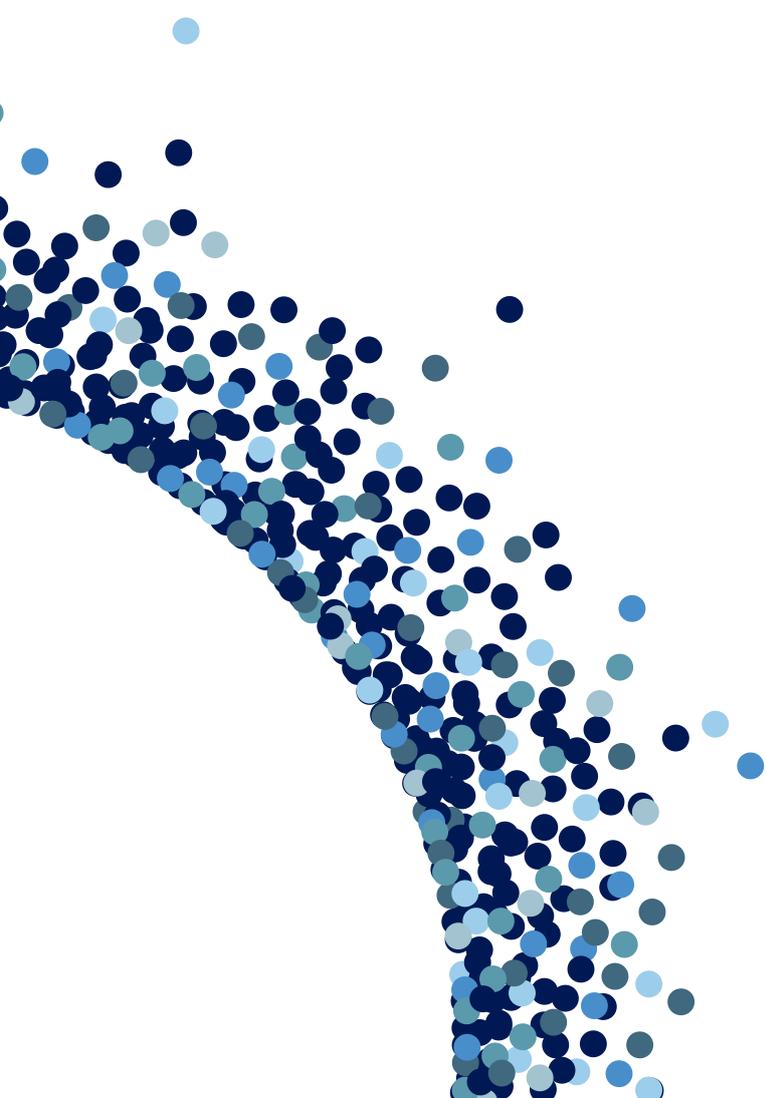




# BRIEFING

## West Midlands: Census Profile



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This briefing summarises key statistics from the 2011 Census for the West Midlands, and its constituent districts and unitary authorities. The briefing provides information about population levels; the number, population share, age and gender of foreign-born residents; as well as countries of origin, main languages and passports held. Finally, the briefing compares the West Midlands to other regions of England and Wales and the 2001 and 2011 Census results.

## Key Points

In 2011, the total usual resident population of the West Midlands stood at just over 5.6 million people. Just over 11% of those residents (629,973) were born outside of the UK.

In 2011, half (49.8%) of the non-UK born population held a UK passport, and 45.6% held only a non-UK passport. Only 4.6% of the non-UK born population held no passport.

Nearly two thirds (72.1%) of the non-UK born population resided in the metropolitan county of West Midlands. At the more local level, the locality with the highest number of foreign-born citizens was Birmingham, with 239,313 non-UK born residents in 2011.

Between 2001 and 2011, the non-UK born population grew the most in Birmingham (77,063 additional non-UK born residents) and the biggest percentage increase in the non-UK born population occurred in Stoke-on-Trent (a 131.5% increase).

Residents born in India represent the most numerous non-UK born group in the West Midlands (99,717 residents) followed by residents born in Pakistan, Poland, Ireland, and Jamaica.

In both 2001 and 2011, the West Midlands occupied the 3rd position in terms of the population share of non-UK born residents out of the ten regions of England and Wales. In terms of population numbers, it held the 4th position in 2011, down from 3rd position in 2001.

## Understanding the evidence

The census is the most complete source of information about the population. It is particularly useful for obtaining population estimates for small geographical areas and information on the characteristics of such a population. Other sources of information on population characteristics in the UK such as the Labour Force Survey have large margins of error at the local level, because they are based on survey data and rely on a limited number of observations at the local level. The census is based on a count of people and households, with efforts to include everyone, but it is supplemented by a survey to detect and estimate those who are missed at first.

The latest UK censuses were conducted during 2011, with 27 March 2011 as the official census day of record. In England and Wales the census was conducted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the National Records of Scotland in Scotland, and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency in Northern Ireland. There are different release dates for the data in these censuses (including the migration-related data). Therefore, when comparing the East Midlands to other parts of the UK, the current briefing uses only information from the ONS 2011 Census releases for England and Wales.

When analysing the nature of migration, defining who counts as a migrant is of crucial importance. Yet there is no consensus on a single definition of a 'migrant'. Different datasets—and analyses from these datasets—use a variety of definitions of 'migrant,' including (1) country of birth, (2) nationality, (3) passports held, (4) length of stay, (5) reason for migration and (6) being subject to immigration controls. For example, people who are foreign-born are not all foreign nationals; likewise, some foreign nationals may have lived in the UK for decades while others reside in the UK for only a year. Perhaps most importantly, not all foreign-born UK residents are subject to immigration control. Some are the children born abroad of UK national parent(s)—e.g. service personnel. Others are long-term residents who have acquired British citizenship. EEA nationals are also not subject to immigration control, yet are often considered migrants in public debate and in ONS net migration counts. This includes EEA nationals born outside the EEA.

The data analysed in this briefing are based mainly on the census statistics for country of birth as well as passports held, not current nationality. The census collected data on passports held, and this can be used as a proxy for nationality; yet nearly 17% of the total usual resident population of England and Wales held no passport in 2011 (ONS, 2013) and data for passports held is not available for 2001, precluding the measure of change over time. When using data on country of birth, it is important to note that many of those included in the foreign-born category will have British citizenship.

The data presented include statistics for usual residents only, unless otherwise specified. Usual residents are defined as anyone in the UK on census day who had stayed or intended to stay in the UK for 12 months or more (or were outside the UK but had a permanent UK address and intended to stay outside the UK for less than 12 months). In terms of countries of birth, data are available for 160 countries as part of regional totals. At the local level, however, data have not been provided for all countries of origin. Instead, the ONS has identified 27 key countries of origin most common at the national level, and all local analyses of the most frequent countries of origin only refer to the most frequent countries out of the 27 key countries of origin. As such, particularly at the local level, there may be other more numerous foreign-born groups that the current census release does not include. However, the totals for each region of origin are available for local areas.

