

Population by Country of Birth and Nationality, 2018



Published on 24 May 2019

This statistical report describes the population of Scotland and its council areas by country of birth and nationality, using data from the Annual Population Survey.

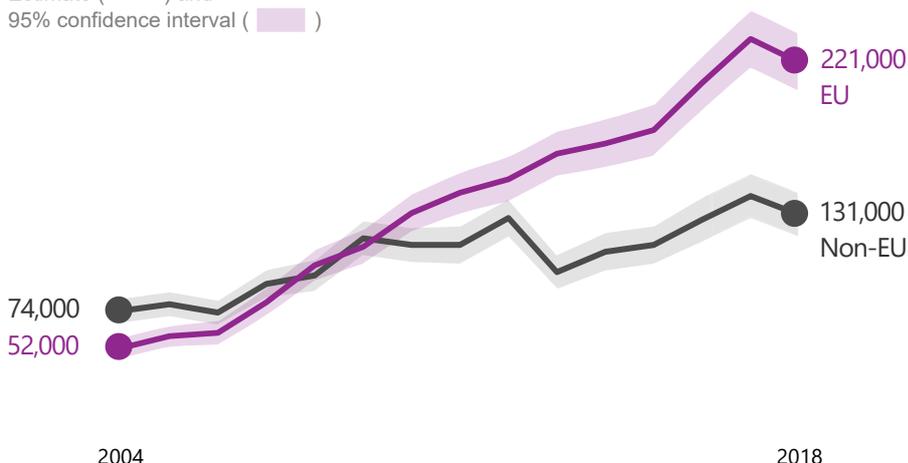
In 2018, there were 352,000 non-British nationals in Scotland

The non-British population of Scotland remained broadly stable over the past year.

Prior to 2018, the EU national population increased since the EU expansion in 2004 and also grew at a faster rate than the non-EU population.

Number of non-British nationals

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



EU nationals make up 63% of Scotland's non-British population

In 2018 there were 221,000 EU nationals living in Scotland, and over half of those people were nationals of EU8 countries.

There were 131,000 non-EU nationals, accounting for 37% of the non-British population.

Number of non-British nationals

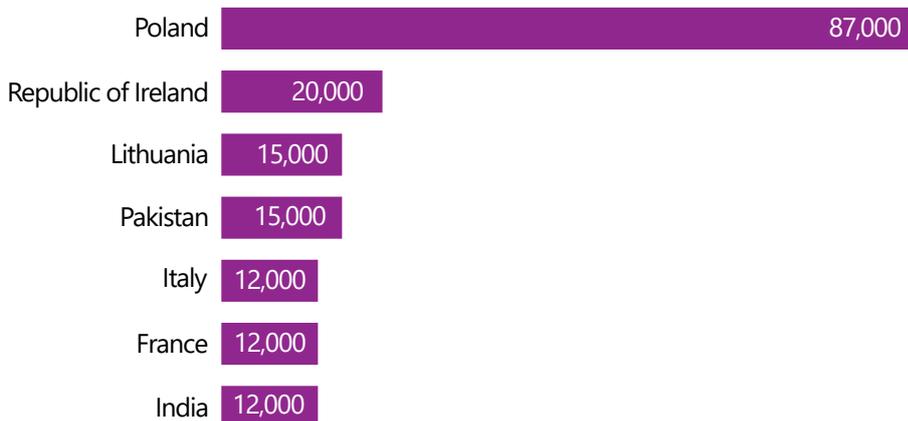


Polish remains the most common non-British nationality

For the twelfth consecutive year, nationals of Poland were the most common non-British nationality in Scotland, with 87,000 people in 2018.

Polish nationals accounted for a quarter of the non-British population in Scotland.

Most common non-British nationalities in Scotland, 2018



Population who are non-British nationals (percentage)

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



* Confidence intervals are reported to the nearest thousand. For Na h-Eileanan Siar they round to zero.

Non-British nationals live in all thirty-two council areas

In 2018, the council area with the highest proportion of its residents who were non-British nationals was Aberdeen City (17%). This was higher than the Scottish average of 7%. City of Edinburgh (16%) and Glasgow City (13%) were the other areas that were higher than the Scottish average.

