

International migration

Introduction

On 2nd November 2022, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) released further results from the 2021 Census for England and Wales. These included 9 univariate (one variable) tables relating to international migration, including country of birth, passports held and year of arrival.

Key Findings

- The 2021 Census showed around 53,820 residents (9.9%) of East Sussex were born outside the UK, an increase of 10,970 (25.6%) since 2011.
- Compared to other counties and unitary authorities in the South East, East Sussex has the second-smallest proportion of residents born outside of the UK after the Isle of Wight.
- The top non-UK country of birth was Poland; there were 3,390 Polish-born residents living in East Sussex in 2021, 0.7% of the total East Sussex population.
- The number of people who were born in Romania grew by 582% since the previous Census, up from 370 people in 2011 to 2,550 in 2021.
- 29,430 usual residents (5.4%) held a non-UK passport; the most common non-UK passport held was Polish (3,280 or 0.6% of all usual residents).
- 2,950 usual residents (0.5% of the total population) moved into East Sussex from outside the UK in the 12 months prior to the Census being taken, down from 3,620 (0.7% of the population) in 2011.

Country of Birth

The 2021 Census showed that 53,820 people in East Sussex were born in a country outside of the UK, up from 42,850 in 2011. This means that at the time of the 2021 Census, about one tenth of East Sussex residents was born outside the UK. This is low compared to England as a whole, where more than 1 in 6 residents was born outside of the UK.

At district level, Eastbourne had the largest number of residents born outside of the UK (15.2%), followed by Hastings (11.4%).

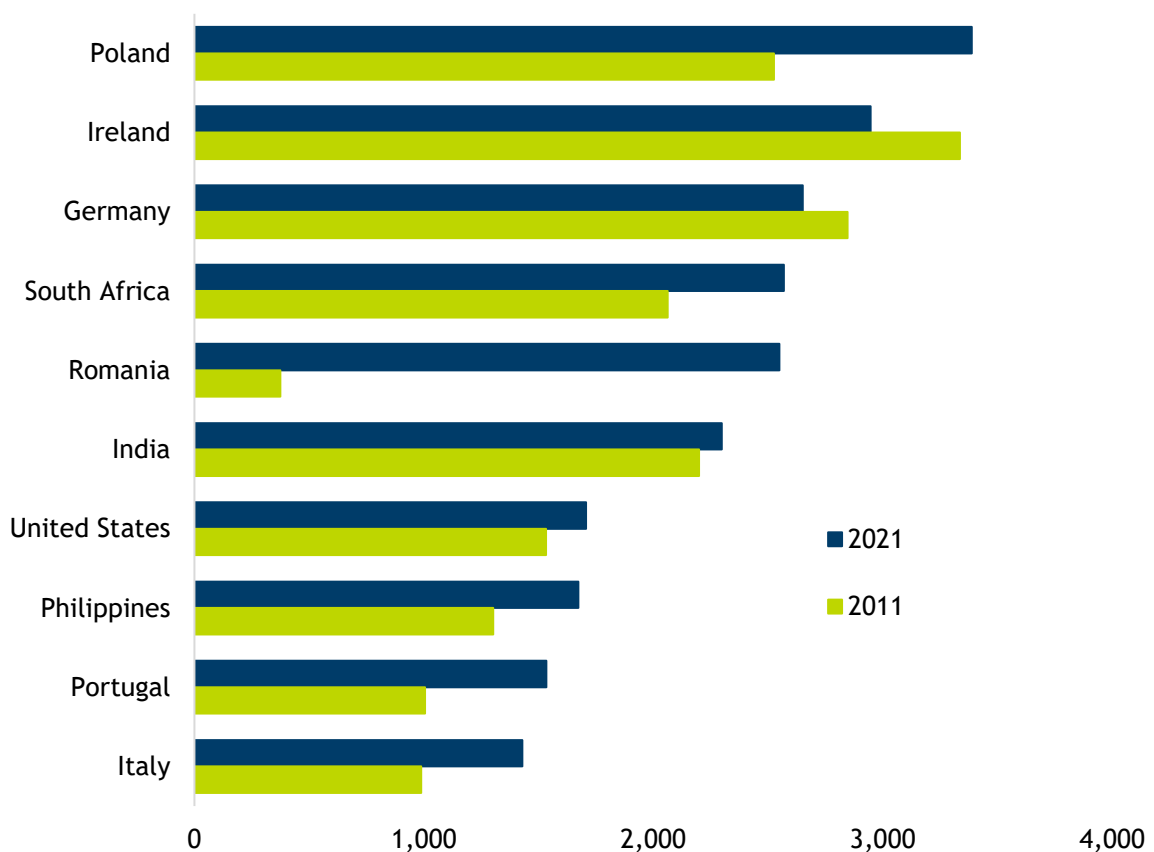
Area	Total Population	Number of Usual Residents Born Outside the UK	Percentage of Usual Residents Born Outside the UK
East Sussex	545,844	53,819	9.9%
Eastbourne	101,686	15,448	15.2%
Hastings	90,991	10,338	11.4%
Lewes	99,904	8,845	8.9%
Rother	93,112	7,023	7.5%
Wealden	160,151	12,165	7.6%
South East	9,278,065	1,462,115	15.8%
Brighton and Hove	277,106	54,344	19.6%
Kent	1,576,071	194,088	12.3%
Surrey	1,203,107	215,624	17.9%
West Sussex	882,683	113,929	12.9%
ENGLAND	56,490,049	9,802,543	17.4%