See the Migration Observatory video interview of Peter Stokes, 2011 Census Statistical Design Manager, for further discussion.

## In 2011, the total usual resident population of the West Midlands stood at just over 5.6 million people. Just over 11% of those residents (629,973) were born outside of the UK

As shown in Table 1, in 2011, the total usual resident population of the West Midlands stood at 5,601,847 persons, 629,973 of which had been born outside of the UK. This represents 11.3% of the total resident population in the region (a 48.4% increase from 7.6% in 2001). The foreign-born population of the West Midlands accounts for 8.4% of the total non-UK born population of England and Wales (a decline of 2.4% from 8.6% in 2001). Since 2001, the foreign-born population grew by 230,691 persons, accounting for 69% of the total population growth of 334,539 usual residents in the decade. While overall the population of the West Midlands increased by 6.4% between 2001 and 2011, the non-UK born resident population grew by 57.8% in the same period.

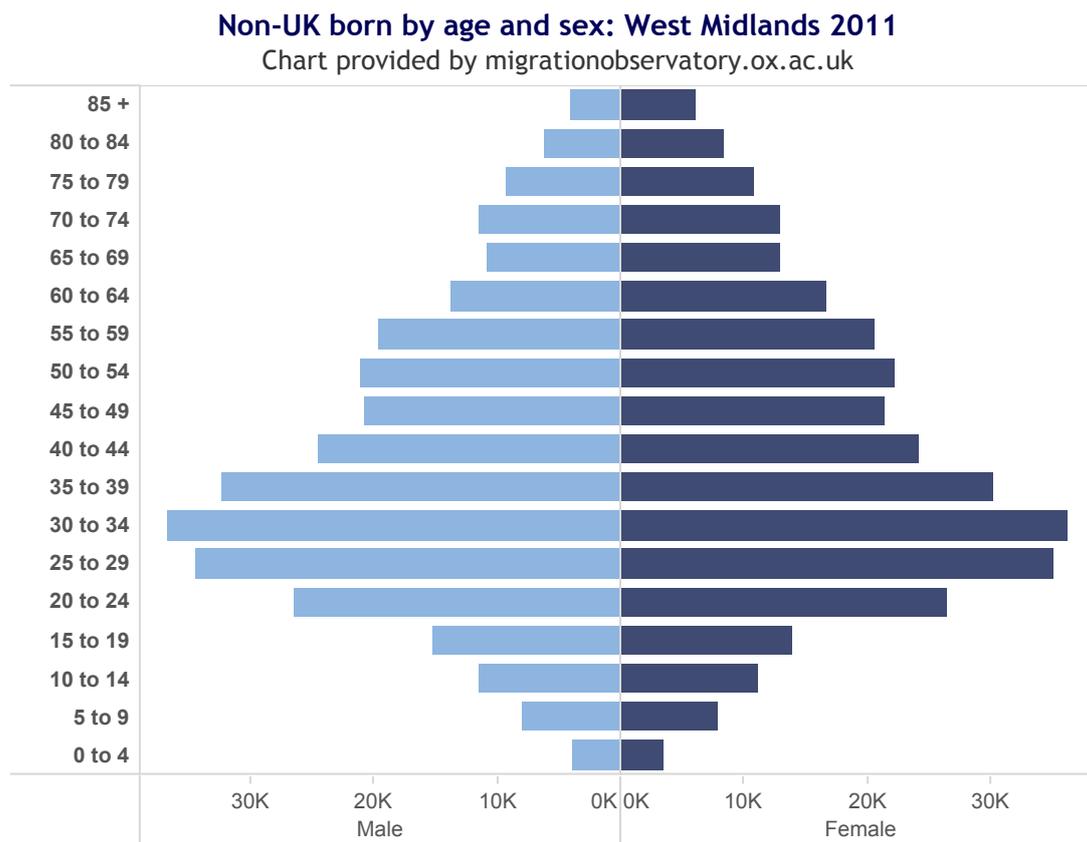
Table 1 – Key census statistics for the West Midlands

|  | 2001      | 2011      | Change (%) |
|--|-----------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Total usual resident population</b>                             | 5,267,308 | 5,601,847 | +6.4%      |
| <b>UK-born resident population</b>                                 | 4,868,026 | 4,971,874 | +2.1%      |
| <b>Non-UK born resident population</b>                             | 399,282   | 629,973   | +57.8%     |
| <b>Non-UK born as share of the region's population</b>             | +7.6%     | +11.3%    | +48.4%     |
| <b>Share of non-UK born population of England and Wales</b>        | +8.6%     | +8.4%     | -2.4%      |
| <b>Non-UK passport holders</b>                                     |           | 310,613   |            |
| <b>Non-UK passport holders as share of the region's population</b> |           | 5.5%      |            |

Source: Enland and Wales Census 2001 and 2011, ONS. Usual resident population.

In 2011, 41% of West Midlands' foreign-born residents were aged 20–39 years of age and 69% were aged 20–59 years of age (see Figure 1). In comparison, 24% of the UK-born population were between 20 and 39 years old in 2011. The most common age-groups were the 25–29 and 30–34 age groups, accounting for 11% and 12% of the non-UK born population respectively. Moreover, of the 629,973 foreign-born residents in 2011, 49% were men and 51% were women. However, the gender distribution differed somewhat depending on the age group; a slight majority of both those aged 0–24 and 30–44 were men. Non-UK born residents within the other age-groups were more likely to be women, and this likelihood increased with age.