The council areas with the lowest proportion of its residents who were non-British nationals were North Ayrshire and Inverclyde (both round to 1%).

Estimates of EU and non-EU nationals living in council areas are available on the NRS website.

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

An estimated 14% of the population of larger cities were non-British nationals in 2018.

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Key Findings

The non-UK population living in Scotland in 2018 stood at 352,000 non-British nationals or 469,000 non-UK born in 2018, remaining broadly stable over the past year. This follows a period of growth where the non-UK population increased following the expansion of the EU in 2004.

These estimates are sourced from the Annual Population Survey so there is sampling variability and a degree of uncertainty with the results. Due to this, users are advised to focus on longer term trends and changes which are confirmed as statistically significant.

Population by nationality

- There were estimated to be 352,000 people living in Scotland who had non-British nationality in 2018, accounting for 7% of the usually resident population.
- Of those who had non-British nationality, 221,000 (63%) were EU nationals and 131,000 (37%) were non-EU nationals.
- Polish nationals accounted for one quarter (87,000) of all non-British nationals living in Scotland in 2018, and remain the most common non-British nationality.
- The council areas where non-British nationals made up the largest proportion of the population were Aberdeen City (17%), City of Edinburgh (16%) and Glasgow City (13%).

Population by country of birth

- In 2018 there were estimated to be 469,000 people living in Scotland who were born outside of the UK. This accounts for 9% of the population.
- Of those who were born outside the UK, 229,000 (49%) were born in an EU country and 241,000 (51%) were born elsewhere in the world.
- Poland remains the most common non-UK country of birth with 17% (78,000) of all non-UK born people living in Scotland being born there.
- The council areas with the largest proportions of their population born overseas were City of Edinburgh (21%), Aberdeen City (19%) and Glasgow City (16%).

1. Introduction

This publication summarises the latest estimates of the Scottish population by country of birth and nationality, for the year ending December 2018. These estimates are produced using the Annual Population Survey (APS), which has a sample size of around 300,000 respondents in the whole of the UK, and is the largest household survey in the UK (other than the Census and Census coverage survey). In 2018, the sample size for Scotland was around 36,000 people.

The estimates from the APS differ from the official mid-year population estimates (MYE) as the APS is a household survey, so does not include most communal establishments. The mid-year estimates also refer to a mid-year period (as at June), rather than the calendar year period covered by this publication. The MYE provide estimates of the population by sex and age, whereas the APS can be used to provide estimates by country of birth and nationality.

Country of birth refers to the country that a person was born in and cannot change. Whereas, nationality refers to the nationality stated by the respondent when they were interviewed and can be subject to change.

The population estimates by country of birth and nationality are available for Scotland's council areas and can be accessed on the [NRS website](#). The statistics can be used to understand the profile of the population living in local areas, and are often used by central and local government for planning and monitoring service delivery.

How to find data

What are you looking for?

Where is it?

The data used in this publication

[Excel tables](#)

All figures from this publication

[All figures](#)

Data for council areas

[Excel tables](#)

Individual country data from the APS for Scotland and other regions across the UK

[ONS tables](#)

Analysis from ONS on trends at UK level

[ONS statistical bulletins](#)

2. Population by nationality

There were estimated to be 352,000 people living in Scotland who had non-British nationality in 2018, accounting for 7% of the usually resident population. Overall this remained broadly stable over the year as the change in the number of non-British nationals living in Scotland between 2017 and 2018 was not statistically significant. A breakdown by nationality group is shown below in Table 1.

Table 1: Population by nationality in Scotland, 2018

Nationality	2017	2018	Change	Percentage of Non-British Population (2018)
All	5,311,000	5,364,000	53,000	-
British	4,933,000	5,010,000	77,000	-
Non-British	378,000	352,000	-26,000	-
EU (total)	235,000	221,000	-14,000	63%
EU14	92,000	82,000	-10,000	23%
EU8	128,000	122,000	-6,000	35%
EU2	14,000	15,000	1,000	4%
EU Other	2,000	2,000	no change	1%
Non-EU (total)	142,000	131,000	-11,000	37%
Other Europe	12,000	12,000	no change	3%
Asia	70,000	58,000	-12,000	16%
Rest of the World	61,000	61,000	no change	17%

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

Note: None of the above changes were measured to be statistically significant at the 95% level.

