from saved data when travel documents are checked, thus mitigating the gaps in inbound API coverage.

Coverage can be estimated as a percentage of routes or as a percentage of volumes of travellers on routes. As some routes can have much higher volumes than others, it is most meaningful to consider coverage weighted by numbers travelling.

The overall Coverage figures for the latest quarter (to 30 June 2019) were 100% outbound and 89% inbound, very similar to those reported in the previous report. The only changes within subcategories is for inbound Maritime, where the overall coverage rate has fallen slightly from 42% to 39%, reflecting a change in the balance of cruise and ferry inbound passengers.

As noted earlier, the 0% and 23% coverage for rail inbound and ferry inbound travel is mitigated by passport examinations data. In particular, all inbound rail passengers and most inbound ferry passengers arriving from Belgium or France must present passports for examination (at UK's juxtaposed border controls⁷)

Table 2.1 Coverage figures for API/TDI

	30-Jun-14	30-Jun-15	30-Jun-16	30-Jun-17	30-Jun-18	30-Jun-19
Outbound all travel modes	81%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Inbound all travel modes	81%	83%	87%	89%	89%	89%
<i>Aviation inbound</i>	96%	97%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<i>Rail inbound</i>	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Maritime inbound</i>	21%	29%	32%	42%	42%	39%
<i>Maritime inbound (cruise)</i>	53%	94%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<i>Maritime inbound (ferry)</i>	16%	16%	25%	25%	24%	23%

Voyage level data receipt (previously referred to as 'Completeness')

While coverage of exit checks data has now increased to 100% for the in scope outbound routes, indicating that systems are in place to collect data, carriers do not always in practice supply data pertaining to a flight or an individual. Estimates of voyage level data receipt are available for aviation routes and relate to the extent to which carriers supply API data for voyages, not whether all data for every passenger on a particular voyage was received.

Definition In this report, voyage level data receipt (previously referred to as 'completeness') refers to the completeness in the provision of the supply of data agreed and delivered by carriers in relation to voyages, i.e. individual flights or journeys. Figures for voyage level receipt are currently available for aviation. For inbound voyages, voyage level receipt figures are calculated as the percentage of voyages where at least one Passenger Check-in message was received. For outbound voyages, voyage level receipt figures are calculated as the percentage of voyages where at least one Passenger Departure Confirmation message was received. These measurements do not mean that all data for every passenger on a voyage was received.

The estimates for the voyage level data receipt (see above definition) stood at 90% overall in March 2014, rising to 94% by November 2014. The 2015 NAO⁷ report stated that voyage level data receipt (previously referred to as

⁷ <https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2017/07/11/fact-sheet-the-uks-juxtaposed-border-controls/>

'completeness') had reached 98% by September 2015 for the receipt of passenger check-in messages for inbound flights, and departure confirmation messages for outbound flights. More recent figures were 97.6% (inbound) and 97.2% (outbound) for June 2016; 98.7% (inbound) and 98.3% (outbound) for June 2017; 98.9% (inbound) and 98.5% (outbound) for June 2018; 99.5% (inbound) and 99.0% (outbound) for June 2019.

Aviation accounts for around 87% of overall inbound and outbound travel movements. Rail travel (Eurostar and Eurotunnel) accounts for 7% and maritime travel for the remaining 7% (NB percentages do not sum to 100% due to rounding). As yet, there are no measures of voyage level data receipt for rail and maritime travel.

Although the available voyage level data receipt rates for flights are high, it does not indicate whether all data for every passenger on a particular voyage was received. The impact of not receiving passenger details could have important impacts on the statistical estimates. For example, a non-completeness rate as low as 1% or 2% where no initial record of departure was found, would still potentially generate a high number of incorrect initial estimates (bearing in mind that there were 20.4 million non-EEA admissions overall in 2018, of which 7.2 million were visa nationals). Although some background level of missing data is inevitable, this potential source of uncertainty needs to be taken into account when interpreting the figures on departure rates.

Coherence: The processing of API data and matching to other sources

API data has been used for a number of years to inform operational immigration control assessments. Over time, processes have been implemented to improve the quality of the data, such as addressing duplicate records. As far as possible, a person-centric view is produced, using links within immigration system data as well as matching processes for API data.