Source: ONS

Within the South East, East Sussex has the second-lowest proportion of residents born outside of the UK. Only the Isle of Wight has fewer overseas-born residents at 6.1%. Outside of the South East, however, there are many authorities with fewer non-UK born residents. In Northumberland, for example, only 3.5% of their residents was born outside of the UK.

The chart below shows the top 10 countries of birth for East Sussex residents in 2021 and the corresponding populations in 2011.

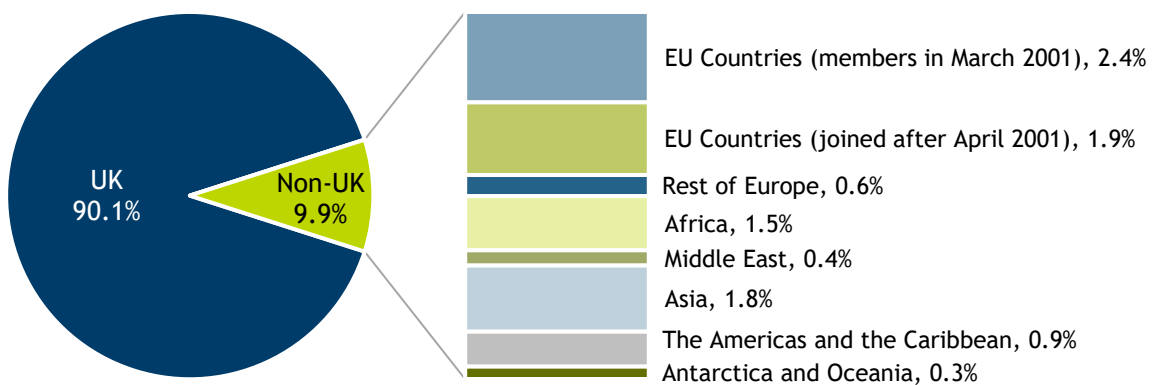
Number of East Sussex residents born outside of the UK by country of birth, 2011 and 2021