What is 'statistical significance'?

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

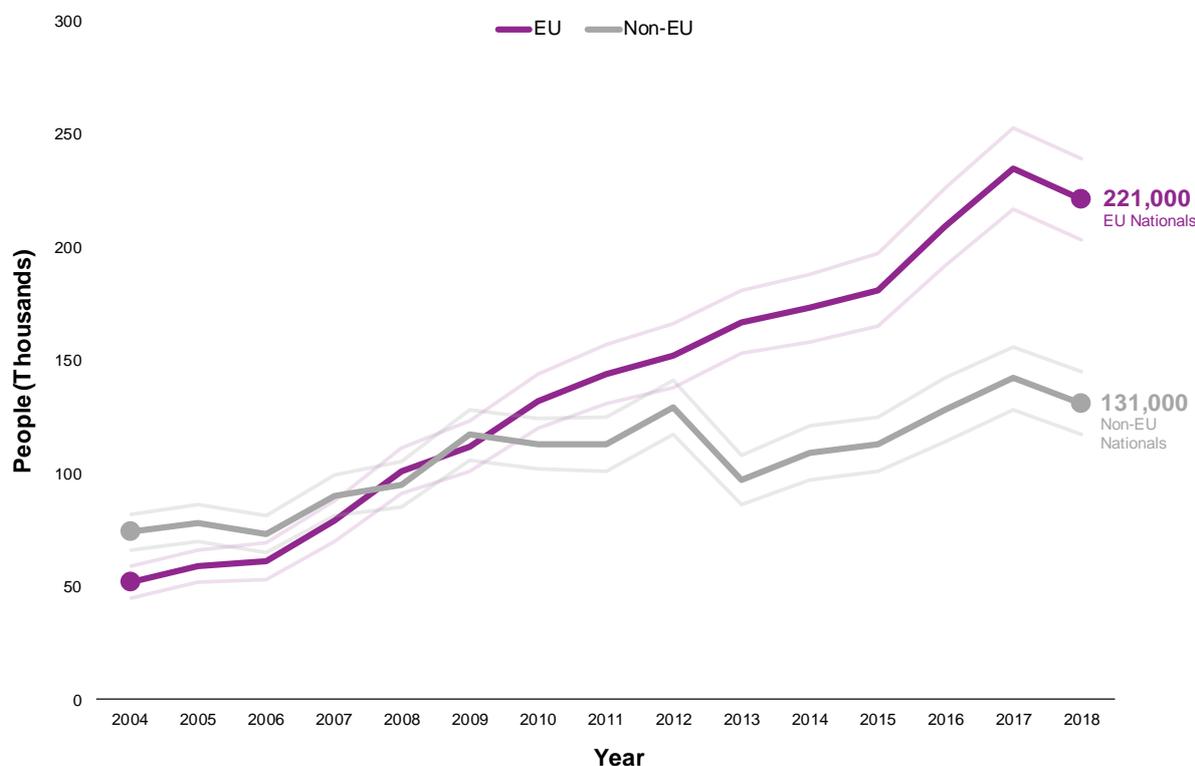
When two estimates are very close, sometimes their confidence intervals overlap and it's hard to say if there is a real difference. For example, the difference may be due to sampling error or have occurred simply by chance. In this case, the difference between the numbers is **not statistically significant**.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

When the confidence intervals for two estimates do not overlap, the difference between these numbers is **statistically significant**. In other words, when a difference is said to be statistically significant it reflects a real difference and has not occurred simply by chance.

Of all non-British nationals living in Scotland in 2018, 221,000 (63%) were EU nationals and 131,000 (37%) were non-EU nationals. The largest sub-group of the EU national population remains EU8, with 122,000 people. Within the non-EU population, nationals of Asia and the Rest of the World (The Americas, Africa and Oceania) make up similar proportions of the population.