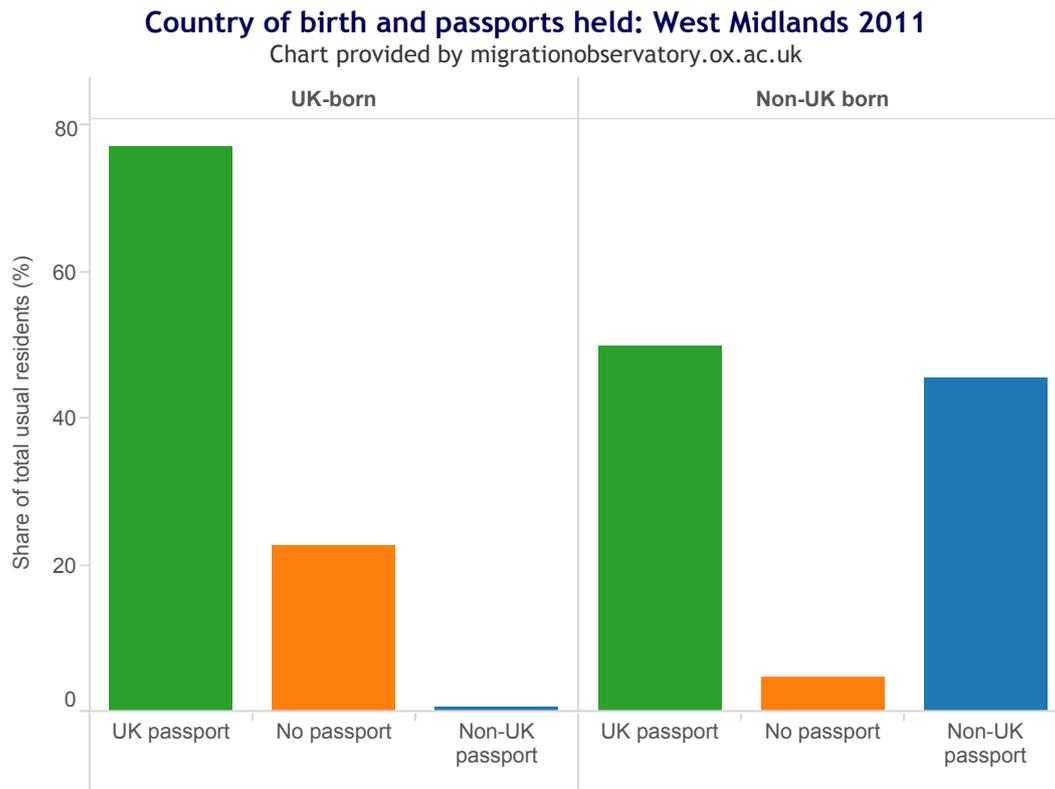
Figure 1



**In 2011, half (49.8%) of the non-UK born population held a UK passport, and 45.6% held only a non-UK passport. Only 4.6% of the non-UK born population held no passport**

In 2011, a fifth (20.5%) of all residents of the West Midlands held no passport. At the same time, 73.9% held a UK passport and 5.5% (310,613) held only a non-UK passport (see table 1). It is important to note that for residents with dual passports, priority was given to UK passports and then Irish passports in the census data collection process. Thus, respondents with both a UK and a non-UK passport are included as having a UK passport. In terms of the foreign-born population, only 4.6% held no passport. In fact, as shown in Figure 2, 49.8% of the non-UK born population (313,539) held a UK passport, while 45.6% (287,188) held only a non-UK passport.

Figure 2



Source: England and Wales Census 2011, ONS. Usual resident population.

### Nearly three quarters (72.1%) of the non-UK born population resided in the county of West Midlands. At the more local level, the locality with the highest number of foreign-born citizens was Birmingham, with 239,313 non-UK born residents in 2011

Nearly three quarters (72.1%) of the non-UK born population resided in the county of West Midlands (which also concentrates nearly half (48.8%) of the total population of the region). At the more local level, the locality with by far the highest number of foreign-born citizens was Birmingham (see Figure 3); its 239,313 non-UK born residents represent 22.2% of Birmingham's population and 37.8% of all foreign-born residents of the West Midlands region.

As such, the majority (24 out of 30) of the other districts and unitary authorities of the region each had less than 5% of the non-UK born population of the region in 2011. North Warwickshire's 1,821 non-UK born residents, the smallest in the region, represented 0.3% of the total foreign-born population of the West Midlands. In terms of the non-UK born residents as share of all local residents, the district of Staffordshire Moorlands has the lowest proportion, with its 2,232 foreign-born residents representing 2.3% of all residents.

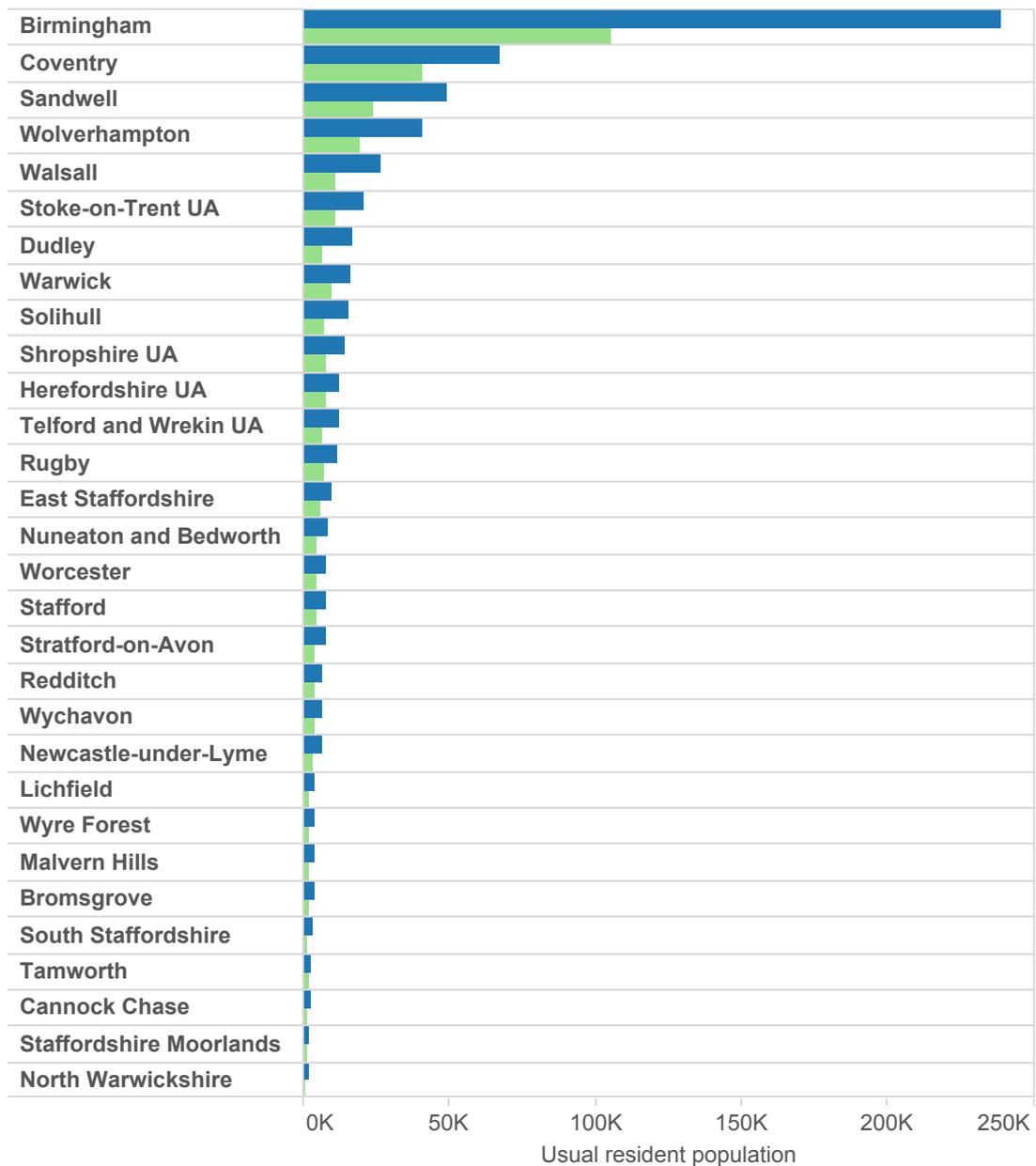
Birmingham also had the highest number of residents with only a non-UK passport. In 2011, there were 105,445 residents with only a non-UK passport living in the district of Birmingham, representing 9.8% of the local population and 34% of all those with only a foreign passport resident in the West Midlands (see Figure 3). In terms of the population share, however, Coventry comes out top in this measure, with 12.8% of residents holding only a non-UK passport in 2011 – this amounts to 40,555 residents, compared to 67,233 residents born outside of the UK.

