



BRIEFING

Migrants in Scotland: An Overview

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PUBLISHED: 18/09/2013



This briefing provides an overview of the numbers, population shares, geographic distribution and nationalities of migrants in Scotland.

Key points

Between 2004 and 2012 the non-UK born population of Scotland increased from 204,000 to 375,000. During the same period the estimated population in Scotland with non-British nationality increased from 127,000 to 285,000.

In 2012, Scotland hosted about 5% of the non-UK born and 6% of the non-British national population of the UK.

In 2012, Scotland's population was estimated to be 7.2% non-UK born (up from 4.1% in 2004) and 5.5% non-British national (up from 2.5% in 2004).

Glasgow City has the largest estimated number of people born outside the UK (86,000 in 2012) among all council areas with comparable data in Scotland.

People born in Poland constitute the largest non-UK born group in Scotland (56,000 in 2012). Polish migrants account for about 15% of all the non-UK born population resident in Scotland.

Understanding the evidence

In this briefing the term non-UK born is used in reference to someone who was born outside the UK. Those born outside of Scotland but within the UK are not considered to be foreign-born. The term non-British national refers to someone who is not a British citizen irrespective of place of birth.

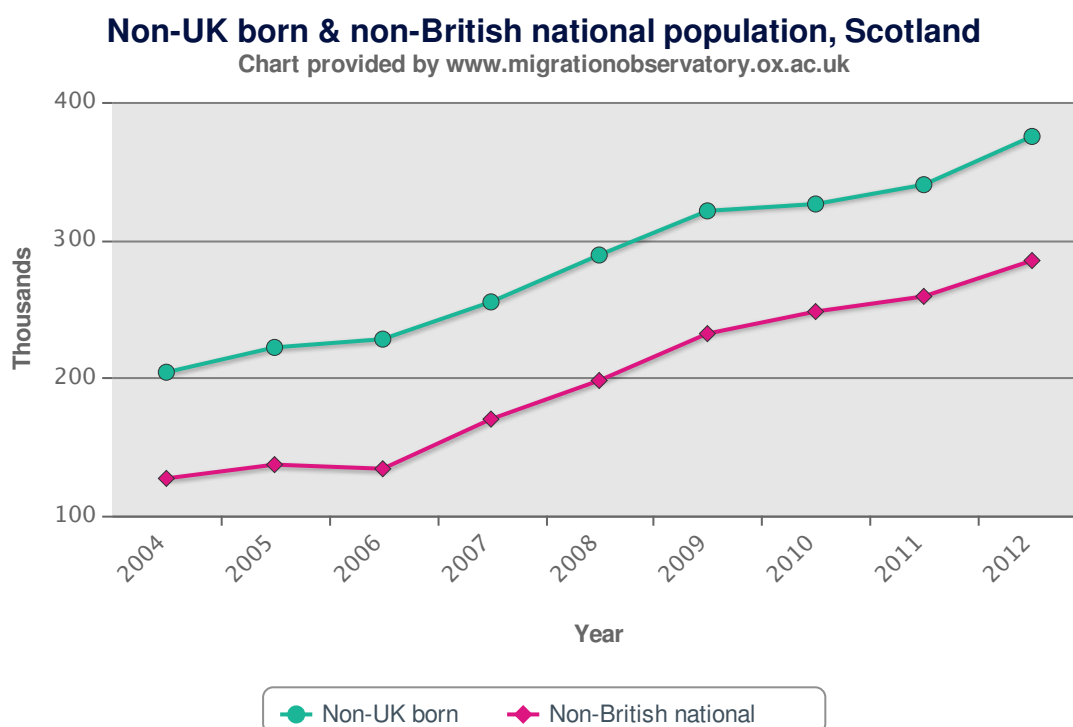
All data in this briefing come from the Annual Population Survey (APS). All numbers presented are estimates with associated margins of error. For example, the number of non-UK born people residing in Scotland during 2011 was estimated at 375,000, but the 95% confidence interval associated with this estimate ranges from 354,000 to 396,000. This uncertainty is greater at the council level. The discussion of the number of migrants in different areas of Scotland is limited to those areas with sufficient observations in the APS to provide sensible estimates. In particular, estimates from the APS for areas with a coefficient of variation (i.e. measure of dispersion) of more than 20% have been suppressed as they are not considered reliable. Therefore, the regional analysis does include only some council areas in Scotland. Finally, there is also considerable uncertainty in the number of residents by country of birth. For instance, there were 56,000 estimated residents of Scotland in 2012 who were born in Poland. However, the 95% confidence interval associated with this estimate ranges from 48,000 to 64,000.