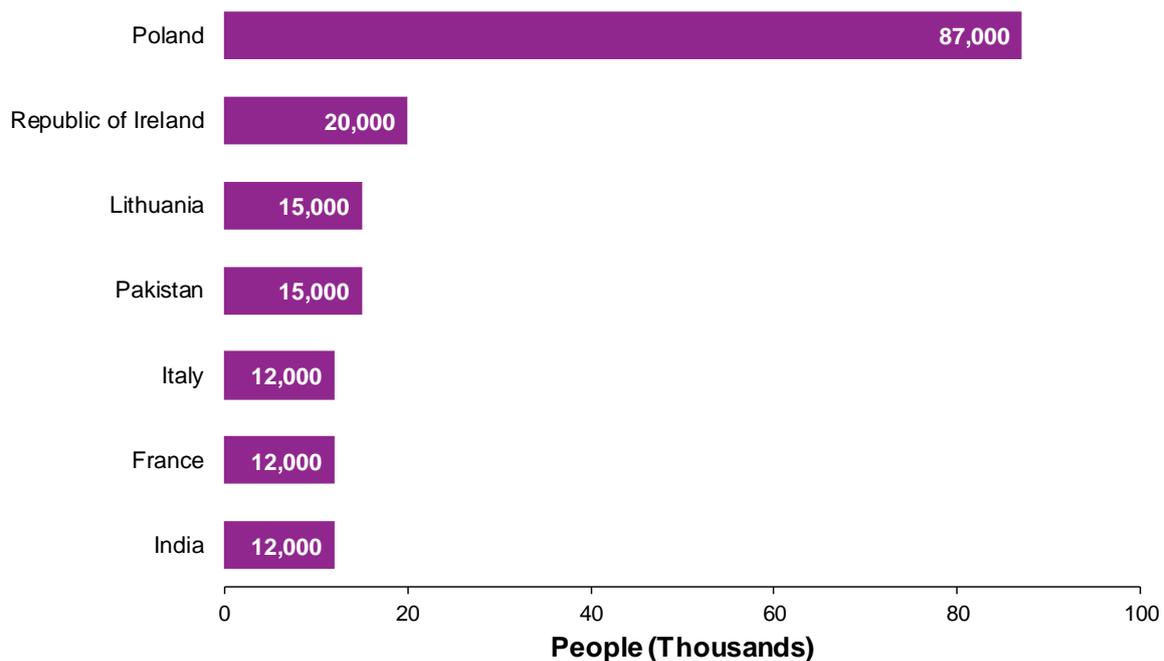
Figure 1 shows the change in the number of EU and non-EU nationals living in Scotland. Prior to 2018, the EU national population increased since the EU expansion in 2004, and also grew at a faster rate than the non-EU population. However this growth in both EU and non-EU populations ended in 2018, with both remaining broadly stable between 2017 and 2018. As these estimates are sourced from the Annual Population Survey, there is sampling variability and a degree of uncertainty with the results. Confidence intervals are used to show this uncertainty, as displayed in Figure 1. This means the change between 2017 and 2018 is not statistically significant due to the uncertainty around each estimate.

Figure 1: Population by nationality in Scotland, 2004 to 2018



The most common non-British nationalities in Scotland are shown in Figure 2. Polish nationals accounted for one quarter of all non-British nationals living in Scotland in 2018, and remain the most common non-British nationality.