In this measure, Staffordshire Moorlands also had the smallest percentage of residents with only a non-UK passport in 2011, with the 1,065 residents representing 1.1% of the local population and 0.3% of all non-UK passport-holders in the region.

Figure 3

### Non-UK born and non-UK passports held: West Midlands 2011

Chart provided by migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk



Source: England and Wales Census, 2011, ONS. Usual resident population.  
 Note: Non-UK born and Non-UK passport holders are overlapping categories; the vast majority of residents with a foreign-passport will also be foreign-born.

■ Non-UK born    ■ Non-UK passport

While there were 629,973 non-UK born persons usually resident in the West Midlands in 2011, there were also 15,311 short term residents (defined as staying between 3 and 12 months) born outside of the UK in the region in the same year. As mentioned above, Birmingham had the largest foreign-born usual resident population and it was also the top locality in terms of short-term residents, with 5,063 short terms residents, amounting to 33% of all the non-UK born short term residents of the region.

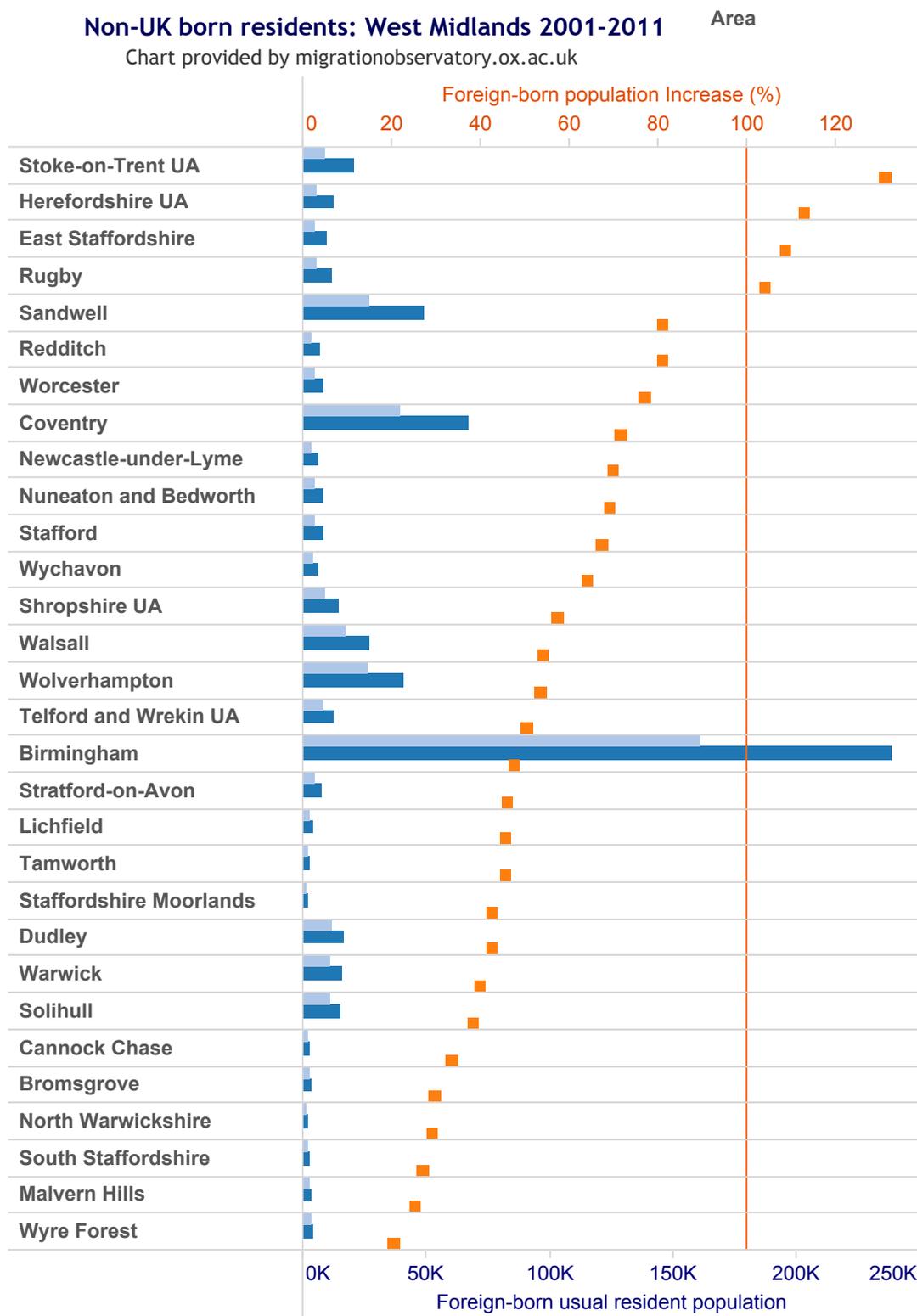
**Between 2001 and 2011, the total non-UK born population grew the most in Birmingham (77,063 additional non-UK born residents) and the biggest percentage increase in the non-UK born population occurred in Stoke-on-Trent (a 132% increase)**

Between 2001 and 2011, the non-UK born population increased in each county, district and unitary authority within West Midlands, but to varying degrees and at different speeds (see Figure 4). The largest numerical increase took place in Birmingham,

with the number of foreign-born residents rising by 77,063 residents. However, since the non-UK born population was already the largest in the region, this rise represents an increase of 47.8%, below the regional rate of growth in the non-UK born population in the decade.