Between 2004 and 2012 the non-UK born population of Scotland increased from 204,000 to 375,000

Figure 1 presents the number of non-UK born residents and non-British nationals living in Scotland for the period 2004 to 2012. In 2004 the number of non-UK born residents was estimated to be 204,000 and the number of non-British nationals was 127,000. Both of these numbers have increased continuously over time. In 2012 there were 375,000 non-UK born people resident in Scotland and 285,000 non-British nationals. This total represents an increase of 84% in the non-UK born population and an increase of 124% in the non-British population since 2004. The largest increases in the non-UK born and non-British population occurred during the 2007–2009 period.

During the period 2004–2012 the UK-born population of Scotland decreased from 4,810,000 to 4,804,000, which constitutes a decline of 0.1%. In 2012, Scotland hosted about 5% of the non-UK born and 6% non-British national population of the UK.

Figure 1

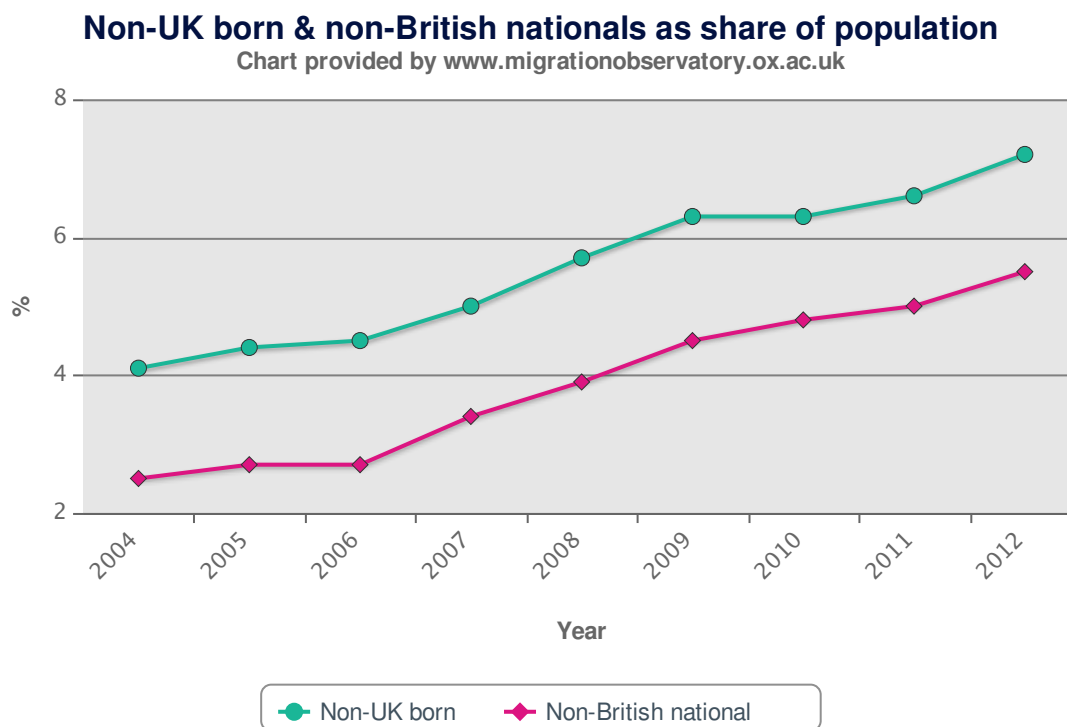


Source : Office for National Statistics, Annual Population Survey

In 2011, 7.2% of Scotland's population was born outside of the UK and 5.5% of Scotland's population reported foreign nationality

