

# Transforming UK migration statistics during Covid-19

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# Our transformation journey

- UK migration statistics based on International Passenger Survey
- Making increasing use of admin-data over past few years – aiming to put this at the core of our statistics
- Users need more detailed evidence on migration, including impacts
- Collaborating across the Government Statistical Service to deliver

## Concepts

What concepts do we need to measure, and what definitions support these?

e.g UK Migration



## Data

What data can we use to answer users' questions?

- Administrative
- Census
- Survey
- Big/commercial/other data sources

## What are the user needs?

How is the population changing, including patterns of international migration?

What impact is this having on the economy, labour markets and society?

## Outputs

What outputs do we need to produce?

- Population and international migration outputs
- Migrants and migration analysis
- Population characteristics
- Demographic analysis
- Families and households statistics

## Methods

What methods can we use to analyse administrative data?

Estimate population flows

Estimate population stocks

Triangulate the results

# Impact of Covid-19

- The International Passenger Survey was suspended due to Covid-19 in March 2020
  - Published our final statistics based on available survey data in August 2020 (with adjustments to correct for overestimation of non-EU students)
- We have accelerated our transformation plans and will now deliver new measures of migration based on admin-data from 2020 onwards
  - “Admin-Based Migration Estimates (ABMEs)”
- Published updates in our Transformation Overview webpage to communicate this to our users and stakeholders

# New measures from admin data

- Main sources of administrative data for our first iteration of new measures. Drawing on the strengths of these for migration from within and outside the EU:
  - **The Registration And Population Interactions Dataset (RAPID)** is a longitudinal dataset that captures interaction data for anyone with a national insurance number from 2010-11 onwards.
  - **Home Office Exit Checks data** covers non-EEA nationals who hold a visa and includes information on immigration and travel histories.
  - **Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data** includes those studying at Higher Education Institutes in the UK (exc. further education).

# How has migration changed since Covid-19?

- Developing our **use of modelling techniques** to address time lags in our 'best' admin sources and to help us measure how migration is changing since Covid-19
- Challenging given changes to historical relationships, fewer sources relating to emigration plus known impacts on operational processes/collection of admin data

Department for  
Work and Pensions  
- National Insurance  
Number allocations

Home Office visa  
applications

Home Office air  
passenger arrivals

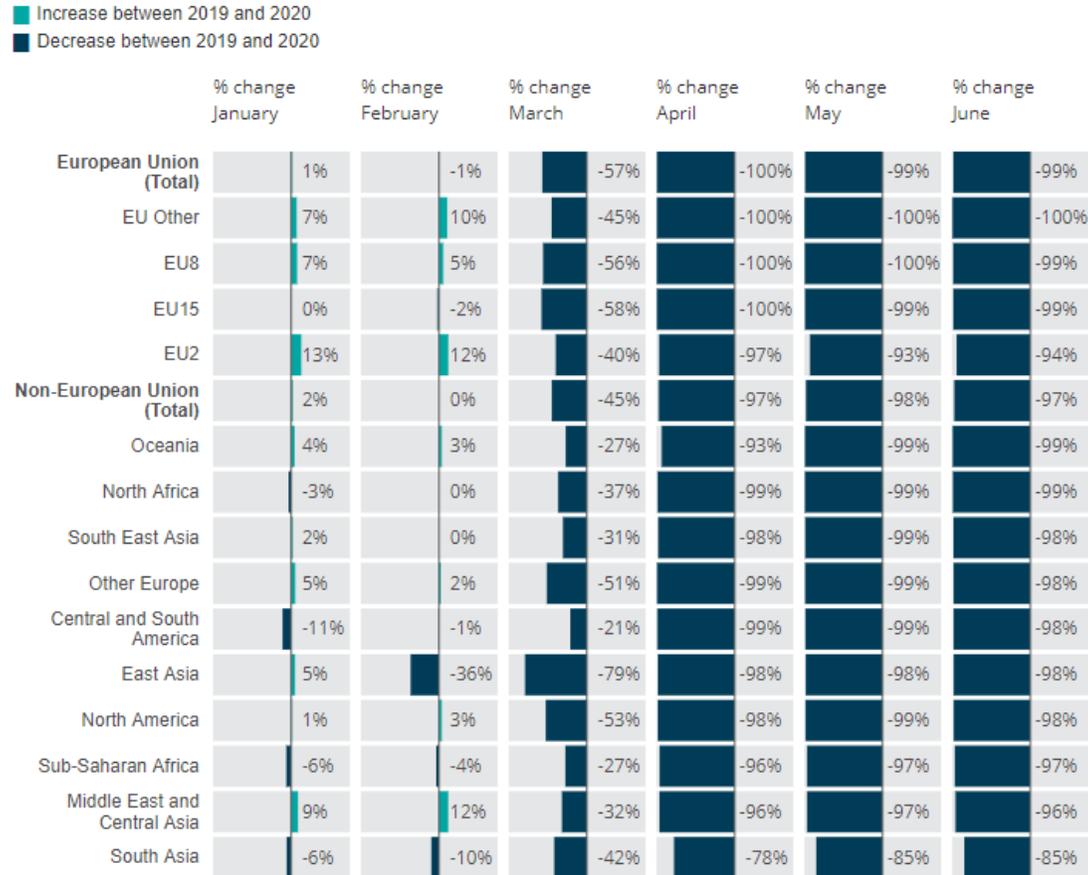
Civil Aviation  
Authority passenger  
in and outflow data