The biggest percentage increase in the non-UK born population took place in the unitary authority of Stoke-on-Trent, where the foreign-born population grew by 11,776 persons (from 8,498 in 2001 to 20,714 in 2011), representing a growth of 131.5%. At the same time, the foreign-born population has grown the least in the district of Wyre Forest, increasing by 656 persons; this represents a rise of 20.6%, the lowest in the region.

Figure 4

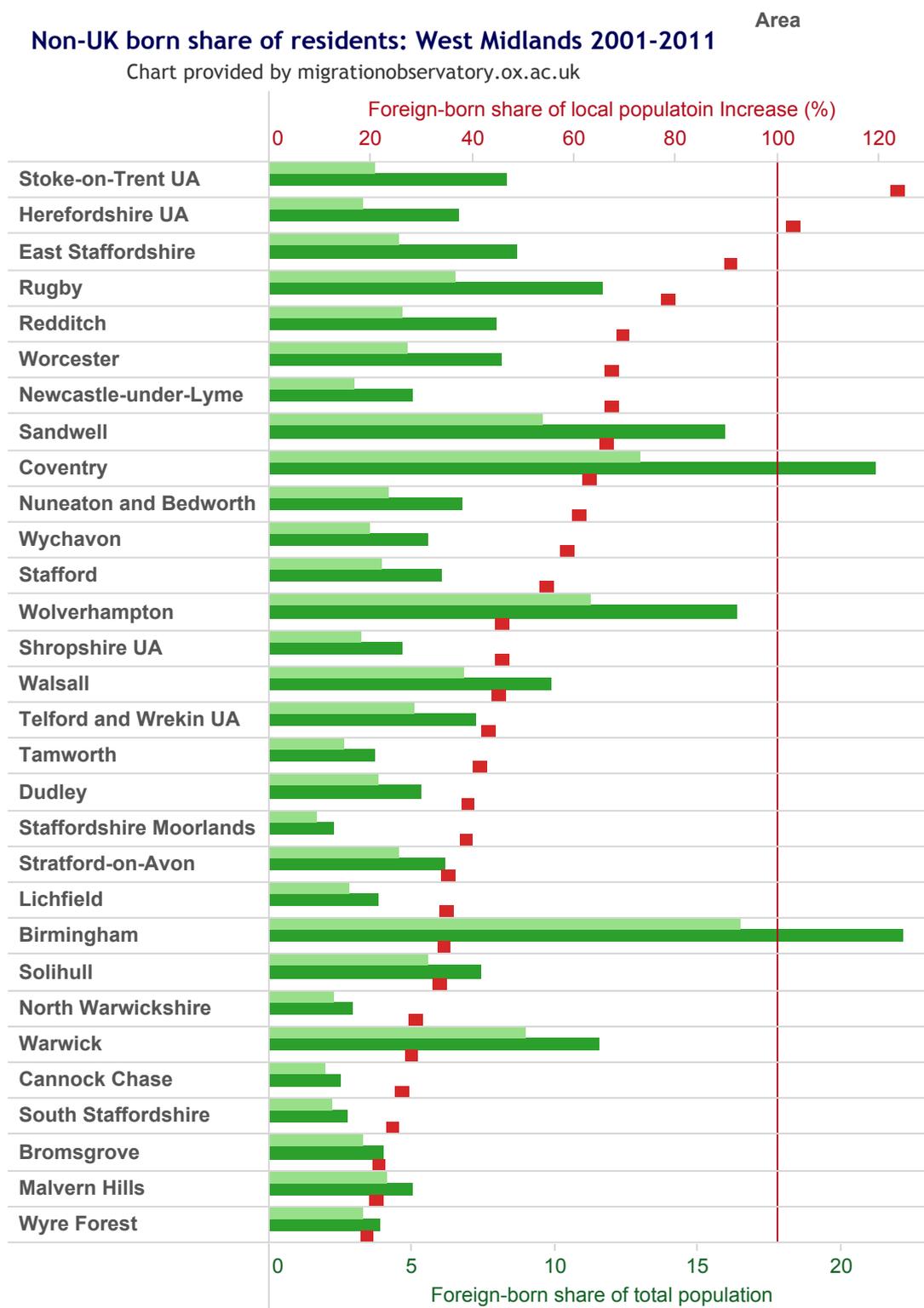


Source: England and Wales Census 2001 and 2011, ONS. Usual resident population.

Legend: 2001 (light blue), 2011 (dark blue), Increase (%) (orange)

As shown in Figure 5, although the non-UK born population has increased in each area of the West Midlands since 2001, its distribution within the region has changed somewhat since 2001. In terms of the foreign-born as a proportion of the total resident population within a given area, the highest increase (from 4.5% to 8.7%, a 91% increase) took place in the district of East Staffordshire. The area with the lowest change in the share of the foreign-born population within the resident population was again Wyre Forest, with an increase of 19% (from 3.3% in 2001 to 3.9% in 2011).

Figure 5



Source: England and Wales Census 2001 and 2011, ONS. Usual resident population.

■ 2001     
 ■ 2011     
 ■ Share Increase (%)