Figure 2 presents the share of Scotland's population which is non-UK born and non-British national for the period 2004–2012. In 2012, Scotland's population was 7.2% non-UK born which represents an increase from the 2004 value (4.1%). An estimated 5.5% of Scotland residents in 2012 were non-British nationals which also represent an increase from the 2004 value (2.5%). The share of Scotland's population which is non-UK born is smaller than that of the UK as a whole (12% in 2012). Likewise, the share of Scotland's population with non-British nationality is smaller than that of the UK (7.8%).

Figure 2



Source : Office for National Statistics, Annual Population Survey

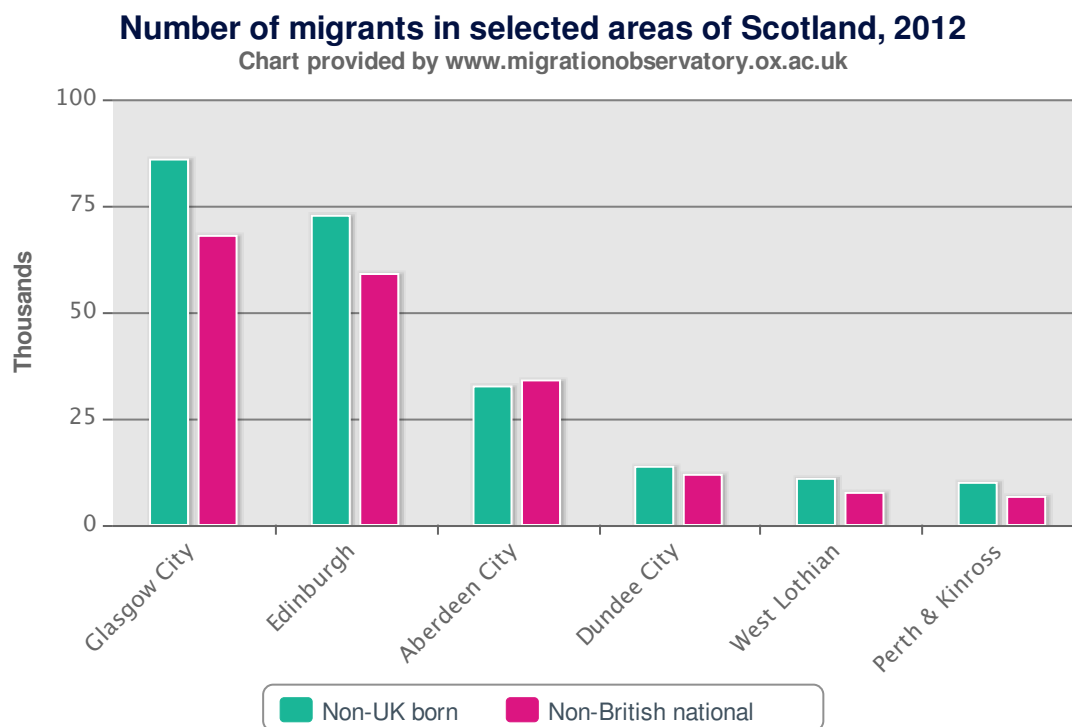
Glasgow City had the largest number of non-UK born people in 2012 (estimated at 86,000) among all council areas with comparable data in Scotland

Figure 3 reports the estimated number of migrants in Scotland for only those areas in which there is reliable evidence available from the Annual Population Survey to make sensible estimations about the local non-UK born population. Therefore, Figure 3 does not include all areas of Scotland.

Glasgow City has the largest number of migrants (86,000 non-UK born people in 2012) among all council areas with comparable data in Scotland. Edinburgh (city) comes in a close second place (73,000 non-UK born people in 2012). However, given the degree of uncertainty in the data is not possible to conclude that Glasgow has a larger non-UK born population than Edinburgh. Data for previous years suggests that these two cities have consistently been the main hosts of migrants in Scotland over time.