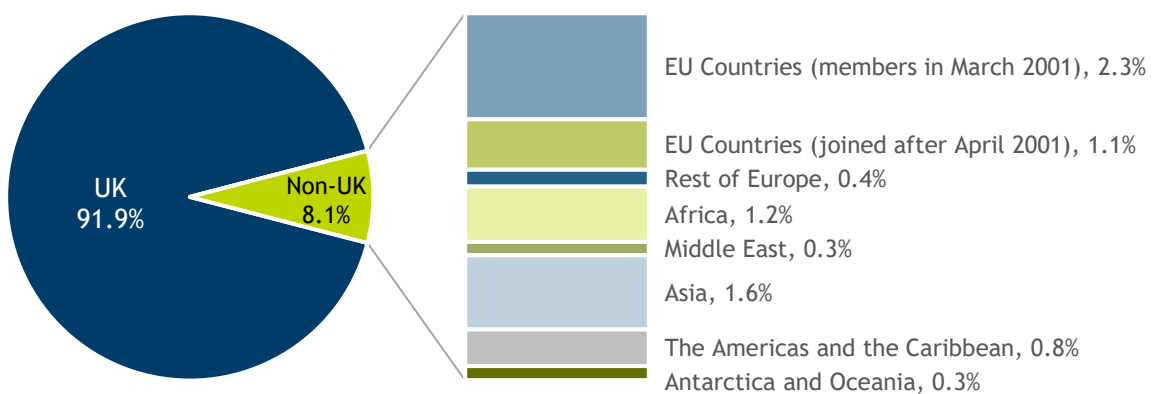
Source: ONS

Poland replaced Ireland as the top non-UK country of birth in 2021, with Polish-born residents making up 0.7% of the total population of East Sussex. While the number of Polish-born residents increased 34% between 2011 and 2021, the number of Irish-born residents fell by 12%.

Country of Birth of East Sussex Residents in 2021



Country of Birth of East Sussex Residents in 2011

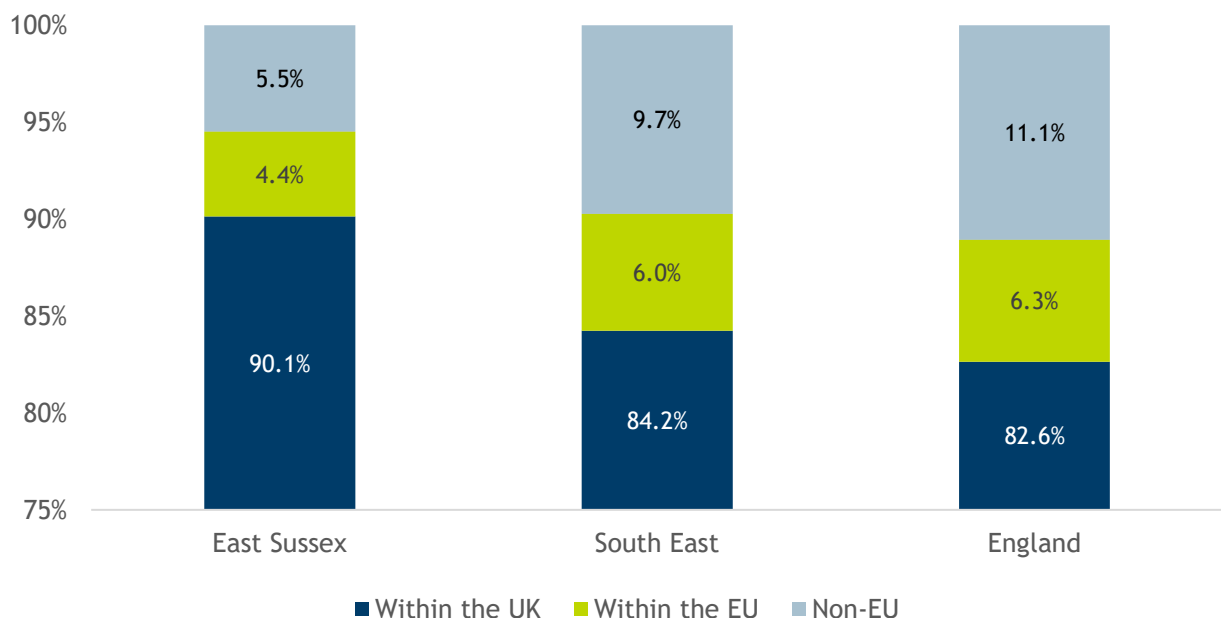


Source: ONS

Those who listed Romania as their country of birth increased to 2,550 in 2021 from 370 in 2011, an increase between censuses of 2,180 (582%), making Romania the fifth most common non-UK country of birth. This increase was the highest out of any country and is driven by working restrictions for Romanian citizens being lifted in 2014. Portugal and Italy also entered the top 10 non-UK countries of birth. The number of Portuguese-born residents increased by 53% to 1,530 between 2011 and 2021, while the number of Italian-born residents increased by 45% to 1,430 across the decade.

France, Australia and Zimbabwe dropped out of the top 10 in 2021. The number of East Sussex residents born in these countries actually increased between 2011 and 2021 (by 7%, 9% and 6% respectively), but greater increases for other countries means that they no longer feature in the top 10 countries of birth.

Country of birth of usual residents in East Sussex, the South East and England



Source: ONS

Passports Held

In addition to asking country of birth, the Census also asks information about passports held. It should be noted that some residents may hold two or more passports, and as such, the number of passports held by the resident population will exceed the number of passport holders.