Processes for data linking

The ISA system combines immigration and travel events data into travel histories for individuals through a process of data linking. This also includes external linking based upon immigration system data and additional data matching to create (as far as possible) a single person-centric dataset. Whilst linking various immigration systems data combines events that have common indexes, additional data matching combines events that have common biographic details. The data matching uses deterministic, probabilistic and event based matching methods. It is relatively easy to appreciate how each individual linking method operates in isolation; however, the combined effect of different methods working together is more complex. The ISA system has to cater for all (non-EEA nationals) and so matching needs to be intuitive enough to make best use of records with poor data quality but cautious enough to ensure that incorrect initial estimates are kept to a minimum. In doing this, work is done to also include records with limited data quality by employing multiple techniques and business logic.

For API data visa national identities, proportions where Immigration System records found, and proportions where Passport Examinations data found

Matching rates of API data to Immigration System records and Passport Examinations data have been produced using a method which either examines the inbound, or outbound journey. This corresponds with the change to 'leave instance' reporting in the previous "Third report on statistics being collected under the exit checks programme" published in August 2018 (see User Guide) and therefore looks at the match rate for as much of the data as possible.

API records from all modes of transport have been included, with aviation contributing the majority (99.2%) of inbound API data and 93.1% of outbound data. The difference in these percentages reflects known issues of coverage with no inbound API data for rail and only partial inbound maritime, these gaps in coverage being mitigated by inbound passport examinations data.

For API data for visa national identities, proportion where Immigration System records found

For visa nationals, during the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019, the match rate was 95.3% for inbound journeys and 91.1% for outbound. In other words, for more than 9 out of every 10 travel events to or from the UK by visa nationals where an identity could be constructed in the system, there was a corresponding and linkable out of country visa or in country grant of leave.

Non-matching may legitimately occur because

- A passport has been renewed following expiry or loss whilst its owner was in the UK.

- Some travellers may use a different travel document, for example when initially booking their voyage or because they hold dual nationality.
- A passenger may have leave to remain in the UK captured in an old passport which is presented on arrival, but use a more recent document on departure.
- A passenger may hold a residency card issued under EU law by an EEA member state together with other documentation that allowed visa free entry.
- Some cruise passengers benefit from a visa waiver for port visits.
- A passenger may have been granted leave by other parts of the Common Travel Area and this is not linked.

There could also be inconsistencies between the data entered in booking a voyage as a result of an error (e.g. on passport number, nationality or date of birth) that result in no match.

Table 2.2 Proportion of inbound API journeys for visa national identities where Immigration System records found (excluding visits less than 48 hours) - 2018/19

Nationality	Inbound API journeys*	Percentage matched to Immigration System records
China	1,140,929	98.7%
India	881,353	96.7%
Russia	261,285	94.6%
Turkey	211,774	96.9%
Saudi Arabia	206,651	98.6%
Nigeria	199,172	92.6%
South Africa	187,157	91.1%
Pakistan	178,518	93.2%
Thailand	124,175	96.6%
Philippines	91,178	92.8%
Other	1,159,756	91.8%
All visa nationals	4,641,948	95.3%

*Visits where a person arrives and departs the UK within 48 hours have been excluded. The analysis also excludes:

- Visits from some nationals of Gulf States travelling under an Electronic Visa Waiver (available to Kuwaiti, Omani, Qatari and Emirati nationals).
- Visits by 'non-visa' nationals, such as US citizens, who are permitted to enter the UK as a visitor without a visa.
- Visits by visa nationals granted settlement who do not need a visa to enter the UK (if returning within a 2-year period).

Table 2.3 Proportion of outbound API journeys for visa national identities where Immigration System records found (excluding visits less than 48 hours) - 2018/19

Nationality	Outbound API journeys*	Percentage matched to Immigration System records
China	1,109,396	97.4%
India	862,420	94.7%
Russia	278,022	90.4%
Turkey	228,626	93.6%
Nigeria	217,387	80.5%
Saudi Arabia	213,880	96.2%
South Africa	198,096	82.5%
Pakistan	177,805	89.5%
Thailand	127,264	94.6%
Ukraine	119,747	88.2%
Other	1,280,018	85.3%
All visa nationals	4,825,235	91.1%

*Visits where a person arrives and departs the UK within 48 hours have been excluded. The analysis also excludes:

- Visits from some nationals of Gulf States travelling under an Electronic Visa Waiver (available to Kuwaiti, Omani, Qatari and Emirati nationals).
- Visits by 'non-visa' nationals, such as US citizens, who are permitted to enter the UK as a visitor without a visa.
- Visits by visa nationals granted settlement who do not need a visa to enter the UK (if returning within a 2-year period).