Figure 2: Most common non-British nationalities in Scotland, 2018



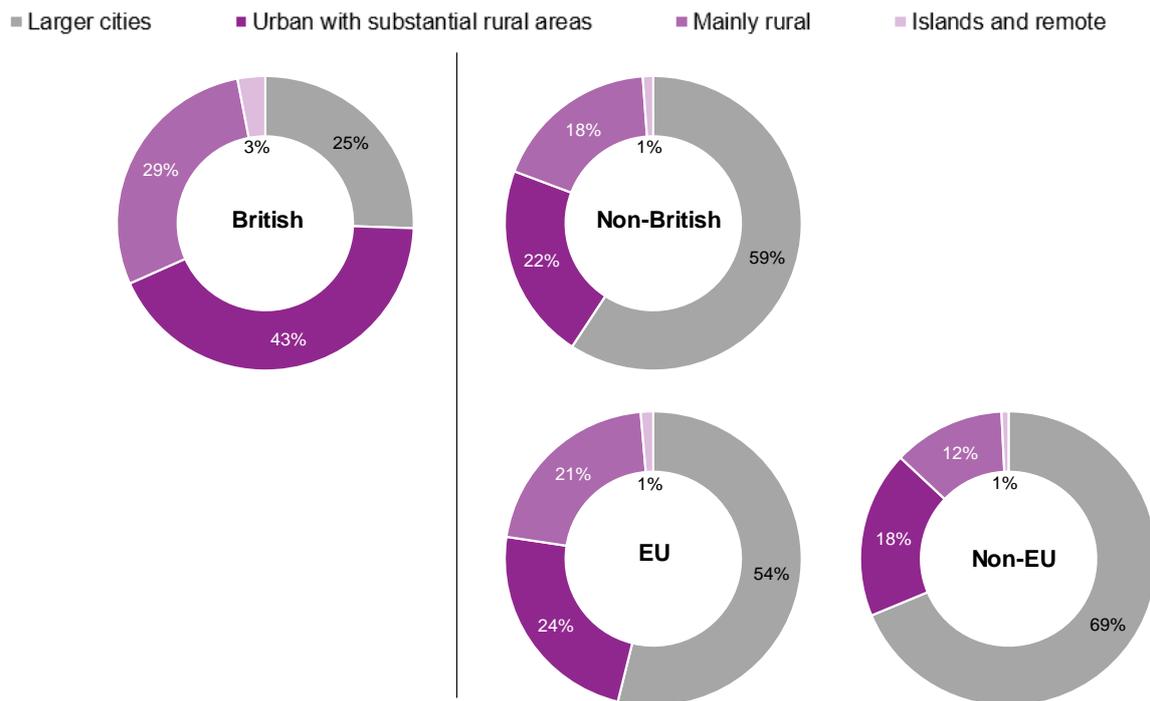
The population estimates by nationality are available for Scotland’s council areas and can be accessed on the [NRS website](#).

The council areas where non-British nationals made up the largest proportion of the population were Aberdeen City (17%), City of Edinburgh (16%) and Glasgow City (13%). The same council areas had the largest numbers of non-British nationals in 2018, but in a different order: Glasgow City (82,000), City of Edinburgh (81,000), Aberdeen City (38,000).

To get a sense of where people live within the country, councils can be grouped together using the [RESAS classification](#)¹ of council areas. This clusters areas according to their level of rurality using four different groups – “larger cities”, “urban with substantial rural areas”, “mainly rural” and “islands and remote”. As shown in Figure 3, different nationalities tend to live in slightly different areas within Scotland.

¹ The Scottish Government’s Rural and Environmental Science and Analytical Services (RESAS) have developed a fourfold classification of council areas according to their level of rurality. More information can be found in their research paper: [Understanding the Scottish rural economy \(2018\)](#).

Figure 3: Population by nationality and RESAS classification, 2018



British nationals, who make up 93% of Scotland’s population, live mostly in urban with substantial rural areas (43%), with 29% living in mainly rural areas and a quarter living in larger cities.

The non-British population in Scotland are more likely to live in cities. In 2018, 59% of non-British nationals lived in larger cities compared to 25% for the British population. Within the non-British population, 69% of non-EU nationals lived in cities compared to 54% for EU nationals.

Looking at other areas, 18% of non-British nationals lived in mainly rural areas and 1% lived in islands and remote areas in 2018. Of all non-British nationals living in mainly rural areas, almost three quarters (73%) were EU nationals.

3. Population by country of birth

There were estimated to be 469,000 people living in Scotland who were born outside of the UK in 2018, accounting for 9% of the usually resident population. This remained broadly stable between 2017 and 2018, as the change in the number of non-UK born persons living in Scotland in the past year was not statistically significant. A breakdown of these statistics by country of birth is shown below in Table 2.

