

Measuring migration in the UK – Challenges and opportunities

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Our vision



To provide the best possible international migration statistics and insights.

By using the best data available, we will produce outputs that are relevant, coherent and timely

Measuring international migration in the UK - the past

- Big flows of travellers c. 150m
 - Of which c600,000 immigrants (1 in 250 arrivals) and c300,000 emigrants (1 in 500 departures)
- The main measure used is **long-term** migration, using the UN definition
- Our report provided migration data quarterly based on the International Passenger Survey (IPS) – an **intentions-based** survey about migration *flows*
- We publish separately measures of migration *stocks*, using Annual Population Survey

Migration Statistics Quarterly Report: May 2020

A summary of the latest official long-term international migration statistics for the UK for the year ending December 2019. Data from the Home Office, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) are also included.

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Next release:
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Measuring international migration in the UK - the present

Administrative-based migration estimates (ABMEs)

- Strategic solution to produce **behaviour-based** international migration estimates.
- Derive flows of migration from two periods of stocks produced using administrative data.
- Based on applying rules to imply whether someone has immigrated into or emigrated out of the UK.

Sources

- RAPID – dataset containing all individuals who pay tax or receive benefits (with additional nationality information linked on)
- Exit Checks – information on visa records (currently restricted to just non-EEA nationals only)

- Tactical solution after IPS suspended to produce timely measures of migration during pandemic.
- State space model using admin data, designed to cope with turbulent periods
- In lack of complete data, relies on assumptions (e.g. proxying EU traveller flows with non-EU traveller behaviours)

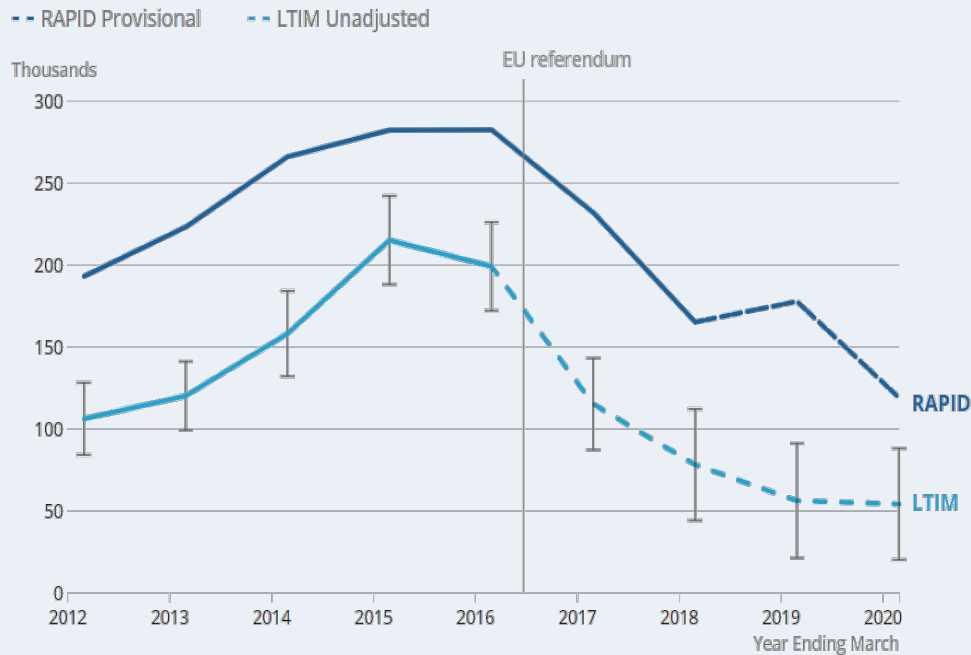
Sources

- Timely information on travellers (visas, border crossing and travel data, including Civil Aviation Authority, Eurotunnel and ferries data)

