



Statistical News Release: Immigration Statistics

25 February 2016

Immigration Statistics, October to December

Home Office's *Immigration Statistics October to December 2015* release, published today, provides the latest figures on those subject to immigration control. All data below relate to the calendar year 2015 and all comparisons are with the calendar year ending 2014, unless indicated otherwise.

Estimates of the numbers of non-EU nationals migrating long-term to the UK, by reason for migration, are published by the Office for National Statistics, and available on their website. ([International Migration](#)).

Key points from the latest release

Work

There were 92,062 Tier 2 skilled work visas granted in the calendar year 2015, up 2% (+1,365), and 44,948 Tier 5 Youth mobility and temporary visas granted, also up 2% (+945). These increases were offset by fewer grants in the Tier 1 Investor category, down 76% (-2,287) following changes introduced in November 2014, and fewer grants to dependants in routes now closed to new applicants (Tier 1 General -1,506; Tier 1 Post Study -346). Of the 177,544 decisions in 2015, 6% (10,861) were refused.

In the year ending September 2015, the ONS estimate there were **67,000 non-EU long-term immigrants for work**, an increase of 2% (+1,000) compared with the previous 12 months. However, this increase was not statistically significant. Over the same period, long-term (1 year or more) work-related visas granted to main applicants also rose, by 25% to 79,428 in the year ending September 2015. The level and trend from the two series are in broad terms similar over the longer term. There are nonetheless a number of reasons why the long-term immigration estimates and visas data may show different trends in the shorter term, including sampling variation and coverage; further details are given in the Work topic.

Study

In 2015 there were 210,348 **Study-related visas** granted, excluding the unsponsored short-term student category (formerly known as 'student visitors'), a fall of 4% compared with 2014. Over the same period, the number of **university-sponsored study visa applications** (main applicants) fell slightly (-1% to 166,366), with a 7% increase for Russell Group universities to 75,634. There were falls for other sectors, notably a 17% fall for the further education sector to 15,982. Most of the fall in the Further Education (FE) sector's sponsored visa applications since the peak in mid-2011 was accounted for by licenses which have since been revoked.

In the year ending September 2015, the ONS estimates that there were 117,000 **non-EU long-term immigrants coming to study and who had an intention to remain a year or more**, an 11% (-15,000) fall, though not statistically significant. Over the same period, the number of long-term (1 year or more) study-related visas granted (main applicants) was 5% lower at 138,533. Although the trends in the long-term estimates and comparable visa numbers can be very different, these most recent changes have resulted in the two series becoming much closer in the last year.

Family

There were 37,859 family-related **visas** granted in 2015. This is an increase of 9% compared with 2014 (34,876). There was a 12% decrease in the number of other visas granted to dependants (excluding visitor visas) joining or accompanying migrants in the UK (68,699) compared with the previous 12 months (78,106).

In the year ending September 2015 (the latest provisional data available), estimates from the International Passenger Survey (IPS) showed that 43,000 non-EU nationals immigrated long-term to the UK to accompany or join others, that is with the intention of staying for a year or more. This was an 11,000 decrease from 54,000 in the previous 12 months. Those arriving to accompany or join are not directly comparable with visa categories but will include both family-related migration and potentially dependants of other migrants, as explained in the Family topic.

Asylum

Asylum applications from main applicants increased by 29% to 32,414 in 2015, the highest number of applications since 2004 (33,960). The largest number of applications for asylum came from nationals of **Eritrea** (3,729), followed by **Iran** (3,248), **Sudan** (2,918) and **Syria** (2,609). Including dependants, the number of asylum

applications increased by 20% from 32,344 in 2014 to 38,878 in 2015, around 1 dependant for every 5 main applicants.

In addition, a total of 1,864 people were resettled in the UK in 2015. Of these, 1,194 (1,337 since the scheme began) were granted humanitarian protection under the **Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme**. On 7 September 2015, the Prime Minister announced an expansion to the existing Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. Through this expansion, it is expected that 20,000 Syrians in need of protection will be resettled in the UK by 2020. A total of 1,085 people arrived in the UK having been granted humanitarian protection under the Syrian VPRS in the last quarter of 2015.

Estimated figures show the UK had the ninth highest number (39,000) of asylum applications **within the EU** in 2015, including dependants. Germany (431,000), Sweden (163,000) and Hungary (163,000) were the 3 EU countries that received the highest number of asylum applications, together accounting for 62% of asylum application in the EU.

Admissions

The total number of journeys increased by 5% to a record 123.4 million in 2015 (+6.3 million). This increase was accounted for by 5.8 million more journeys by British, other EEA and Swiss nationals (up 6% to 108.2 million) and 0.6 million more journeys by non-EEA nationals (up 4% to 15.2 million), compared with 2014.

Removals

Enforced removals from the UK decreased by 5% to 12,056 in 2015 compared with the previous year (12,627). This is the lowest level since the series began in 2004.

The number of **passengers refused entry at port and who subsequently departed** has increased by 8% in 2015, to 17,279 from 15,993 for the previous year. While the figure is considerably lower than that in 2004 (36,167), the number **refused entry at port and subsequently departing** has been increasing slowly since 2012.

In 2015, provisional data show that 5,602 foreign national offenders (FNOs) were removed from the UK, using enforcement powers or via deportation. This was a 6% increase on the previous year (5,286) and the highest number since the series began in 2009.

Visitor visas

There were 34,719 (+2%) more **visitor visas granted** at around 1.9 million, excluding Omani, Qatari and United Arab Emirates (UAE) nationals (who were able to visit the UK without a visa from 1 January 2014, following the introduction of the Electronic Visa Waiver scheme). Including these nationals, the number of visitor visas granted still increased by 2% (+35,246), reflecting the usage of the Electronic Visa Waiver scheme.

There were notable **increases in visitor visa** grants for Chinese nationals, up 22% (+70,415 to 397,764, excluding Hong Kong), and Indian nationals, up 15% (+47,439 to 367,243). By contrast there were large falls in visitor visa grants for Russian nationals (-67,037 to 109,717), down 38%.

Notes to editors

1. *Immigration Statistics, October to December 2015* is available via the UK National Statistics publication hub website and the Home Office statistics web pages <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office/series/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>.
2. This release is published as part of a coordinated release of migration and population products. These related products are also published today:
Office for National Statistics (ONS)
 - *Migration Statistics Quarterly Report (Jointly with Home Office and Department for Work and Pensions)*
 - *Provisional Long-term International Migration*The *Migration Statistics Quarterly Report* summarises the regular quarterly migration and related data published by the ONS, Home Office and DWP and is available at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nscl=Migration>
Department for Work & Pensions (DWP)
 - *National Insurance Number (NINo) Allocations to Adult Overseas Nationals 2015*
3. The UK Statistics Authority has assessed Immigration Statistics against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and confirmed designation as National Statistics. More information can be found at report 177 on the UK Statistics Authority website <<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/>>.

4. For **all press enquiries regarding the Home Office Immigration Statistics release**, please contact the Home Office Press Office who will liaise with the Home Office Statistics team.

Newsdesk: **020 7035 3535**

Please note that the press office deals with enquiries from the media only. Members of the public should phone Public Enquiries 020 7035 4848, or email to MigrationStatsEnquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Press enquiries regarding ONS publications should be directed to the ONS Press Office.

5. The Home Office Responsible Statistician is Chris Kershaw.