Department for  
Transport - sea  
passenger statistics

Insights on student  
migration – Russell  
Group, British  
Council

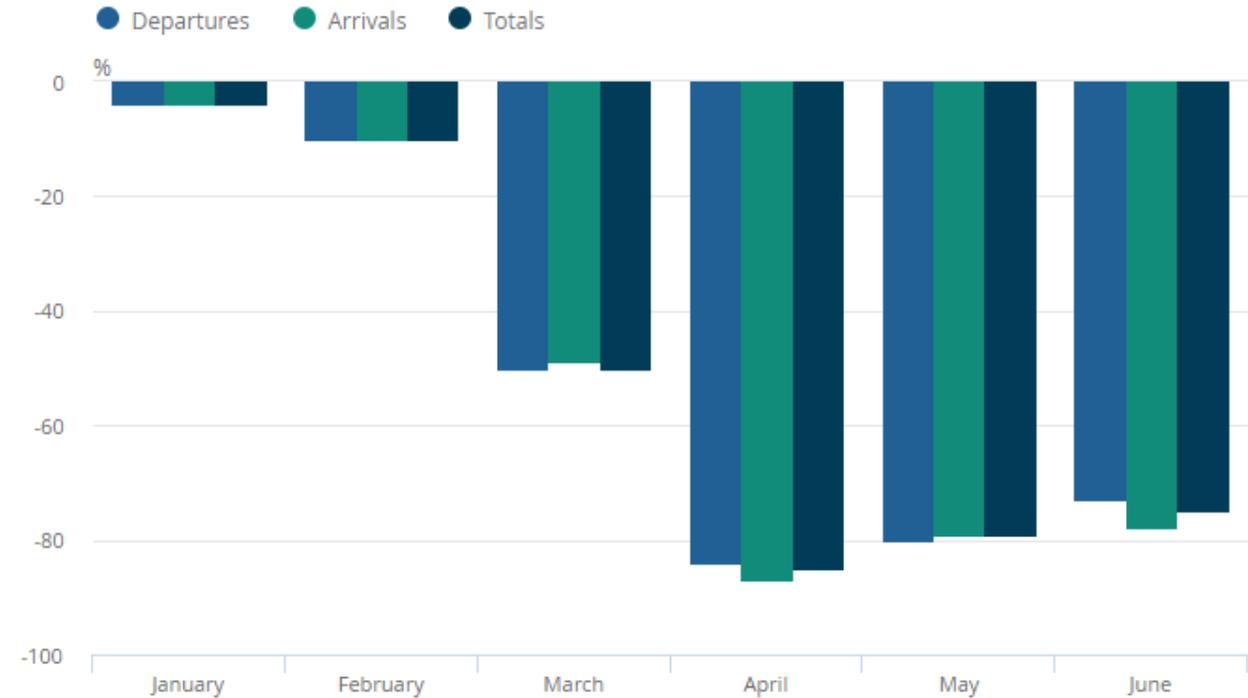
**Figure 6: There was widespread decline in international air travel to the UK since March 2020**

Annual percentage change in monthly air passenger arrivals at airports in the UK from airports in regions of the world, January to June, 2020



**Figure 7: A decline, mainly due to the coronavirus, in passengers travelling by sea was first seen in March 2020 with further reductions in April to June 2020**

Annual percentage change in arrivals and departures by short international ferry routes, UK, January to June 2020



# Collaborating to deliver

- Joining up across ONS – collaborating across migration, population, statistical design and methodology teams
- Working in partnership across the Government Statistical Service to deliver our new measures of migration
- Guidance and advice from The Office for Statistics Regulation
- Migration is changing and will continue to change (impact of Covid-19, Brexit) – a consultative approach, continuing to gather feedback to identify and meet priorities
- International – learning from experiences of using administrative data to measure migration

# Next steps on our transformation journey:

## Very short term

*Now to Nov*

Developing new measures using new sources, as no IPS data

Publishing an update and synthesis report in Nov



## Short term

*2020-2021*

Bedding in new stats, iterative improvements and bringing in new immigration system data



## Medium term

*2021-2022*

Improved and integrated migration system, working alongside admin based population estimates



## Long term

*2023*

Totally integrated population and migration statistics system

# Contact details



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