Aberdeen (city) has the third highest population of people born outside the UK in Scotland (33,000 non-UK born people in 2012).

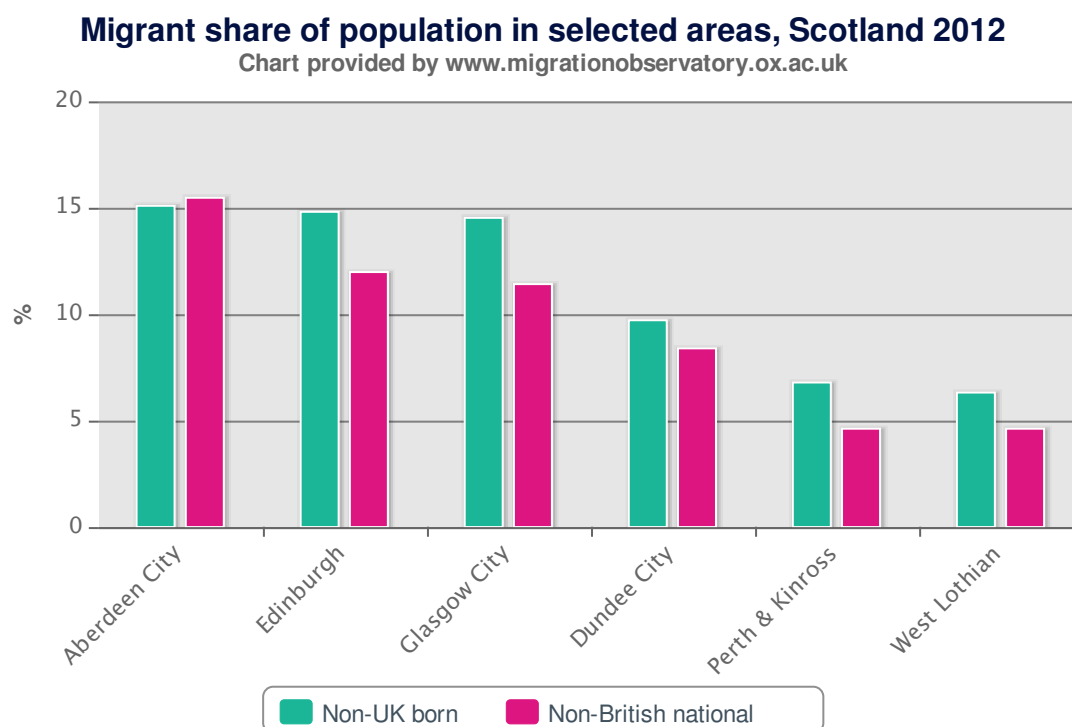
Figure 3



Source : Office for National Statistics, 2012 Annual Population Survey

As shown in Figure 4, if we look at the proportion of the non-UK born population in a particular council area, Aberdeen City comes top (15.1% of the population is non-UK born). The non-UK born population represents an estimated 14.9% of the total population of Edinburgh (city) and 14.6% of the total population of Glasgow City.