Table 2: Population by country of birth in Scotland, 2018

Country of Birth	2017	2018	Change	Percentage of Non-UK born Population (2018)
All	5,311,000	5,364,000	53,000	-
UK	4,834,000	4,893,000	59,000	-
Non-UK	477,000	469,000	-8,000	-
EU (total)	239,000	229,000	-10,000	49%
EU14	107,000	98,000	-9,000	21%
EU8	113,000	112,000	-1,000	24%
EU2	13,000	14,000	1,000	3%
EU Other	6,000	4,000	-2,000	1%
Non-EU (total)	238,000	241,000	3,000	51%
Other Europe	16,000	20,000	4,000	4%
Asia	120,000	108,000	-12,000	23%
Rest of the World	103,000	113,000	10,000	24%

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

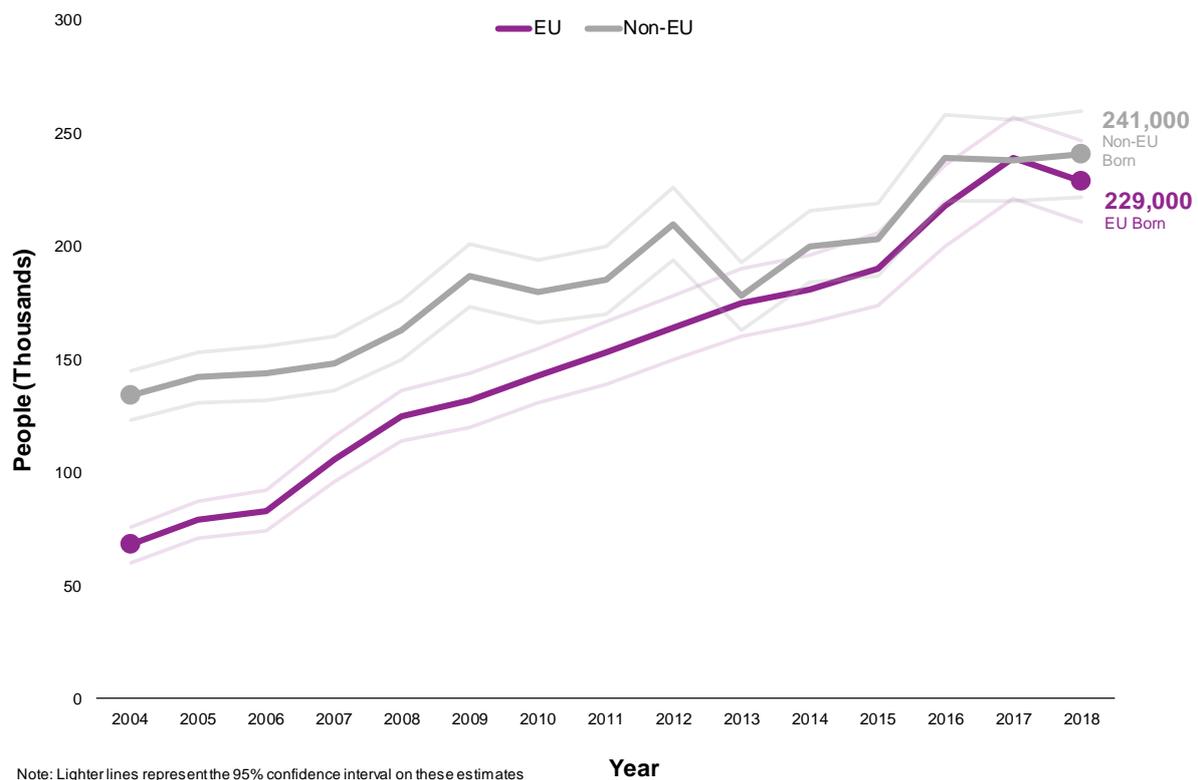
Note: None of the above changes were measured to be statistically significant at the 95% level.

As nationality can change over time (if for example, a citizen of another country gained British citizenship and identified as a British national), country of birth estimates provide a look into how the population who have migrated to Scotland at some point in their lives has changed.