86% of East Sussex residents hold at least one passport. 14% of the population did not have any passport on Census Day, either because they have never held one or their passport has expired. Hastings recorded the highest proportion of non-passport holders (19.1%) and Lewes recorded the lowest (11.9%).

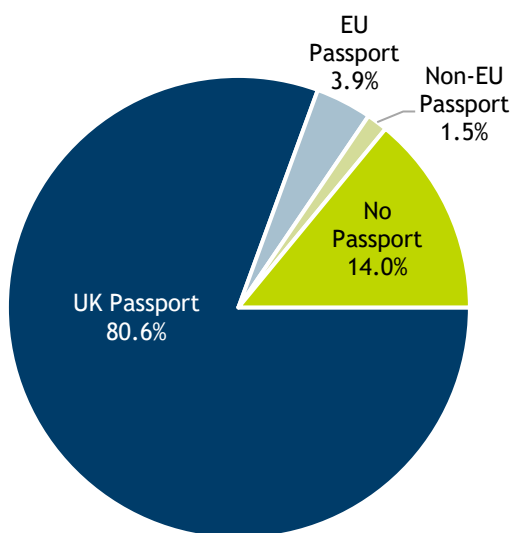
Area	Percentage of Population Holding a UK Passport	Percentage of Population Holding a non-UK Passport	Percentage of Non-Passport Holders
East Sussex	80.6%	5.4%	14.0%
Eastbourne	75.9%	9.8%	14.4%
Hastings	74.2%	6.8%	19.1%
Lewes	83.5%	4.6%	11.9%
Rother	82.1%	3.3%	14.6%
Wealden	84.5%	3.5%	12.0%
South East	79.6%	9.1%	11.3%
Brighton and Hove	79.6%	12.6%	7.9%
Kent	79.5%	7.3%	13.3%
Surrey	82.7%	9.7%	7.5%
West Sussex	81.3%	7.5%	11.1%
ENGLAND	76.6%	10.3%	13.2%

Source: ONS

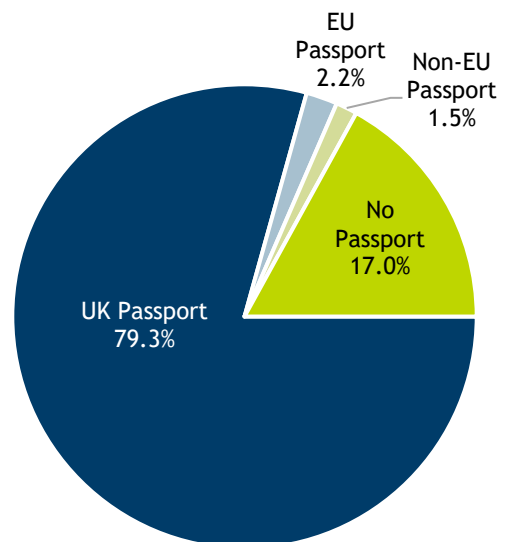
Note: Some residents may hold more than one passport, which is why percentages do not add up to 100%.

Nationwide, 13.2% of residents of England don't hold any passport, but this decreases to 11.3% when looking only at the South East. As can be seen from the above table, East Sussex has fewer passport holders than its surrounding neighbours. The county has the 3rd highest proportion of non-passport holders across the whole of the South East at county and unitary authority level after the Isle of Wight (20.4%) and Medway (14.6%). That said, the number of passport-holders in East Sussex has increased since 2011.