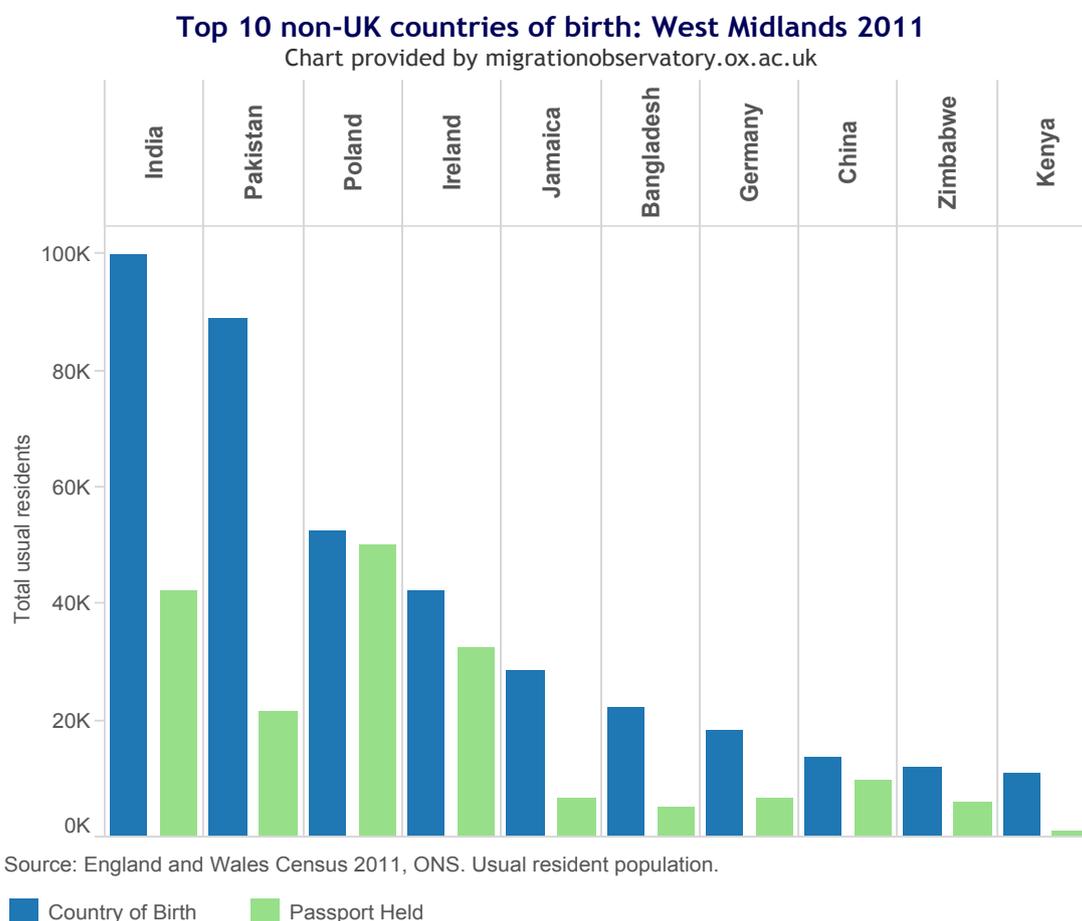
### Residents born in India represent the most numerous non-UK born group in the West Midlands (99,717 residents), followed by residents born in Pakistan, Poland, Ireland, and Jamaica

As shown in Figure 6, residents born in India represent the most numerous non-UK born group in the West Midlands with 99,717 residents, amounting to 16% of the region’s non-UK born population. This is followed by residents born in Pakistan (88,636), Poland (52,499), Ireland (42,173), and Jamaica (28,615). Within the top 10 countries of birth are also Bangladesh, Germany, China, Zimbabwe and Kenya. The resident population born in these 10 countries represents 62% of total foreign-born population of the region.

In terms of passports held, residents with Polish passports were the most numerous group (of those residents that held only a non-UK passport) with 49,974 residents holding a Polish passport in 2011. In this category, residents with Indian passports come second with 42,193 residents. Of those residents born in India, 40% held an Indian passport only (41% held a non-UK passport only), while 58.2% held a UK passport and less than 1% held no passport. In terms of residents born in Poland, 85% held a Polish passport (86.6% held a non-UK passport only), 3.8% held a UK passport and 9.6% held no passport.

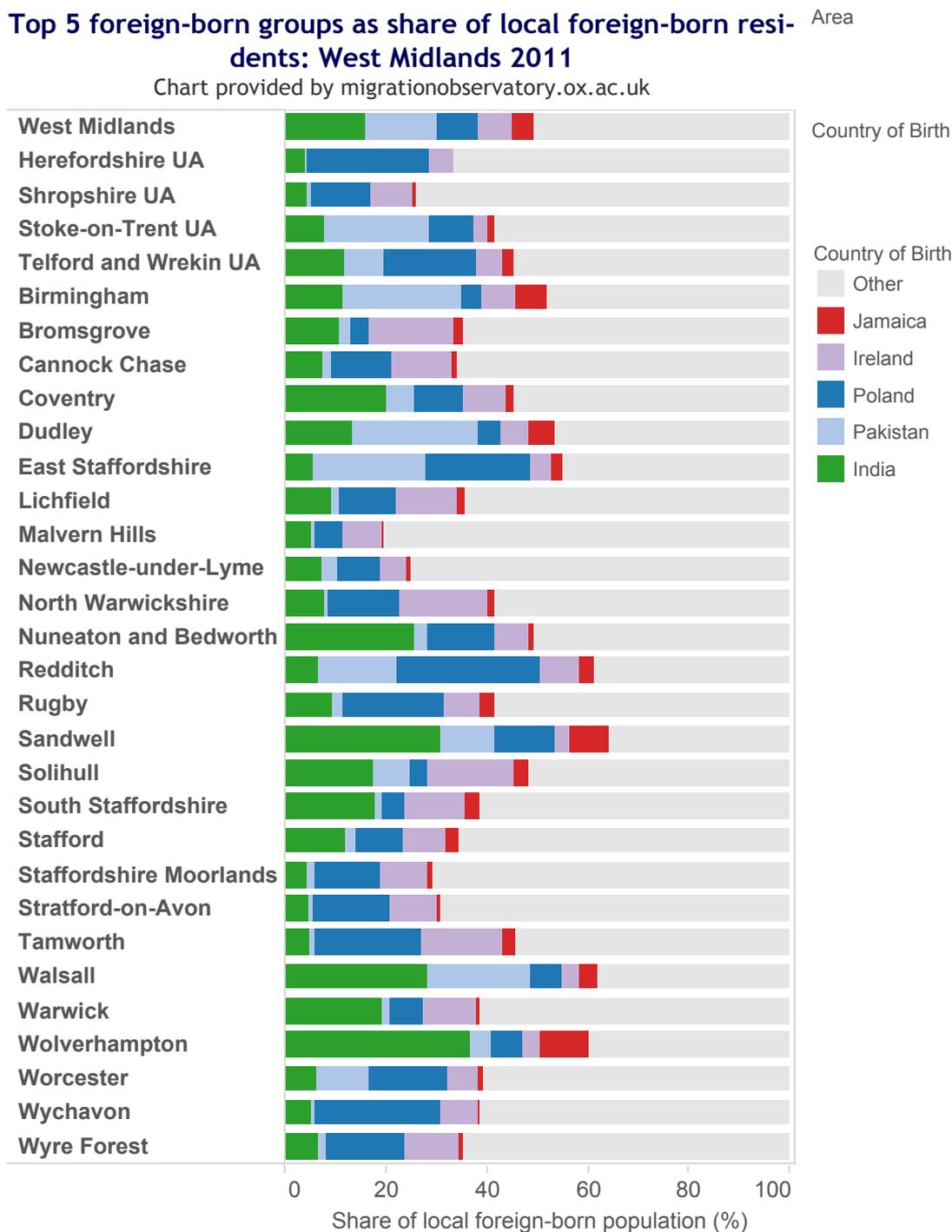
The differences in the relationship between the non-UK born and non-UK passport-holders measures in the case of Poland and India can be partly explained, on the one hand, by the fact that EU citizens have less need to acquire UK citizenship as they are not subject to immigration controls and on the other, by the historical differences in migration from these countries. In fact, 92% of Polish-born residents living in the West Midlands in 2011 arrived in the UK after the 2004 EU expansion (94% since 2001). Conversely, 67% of Indian-born residents living in the West Midlands in 2011 arrived in the country before 2001; as such they have had more opportunity to become eligible and apply for British citizenship.