The non-EU born population (241,000 people) was similar in size to the EU born population (229,000 people) in Scotland in 2018. Within the EU born population, 112,000 people were born in EU8 countries and 98,000 people were born in EU14 countries. People born in Asia and the Rest of the World (The Americas, Africa and Oceania) made up similar proportions of the non-EU born population.

Figure 4 shows the change in the EU born and non-EU born populations of Scotland since 2004. Over the most recent year, the EU born population and non-EU born population remained broadly stable, having previously experienced steady growth in the years prior.

Figure 4: Population by country of birth in Scotland, 2004 to 2018



The most common non-UK countries of birth in Scotland in 2018 are shown in Figure 5. Poland remains the most common non-UK country of birth in Scotland with 17% (78,000) of all non-UK born people living in Scotland being born there.

The population estimates by country of birth are available for Scotland’s council areas and can be accessed on the [NRS website](#).

The council areas with the largest proportions of their population born overseas were City of Edinburgh (21%), Aberdeen City (19%) and Glasgow City (16%). The same council areas had the largest numbers of people born overseas: City of Edinburgh (108,000), Glasgow City (96,000), Aberdeen City (44,000).

Figure 5: Most common non-UK countries of birth in Scotland, 2018

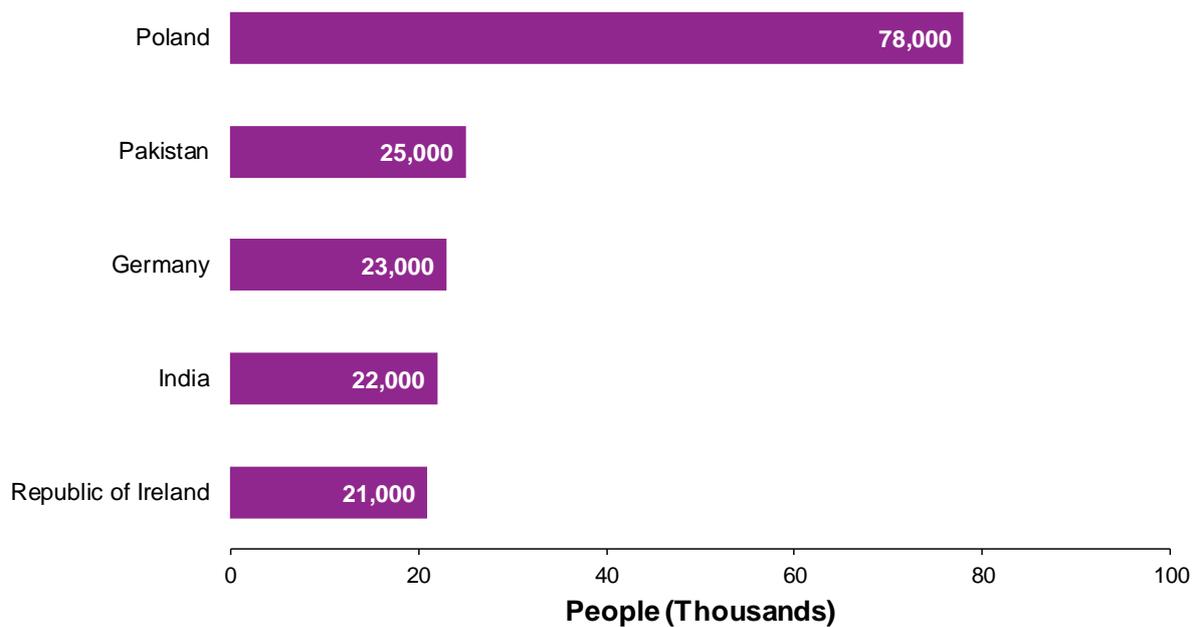
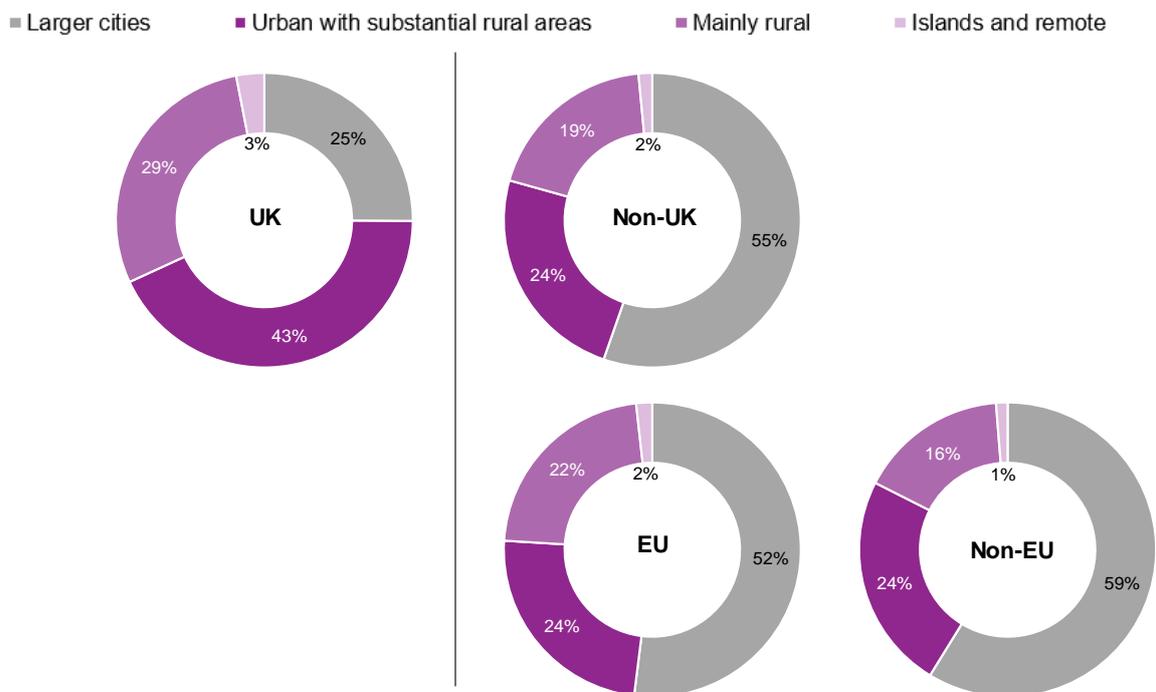