Passports Held by East Sussex Residents in 2021



Passports Held by East Sussex Residents in 2011

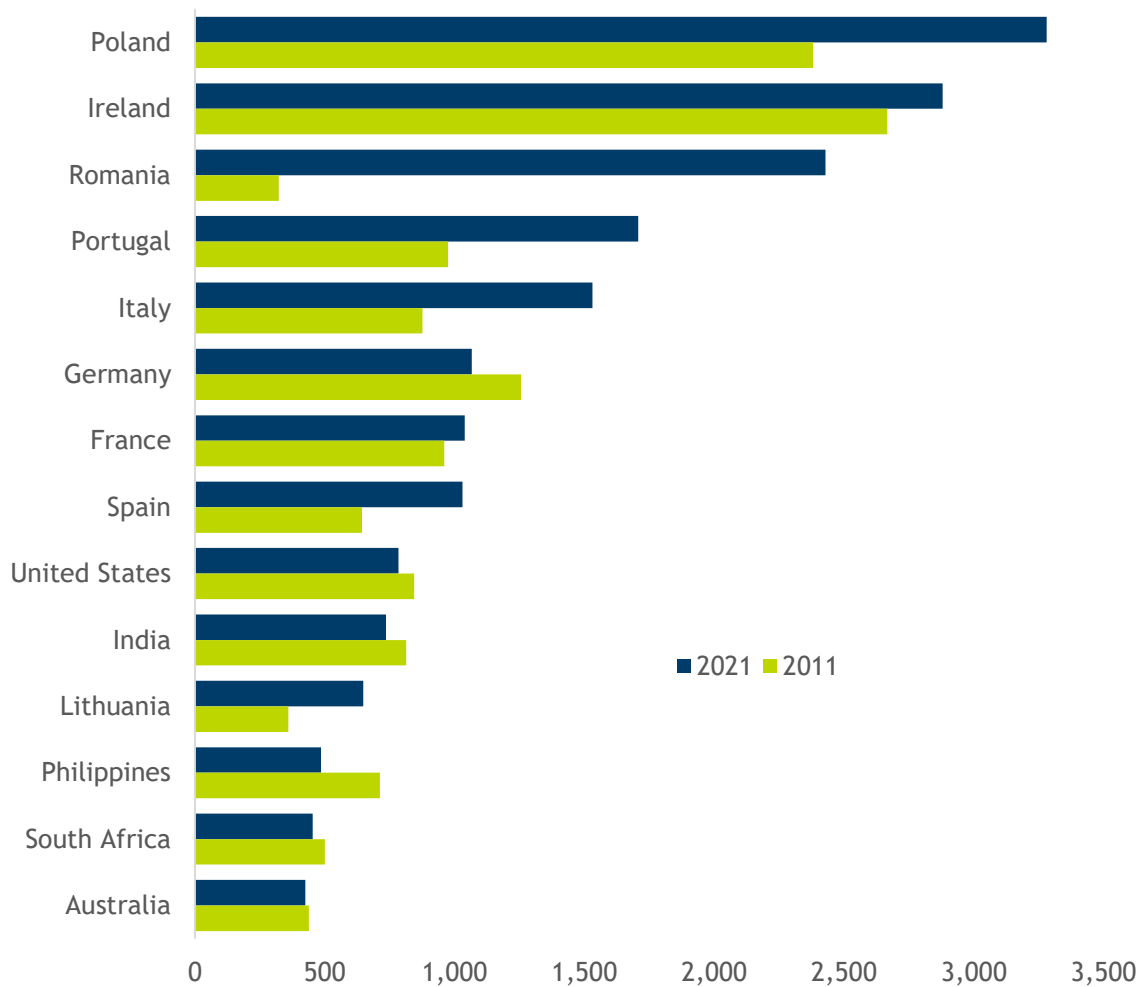


Source: ONS

Non-UK Passports

The 2021 Census recorded 29,430 East Sussex residents (5.4%) holding non-UK passports, three quarters of which are European passports. As with country of birth, there were increases between 2011 and 2021 for most countries.

Non-UK passports held by East Sussex residents in 2011 and 2021



Source: ONS

Polish passports have now surpassed Irish passports as the most common non-UK passport held in East Sussex. Mirroring the trend from the country of birth data, Romania also had the largest increase in non-UK passport holders in East Sussex, with an increase of 2,110 (652%) between 2011 and 2021. The biggest decrease was seen in German passports, with 15% fewer German passports in 2021 than in 2011.

Only 1.5% of East Sussex residents hold a non-EU passport. This contrasts with the 5.5% of East Sussex residents born outside of the EU, and suggests that a large proportion of people born outside the EU have acquired British citizenship and now hold a British passport. That said, some people born abroad will be UK citizens because their parents were UK citizens overseas at the time of their birth.

Unsurprisingly, the gap between the proportion of residents holding an EU passport and the proportion who were born in an EU country is smaller. Prior to Britain leaving the European Union in January 2020, EU passport holders had rights to free movement and employment in the UK not afforded to non-EU nationals. Many of these EU citizens - especially those from countries that were members of the EU prior to March 2001, have since been granted indefinite leave to remain (ILR) in the UK without needing to apply for a British passport. Thus there may be less need for EU passport holders resident in England to apply for a UK passport compared to non-EU nationals.

