



Statistical News Release: Immigration Statistics

1 December 2016

Immigration Statistics, July to September 2016

Home Office's *Immigration Statistics July to September 2016* release, published today, provides the latest figures on those subject to immigration control. All data below relate to the year ending September 2016 and all comparisons are with the year ending September 2015, 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 [International migration](#) website.

Key points from the latest release

Work

There were 93,843 Tier 2 skilled work visas granted in the year ending September 2016, 1% higher than the previous year (92,840), and 42,016 Tier 5 Youth mobility and temporary visas granted, down 3,397 (7%). Just 2,510 (3%) of the 96,523 decisions on skilled work visa applications were refused.

There were 2,342 (34%) fewer Tier 1 unsponsored work visas granted. This was largely due to 1,144 (67%) fewer grants in the Tier 1 Investor category, reflecting changes introduced to the category in November 2014 and fewer grants to dependants in routes now closed to new applicants (Tier 1 General -1,020; Tier 1 Post-study Work -18).

In the year ending June 2016, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates there were 74,000 non-European Union (non-EU) long-term immigrants for work, a 10% increase of 7,000 compared with the previous 12 months. However, this increase was not statistically significant. The level and trend for non-EU long-term migrants and long-term work visas are similar over the longer term.

Study

In the year ending September 2016, there were 207,522 study-related visas granted, 3% lower than the previous year. This includes dependants but excludes the unsponsored short-term student category, formerly known as 'student visitors'. Over the same period, the number of university-sponsored study visa applications (main applicants) fell slightly by 1% to 167,208. However, there was a 6% increase for Russell Group universities to 80,192. There were also falls for the Further education (8% to 14,825), English language school (9% to 2,792), and Independent school (3% to 13,340) sectors. Most of the fall in the Further education sector's sponsored visa applications since the peak in mid-2011 was accounted for by licenses which have since been revoked.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 June 2016, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates that there were 113,000 non-European Union (EU) long-term immigrants coming to study and who had an intention to remain a year or more; 18,000 lower than the preceding year but not a statistically significant change.

Family

The combined total number of family-related visas granted, European Economic Area (EEA) family permits granted, and visas granted to dependants (excluding visitors) fell 2,616 (2%) to 136,037 in the year ending September 2016, despite a 5% rise in the number of family-related visas granted (+1,985 to 38,509). EEA family permits issued abroad also increased, by 3,496 (12%) to 33,082, facilitating entry of non-EEA family members, with most of the increase before the third quarter. However, there was a fall of 8,097 (11%) to 64,446 in visas granted to dependants (excluding visitor visas) joining or accompanying migrants in other routes that more than offset the increases for family visas and permits.

In the year ending June 2016 (the latest provisional data available), estimates from the International Passenger Survey (IPS) showed that 46,000 non-European Union (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 not a statistically significant change on the previous year (45,000). 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 in the UK from main applicants increased by 14% to 33,380 in the year ending September 2016, the highest number of applications since 2004 (33,960). However, numbers of asylum applications in the third quarter of 2016 (7,146 in July to September) have been considerably lower than in the same quarter of 2015 (10,231 in July to September).

In the year ending September 2016, the largest number of applications for asylum came from nationals of Iran (4,822), followed by Iraq (3,127), Pakistan (2,937), Afghanistan (2,567), Syria (2,102) and Bangladesh (1,927). Most applications for asylum are made by people already in the country (89% of applications in the year ending September 2016) rather than immediately on arrival in the UK at a port.

There were 1,704 grants of asylum or an alternative form of protection to Syrian main applicants at initial decision in the year ending September 2016. The grant rate for Syrian applicants was 86%, but some of those not granted will have been transferred to have their case assessed by another EU member state (third country), and other applicants may have been found not to be Syrian following investigation.

An additional 4,162 people (including dependants) were granted humanitarian protection under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) in the year ending September 2016. Since this scheme began in 2014, a total of 4,414 people have been resettled. In the year ending September 2016, an additional 715 people were also resettled in the UK under the Gateway Protection Programme and the Mandate Scheme.

Including dependants, the UK had the sixth highest number (41,000) of asylum applications within the EU in the year ending September 2016. Germany (781,000), Sweden (112,000) and Italy (108,000) were the 3 EU countries that received the highest number of asylum applications, together accounting for 70% of asylum applications in the EU in that period.

Passenger arrivals and visitors

The total number of passenger arrivals increased by 5.0 million (4%) to a record 127.2 million in the year ending September 2016. This increase was accounted for by 4.5 million more arrivals by British, other EEA and Swiss nationals (up 4% to 111.5 million) and 0.5 million more arrivals by non-EEA nationals (up 3% to 15.6 million), compared with the previous 12 months. These numbers represent the number of occasions when a person entered the UK, not the number of distinct individuals.

Data for the calendar year 2015 show the total number of passenger arrivals increased by 5% to 123.3 million. This increase was accounted for by 4.9 million more arrivals by British nationals (up 7% to 72.4 million), 0.7 million more arrivals by other EEA and Swiss nationals (up 2% to 35.7 million) and 0.6 million more arrivals by non-EEA nationals (up 4% to 15.3 million), compared with 2014.

The number of non-EEA visitors increased by 0.3 million (3%). Over a quarter (29%) of all non-EEA visitor arrivals were United States (US) nationals.

Only certain nationalities require a visa to visit the UK. There were 41,981 (2%) fewer visitor visas granted to citizens of those non-EEA countries required to obtain a visitor visa in the year ending September 2016, of a total of around 1.9 million. Excluding Kuwaiti nationals, who were able to visit the UK without a visa from 21 February 2016 as part of the Electronic Visa Waiver scheme, the number of visitor visas granted remained similar (1,829,025 in the year ending September 2015 and 1,833,334 in the year ending September 2016). There were notable increases in visitor visas granted to Chinese nationals, up by 57,568 (15%) to 450,856 (excluding Hong Kong), and Indian nationals, up 21,829 (6%) to 385,569.

Returns

Enforced returns from the UK decreased by 9% to 12,521 in the year ending September 2016 compared with the previous year (13,799). This includes 11,001 enforced removals and 1,520 other returns from detention.

In the year ending September 2016, there were 25,306 voluntary returns (excluding returns from detention) compared to 27,117 in the previous year.

The number of passengers refused entry at port and who subsequently departed increased by 7% in year ending September 2016 to 18,065 from 16,887 in year ending September 2015. The number of passengers refused entry at port and subsequently departed has been increasing since 2012.

In the year ending September 2016, provisional data show there were 5,825 returns of foreign national offenders (FNOs), using enforcement powers or via deportation. This is the second highest number since the series began in

2009 and reflects increasing use of other forms of FNO returns, including those where an offence was committed outside the UK.

Notes to editors

1. *Immigration Statistics, July to September 2016* is available on Gov.UK:
<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)*
Department for Work & Pensions (DWP)
 - *National Insurance Number (NINo) Allocations to Adult Overseas Nationals to September 2016*
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
<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/archive/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/report-177---statistics-on-immigration.pdf>.
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 Migration 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.