Figure 6



It is important to note that the non-UK born groups were not evenly distributed across the region (see Figure 7). Residents born in India were largely concentrated in the metropolitan county of West Midlands, with 83,186 Indian-born persons residing there in 2011, accounting for 83% of all Indian-born residents of the West Midlands region and 18% of the county's foreign-born residents. At the more local level, the largest Indian-born population resided in Birmingham (27,206 residents), while as percentage of the local non-UK born population, the Indian-born population represented the largest share in Sandwell (31% of local foreign-born); both of these districts are located within the West Midlands metropolitan county. The smallest Indian-born population was in Staffordshire Moorlands, where the estimated 102 residents born in India represented 4.6% of the local non-UK born.

Figure 7



Source: England and Wales Census 2011, ONS. Usual resident population.  
 Note: These 5 countries of origin are those of the most numerous foreign-born groups in the region. The ONS has not released data for other countries of origin at the local level, only for the region as a whole.

Residents of Polish birth were somewhat more evenly distributed within the region. The metropolitan county of West Midlands had, again, the largest Polish-born population out of the 9 unitary authorities and counties of West Midlands, with 27,125 residents born in Poland in 2011, representing 52% of all Polish-born residents in the region, but 6% of the local foreign-born population. In terms of the Polish-born as proportion of the local foreign-born population, the top area in this category was the district of Redditch (28%), followed by Wychavon (25%), both of which were located in the county of Worcestershire. The area with the smallest Polish-born population was South Staffordshire, with 127 residents of Polish origin in 2011, accounting for 4% of local-born residents.

### **In terms of main spoken language, 386,134 residents of the West Midlands (7% of total population) spoke a language other than English as their main language in 2011**

There were 386,134 residents of the West Midlands who spoke a language other than English as their main language in 2011. This total represents 7.2% of the total resident population aged 3 and above. Within this group, the most commonly spoken language was Panjabi (17%), followed by Polish (13%) and Urdu (13%). The languages chosen by 5% or more of respondents also included Bengali (with Sylheti and Chatgaya) and Chinese languages (this includes Mandarin, Cantonese and other Chinese languages). Table 2 shows the top 15 languages (or language groups) in the West Midlands. These languages (or language groups) account for 77% of all the languages spoken by those not using English as their main spoken language.

Table 2 - Main spoken language if not English: West Midlands 2011

|                             | Usual residents | Share (%)* |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| <b>Panjabi</b>              | 67,008          | 17.4%      |
| <b>Polish</b>               | 49,965          | 13%        |
| <b>Urdu</b>                 | 48,414          | 12.6%      |
| <b>Bengali(1)</b>           | 23,384          | 6.1%       |
| <b>Chinese languages(2)</b> | 18,590          | 4.8%       |
| <b>Gujarati</b>             | 13,792          | 3.6%       |
| <b>Pakistani Pahari(3)</b>  | 13,767          | 3.6%       |
| <b>Arabic</b>               | 12,217          | 3.2%       |
| <b>Somali</b>               | 9,544           | 2.5%       |
| <b>Pashto</b>               | 7,674           | 2%         |
| <b>Kurdish</b>              | 7,374           | 1.9%       |
| <b>French</b>               | 7,266           | 1.9%       |
| <b>Persian/Farsi</b>        | 6,338           | 1.7%       |
| <b>Slovak</b>               | 4,835           | 1.3%       |
| <b>Portuguese</b>           | 4,491           | 1.3%       |
| <b>Other</b>                | 90,210          | 23.4%      |
| <b>Total</b>                | 384,869         | 100%       |

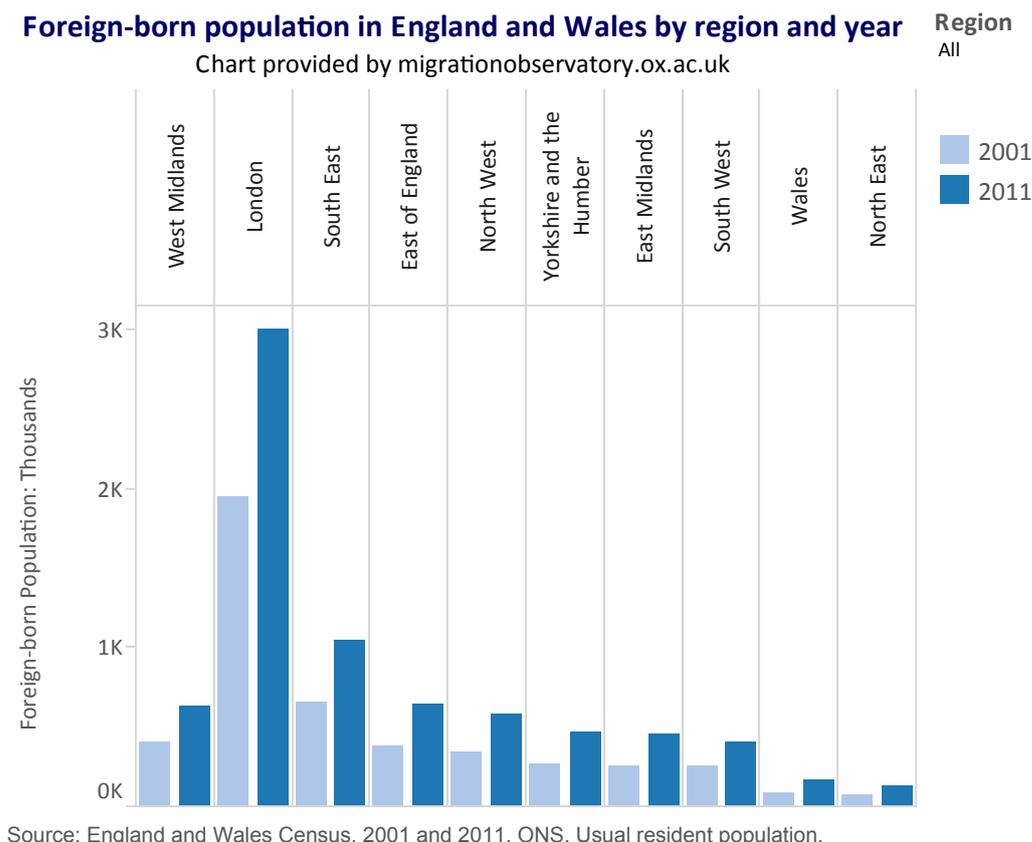
Source: England and Wales census, 2011. Usual resident population above 3 years of age; \*Share of all those who spoke a language other than English as their main language; (1) with Sylheti and Chatgaya; (2) Mandarin, Cantonese + all other Chinese languages; (3) with Mirpuri and Potwari

Among those residents of the West Midlands who did not select English as their main spoken language in 2011, 35% reported speaking English very well and 37% speaking English well. At the same time, 23% reported not being able to speak English well (1.6% of all residents above the age of 3), while 5% reported they couldn't speak English at all (0.4% of all residents above the age of 3). Compared to the whole of England and Wales, foreign-born residents the West Midlands report a slightly lower English proficiency. While 72% in the region stated they could speak English very well or well, for England and Wales as a whole, this was 79% of those who did not speak English (English or Welsh in Wales) as their main language.