There is also a noticeable increase in the number of residents holding Irish passports, despite the number of Irish-born residents having decreased since 2011. This is likely due to an increase in British people of Irish descent applying for Irish passports in order to maintain European citizenship following Brexit.

Address One Year Before the Census

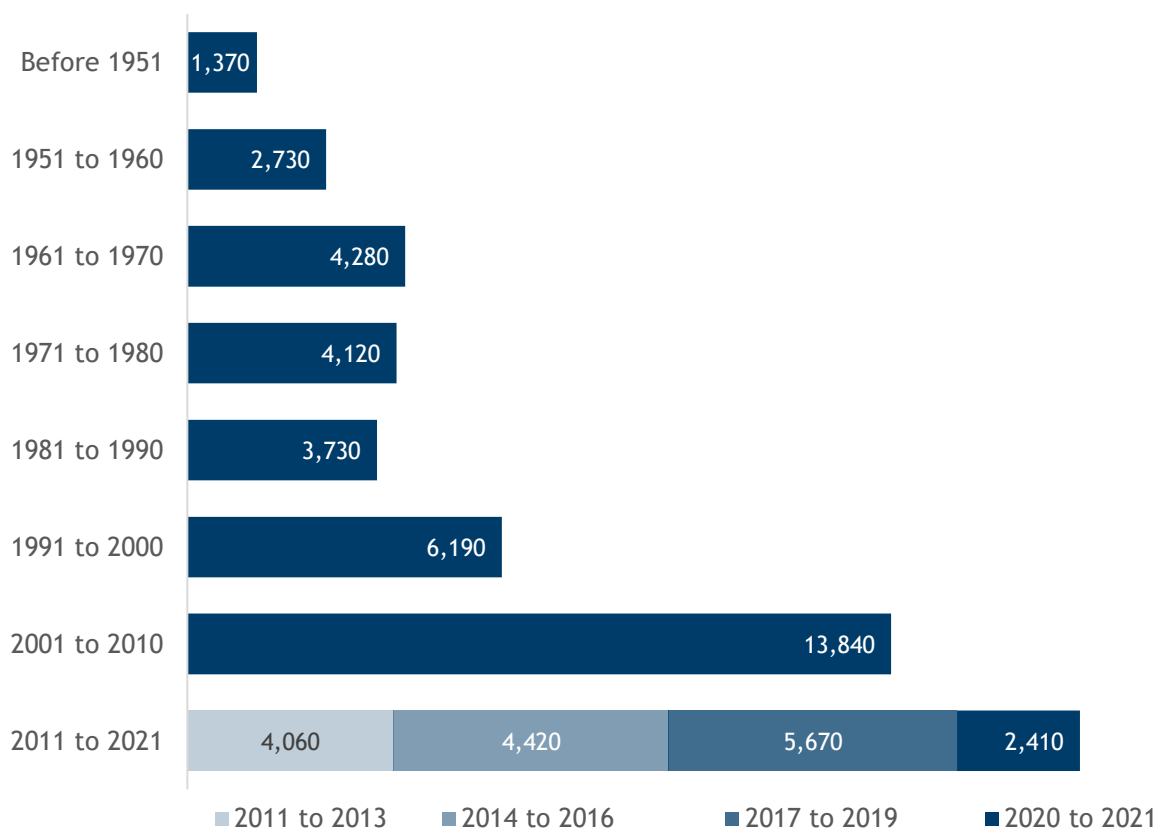
In 2021, 2,950 usual residents (0.5% of the population) stated that they lived outside the UK one year prior to the Census being taken. This is a decrease compared with 2011, when 3,620 (0.7%) had an address outside the UK one year before the Census.

Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, a decline in the number of arrivals in the previous year had been expected. UK travel restrictions were enforced from March 2020 onwards, and restrictions were also put in place in other countries around the world. As a result, migration to and from the UK in the year before the Census was highly restricted. Despite this, nearly three thousand people arrived in East Sussex from overseas in the year leading up to the Census.

Year of Arrival

Of the 53,820 residents in East Sussex who were not born in the UK, 22,420 (41.7%) arrived in East Sussex before 2001, 13,840 (25.7%) arrived between 2001 and 2010, and 17,560 (32.6%) had arrived since 2011.