Modelling to produce migration estimates

Admin Based Migration Estimates – early research

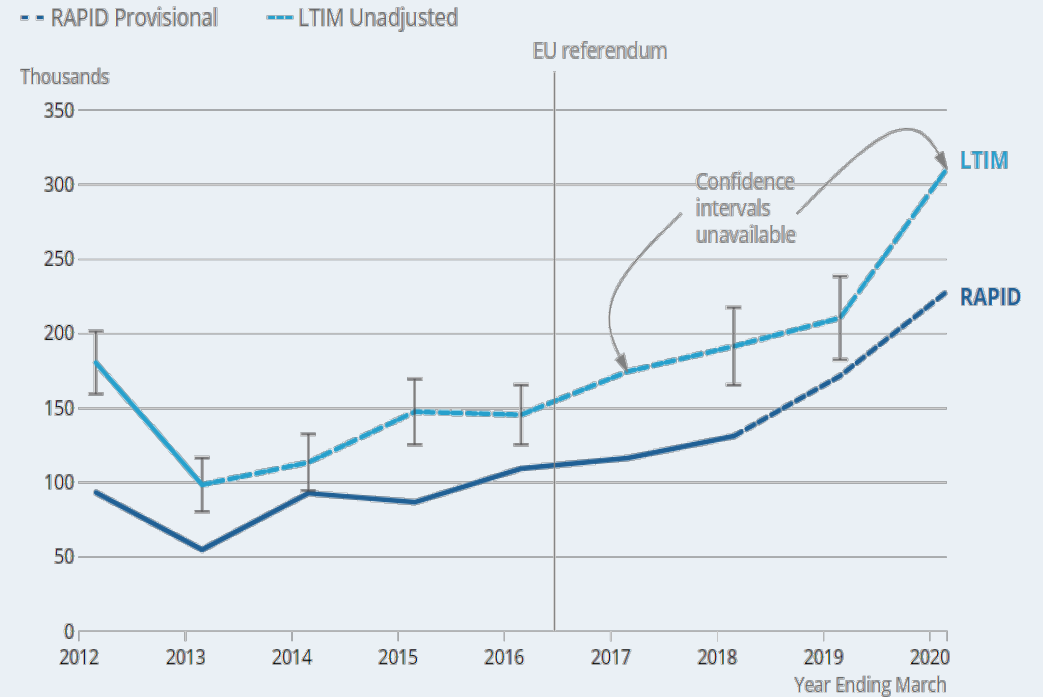
EU net migration – RAPID* > LTIM**
 Greater accuracy when moving from an intentions (LTIM) to behaviour (RAPID) based approach.



ABMEs coverage gaps

- Visa information limited to non-EEA nationals only
- Difficult to spot UK Nationals emigration and immigration on RAPID
- Limited coverage of students and <16's

Non-EU net migration – LTIM < RAPID
 Exposes the challenges in coverage in RAPID, particularly here in international students.



*RAPID = Administrative dataset containing all individuals who pay tax or receive benefits (with additional nationality information linked on)
 **LTIM = Long term international migration measured using IPS

Measuring international migration in the UK - the future!

Administrative-based
migration estimates
(ABMEs)

Modelling to produce
migration estimates

ABMEs supported by
statistical modelling

&

ABME insights

Why?

- Single set of international migration statistics for the UK.
- Bring together the strengths of each approach -

How?

- Using administrative information to reduce assumptions in model.
- Longer-term, link together data sources to address coverage gaps (less reliance on modelling)
- Using strengths of individual ABME sources to provide insight into key policy areas. (e.g. labour market shortages)
- Working with experts, being innovative, and open to new sources and methods.

Questions and challenges

Definitions

Do we need to consider
12-month rule?

Revisions

When and how do we
revise estimates?

Data

We are now more reliant
on external data suppliers

Coherence

Census 2021, admin-
based population
estimates

Stocks vs flows

Reconciling our stocks
and flows measures

Greater demand

Pandemic means greater
need for timely, granular
and more accurate
population statistics

Next steps

Late November

- Research on visa patterns, expiries and transitions – ABME insights
- Population of UK by country of birth and nationality, year to June 2021 (“stocks”)
- UK totals for immigration and emigration, year to December 2020 (“flows”) - Modelling
- Explainer on the difference between stocks and flows

Spring/Summer 2022

- UK totals for immigration and emigration, year to June 2021 (“flows”) – Modelling introducing ABME data feeds
- Impact migration has on labour market shortages (will publish sooner if data and permissions allow) – ABME insights
- Introduce revisions process for migration statistics