The lower proportions found for outbound (compared with inbound) seen here may be a result of contributions from resident dual nationals or those granted settlement prior to 2002, who would not normally be recorded in the data in underlying electronic systems. For example, a dual national holding UK nationality and a non-EEA nationality might be expected to use their UK nationality inbound to the UK, but might use their non-EEA nationality outbound, especially if returning to a country overseas where UK nationals require a visa.

At present, there is no straightforward explanation as to why the differences in proportions found occur between different nationalities. In some cases, it may in part be due to differences in the degree to which travellers use on-line application systems (electronic data being easier to match), consistency in presenting biographical information in different databases or other reasons. For example some nationalities may be more or less likely to be dual nationals with UK citizenship.

The overall rate for visa nationals for 2018/19 (95.3% inbound, 91.1% outbound) is higher than the rate for 2017/18 (94.5% inbound, 90.5% outbound) on a comparable basis.

For API data for visa national identities, proportion where Passport Examinations (PS) data found

The ISA system also records Passport Examinations (PS) data from examinations of passports at the border. This data can be used to supplement inbound API data, completing any missing data, and provides additional information for matching to immigration systems. At the same point at which these examinations are collected, there would normally be the collection of biometric data. These data are also used to provide more complete coverage for inbound data.

When matching inbound API to PS⁸, rates for visa nationals were 93.6% for 2018/19 (92.9% for 2017/18, and 91.7% for 2016/17), and slightly higher when we restrict this to aviation (93.6%, 93.3% and 92.2% respectively) in part reflecting limited coverage for API for non-aviation routes.

Conversely if one looks at match rates of PS data to API, the matching rate for visa nationals for 2018/19 was 89.8%.

⁸ Including checks made at the border of biometric data provided by visa holders.

Glossary of terms

This glossary sets out terms used in the 'Fourth report on statistics being collected under the exit checks programme' release. It is intended to give an overview of the terms, rather than a full technical description.

If there are terms in the release that you would like to be explained in this glossary, please contact: MigrationStatsEnquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk.

Advance Passenger Information (API)

This refers to travel document and service information submitted by carriers in advance of departure for passengers and crew. Data is often self-declared by passengers to carriers at the time of booking.

Common Travel Area (CTA)

The Common Travel Area (CTA) comprises the UK, Ireland and the Crown Dependencies (the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man). Under UK immigration legislation (s.1(3) of the Immigration Act 1971), there are no routine immigration controls on journeys to the UK from within the CTA.

Coverage

Coverage is a measure of the degree to which those routes that are in scope have systems in place that allow submission of data to relevant Home Office administrative systems and hence to the Immigration Status Analysis system. It should not be confused with voyage level data receipt (previously described as 'completeness') - see below.

European Economic Area (EEA)

The EEA consists of the European Union member states as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Switzerland is also included here as although it is not formally a member of the EEA, it has analogous status with respect to immigration control.

Initial Status Analysis (ISA) database

A detailed database developed for monitoring movements of non-EEA nationals that combines not just the API and TDI information required for exit checks, but also other sources of information including the main data on visas and other forms of permission granted for leave to remain in the UK, such as extensions of leave in the UK.

Non visa national

A citizen of a country where there is generally no requirement to obtain a visa prior to travelling to the UK as a visitor (see Immigration Rules Appendix V: visitor rules at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-v-visitor-rules>). An **entry clearance** may be required for travel for other purposes, this being referred to as a **visa** in statistical publications to be in line with the terminology for 'visa nationals'.

Travel Document Information (TDI)

This refers to passenger information submitted by carriers or port operators at, or shortly after the point of departure.

Visa national

A citizen of a country where there is a requirement that they obtain a visa prior to travelling to the UK including as a visitor (see Immigration Rules Appendix V: visitor rules at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-v-visitor-rules>). For the purpose of this report, nationals of countries where visitors can obtain an electronic visa waiver in place of a visit visa are also viewed as visa nationals.

Voyage level data receipt (previously referred to as 'completeness')

Figures for voyage level data receipt are currently available for aviation and relate to the percentage of voyages where at least one passenger message was received. This measurement does not mean that all data for every passenger was received.

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