Figure 6 shows where people live in Scotland by country of birth and RESAS classification. Most of the non-UK born population (55%) live in larger cities, compared to 25% for the UK born population. Within the non-UK population, slightly more EU-born people live in mainly rural and islands and remote areas compared to the non-EU born population.

Figure 6: Population by country of birth and RESAS classification, 2018



4. Links to related statistics

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

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

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

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

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

5. Background Information

All the latest statistics in this report come from the Annual Population Survey covering the period January 2018 to December 2018. The Annual Population Survey (APS) is the Labour Force Survey (LFS) plus a number of sample boosts. The boost for Scotland is funded by the Scottish Government. As the APS is a household survey, it does not cover most people living in communal establishments; this means that the population totals from the APS will be different from the official mid-year population estimates, which cover the entire population.

Changes in the number of people living in Scotland who are non-UK born/non-British nationals are not directly comparable with estimates of long-term international migration (such as the estimates of migration used in the mid-year population estimates). There are a few reasons for this, one is that non-UK born/non-British nationals could move to Scotland from other parts of the UK, and not be included in estimates of long-term international migration (but will instead be included in cross border migration). Another reason is the definitional differences between the International Passenger Survey (IPS) and the Annual Population Survey; the APS is a survey of residential addresses and does not include most communal establishments whereas the IPS does include people who may live in communal establishments. The APS also measures the total resident population ("stock") so captures people who may have moved to Scotland many years ago, whereas the long-term international migration estimates ("flows") measure people moving over a specific period.

6. Notes on statistical publications

National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in line with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics (available on the [UKSA](#) website).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

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

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

Information on background and source data

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

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

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

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

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

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If you have comments or suggestions that would help us improve our standards of service, please contact:

Alan Ferrier
Senior Statistician
National Records of Scotland
Room 1/2/12
Ladywell House
Ladywell Road
Edinburgh
EH12 7TF

Phone: 0131 314 4530
Email: alan.ferrier@nrscotland.gov.uk