**In both 2001 and 2011, the West Midlands occupied the 3rd position in terms of the population share of non-UK born residents out of the ten regions of England and Wales. In terms of population numbers, it held the 4th position in 2011, down from 3rd position in 2001**

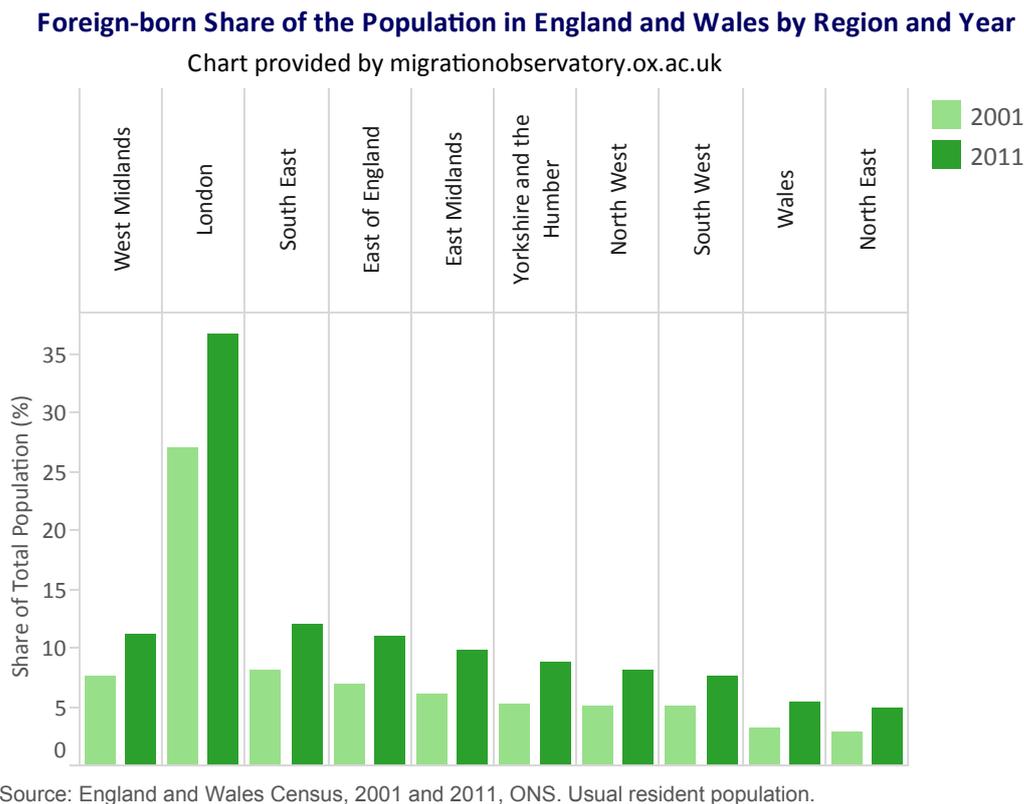
In terms of a regional comparison, in 2011, the West Midlands held the 4th position among regions of England and Wales concerning the number of non-UK born residents, down from 3rd place in 2001 (see Figure 8). In 2011, the number of foreign-born residents in the West Midlands was about 4.8 times lower than London's 3 million non-UK born (the region with the highest number of foreign-born residents in England and Wales), while 4.9 times higher than in the North East, the region with the lowest proportion of non-UK born population, where there were 128,000 people born outside of the UK in 2011.

Figure 8



Concerning the share of the foreign-born population within the total regional population the West Midlands occupied the 3rd position of the ten regions of England and Wales in both 2001 and 2011 – in 2011, 11.3% of all residents had been born outside of the UK (see Figure 9). In 2011, the regions with the lowest share of the foreign-born population were Wales and the North East, where those born outside of the UK made up 5.5% and 5% of the residents respectively. On the other hand, the region with the highest proportion of non-UK born residents was London (37%) and the second region with the highest non-UK born population was the South East (12.1%).

Figure 9



### Evidence Gaps and Limitations

There are two main limitations of the census. Firstly, it is typically only conducted every 10 years. Therefore, other sources of information are important in order to update the information between censuses. Secondly, there are only a limited number of questions included in the census. Therefore, sources of information on the broader characteristics of the population can also complement the census information.

While the census aims to include the entire population, it does have a certain margin of error. For England and Wales as a whole, the relative confidence interval at the 95% confidence level published by the ONS was 0.15% (83,000 people more or less than the estimate). To give an example at the more local level, for Birmingham’s usually resident population of 1,073,045, the relative confidence interval at the 95% level was 1.81%, suggesting a 95% probability that the true value of the population lies somewhere between 1,053,623 and 1,092,467 persons (ONS, 2012). Specific confidence intervals are not currently available for census data relating to country of birth.

## References

- Office for National Statistics. "Detailed country of birth and nationality analysis from the 2011 Census of England and Wales." London, May 2013.
- Office for National Statistics. "Confidence Intervals for the 2011 Census." London, December 2012.

## Related Material

- Migration Observatory briefing – Who Counts as a Migrant? Definitions and their Consequences [www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/who-counts-migrant-definitions-and-their-consequences](http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/who-counts-migrant-definitions-and-their-consequences)
- Migration Observatory video – interview with Peter Stokes, 2011 Census Statistical Design Manager [www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/data-and-resources/video/overview-uk-census-and-migration-data](http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/data-and-resources/video/overview-uk-census-and-migration-data)
- Migration Observatory briefing – Geographical Distribution and Characteristics of Long-Term International Flows to the UK [www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/geographical-distribution-and-characteristics-long-term-international-migration-flows-uk](http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/geographical-distribution-and-characteristics-long-term-international-migration-flows-uk)
- Migration Observatory briefing – Migrants in the UK: An Overview [www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/migrants-uk-overview](http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/migrants-uk-overview)

## Further Information

- Census Project Page [www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/projects/census](http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/projects/census)



## 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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