Figure 4



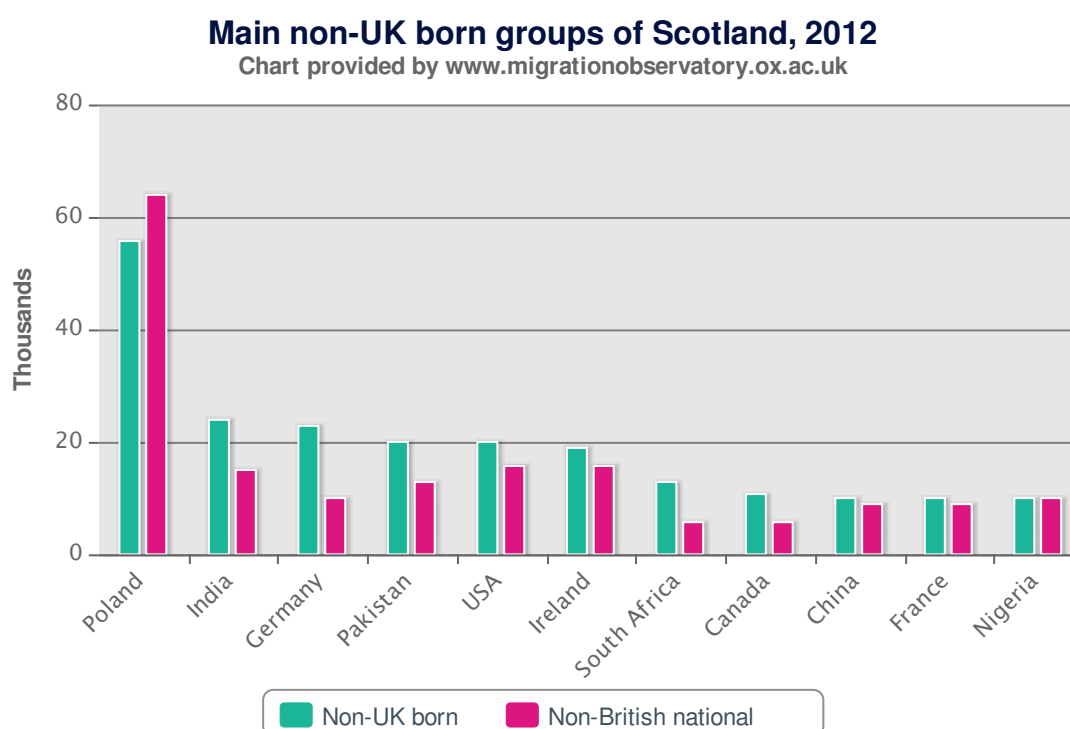
Source : Office for National Statistics, 2012 Annual Population Survey

People born in Poland constitute the largest non-UK born group in Scotland

As shown in Figure 5, there were 56,000 estimated residents of Scotland who were born in Poland. This represents the largest non-UK born group in Scotland in 2012. Scotland hosts about 9% of all those living in the UK who were born in Poland. Polish migrants account for close to 15% of the non-UK born population of Scotland, compared to 8.4% of the non-UK born population of the UK as a whole. Those born in Poland represent the second largest non-UK born group in the UK as a whole.

Other large non-UK born groups in Scotland include people born in India (24,000 in 2012), Germany (23,000 in 2012), USA (20,000 in 2012) and Pakistan (20,000 in 2012).

Figure 5



Source : Office for National Statistics, 2012 Annual Population Survey

Evidence gaps and limitations

First conducted in 2004, the APS combines results from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the English, Welsh and Scottish LFS “boosts” (additional survey interviews in selected areas to increase the sample size). The LFS has some limitations for estimating the dynamics of migrants in the UK. First, it does not measure the scale of irregular migration. Second, it does not provide information on asylum seekers. Third, the LFS excludes those who do not live in households, such as those in hotels, caravan parks and other communal establishments. The LFS is therefore likely to underestimate the UK population of recent migrants. However, unlike other data sources (e.g. Census) the LFS provides annual data on the number and characteristics of migrants in Scotland.

Thanks to Esta Clark and Ronan O’Kelly from the National Records of Scotland for helpful comments and suggestions on this briefing.



The Migration Observatory

Based at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford, the Migration Observatory provides independent, authoritative, evidence-based analysis of data on migration and migrants in the UK, to inform media, public and policy debates, and to generate high quality research on international migration and public policy issues. The Observatory's analysis involves experts from a wide range of disciplines and departments at the University of Oxford.



COMPAS

The Migration Observatory is based at the ESRC Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford. The mission of COMPAS is to conduct high quality research in order to develop theory and knowledge, inform policy-making and public debate, and engage users of research within the field of migration.

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Recommended citation

Vargas-Silva, Carlos. "Migrants in Scotland: An Overview." Migration Observatory briefing, COMPAS, University of Oxford, UK, September 2013.