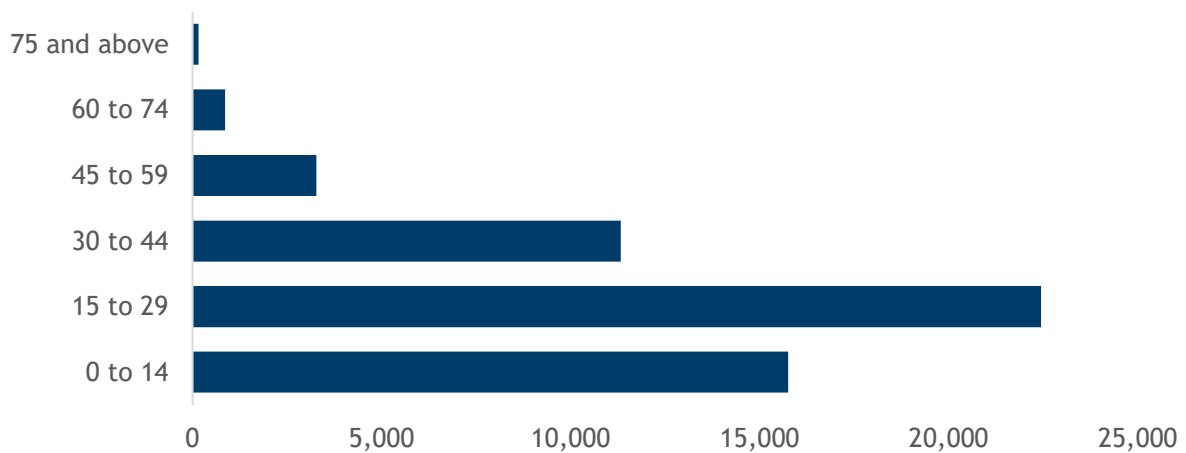
Most recent year of arrival in UK of non-UK born usual East Sussex residents



Source: ONS

In terms of age, 38,200 non-UK born usual residents of East Sussex (41.7%) were below the age of 30 years when they arrived in the UK, with the majority falling in the 15-29 age bracket. Just 1.9% (around 1,000 non-UK born arrivals) was aged 60 and above.

Age of Arrival in the UK of non-UK born
East Sussex residents



Source: ONS

Limitations and mitigations

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produces census data for a range of different output geographies. This includes census statistics for small areas/neighbourhoods right up to statistics for large administrative units. When added together, detailed census results for smaller areas may not exactly match the same data for larger areas. This is because the ONS uses statistical disclosure control methods which swap very small numbers between areas, and/or add small changes to some counts (cell key perturbation). For example, they might change a count of four to a three or a five, to make sure that it is impossible to identify specific individuals. This means that data for small areas may not sum to the totals for higher geographical levels.

For this reason, in any discussion of the census results, we have chosen to round numbers to the nearest 10. Where percentages have been provided, these are based on unrounded numbers. Tables published in this report and on East Sussex in Figures website contain unrounded data as supplied by the ONS, but come with the caveat that individual numbers and totals may vary slightly between tables depending on the selected output geography, as detailed above.

Census statistics are estimates rather than counts, and therefore have measures of uncertainty associated with them. As with all self-completion questionnaires, some forms will have contained incorrect, incomplete, or missing information about a person or household. While the ONS takes numerous steps to correct and minimise possible sources of error, as described in their [Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\) Report](#), no census is perfect.

Future publications

The ONS will be releasing more detailed data and analysis on international migration over the coming months, alongside the release of multivariate data. This will enable us to delve into the statistics in more detail and look at things such as the age profile of different migrant groups.

Further Information

For more information about the census data visit the [ONS website](#). For queries specifically relating to East Sussex, please contact the Research and Intelligence Team via email at esif@eastsussex.gov.uk.

Data can be found on East Sussex in Figures:

[Passports Held](#)

[Country of Birth](#)

Interactive census maps can also be found on the [ONS Website](#), mapping data down to Output Area level, where available.

The Research and Intelligence Team, Governance Services, provides demographic and socio-economic data, intelligence and insight to support East Sussex County Council and other East Sussex Partners. The Team also manages East Sussex in Figures (ESiF), the Local Information System for East Sussex. ESiF is a web-based information system that contains detailed, up-to-date and reliable information on a very wide range of topics. Visit www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk for more information.