



Who are EU migrants in England and Wales?

Who are EU migrants living in England and Wales? Should the UK decide to leave the EU in the forthcoming referendum, the impact of social policies on the rights and responsibilities of non-UK European nationals living in the UK could be significant and will vary according to age, employment and family circumstances. This paper sheds light on the characteristics of migrants and informs the discussion of the economic and social policy implications of the referendum decision.

Key Points

- Over four percent of individuals living in England and Wales in 2011 were born in another EU country, constituting 2.5 million people.
- The majority of EU born people in England and Wales are of working age, with around 70 percent aged between 20 and 60.
- Two-thirds of EU-born individuals aged 18 or over are employed.
- Around one-third of EU-born individuals have a degree.
- Four in ten EU-born live in privately rented accommodation.
- Around 40 percent of EU-born individuals are married.
- Of those who are in partnerships, one-third are partnered with a head of household born in the UK.
- One-third of EU-UK partnerships have at least one dependent child.

Introduction

Understanding the characteristics of EU migrants living in the UK is critical as the country is edging closer to a public referendum on its membership in the European Union. Should the country decide to leave the EU, the impact of social policies on the rights and responsibilities of non-UK European nationals in the UK could be significant. Those families with European bi-national couples, may be particularly affected in at least three ways. Firstly, non-UK partners in bi-national couples might be affected in terms of their eligibility to stay

in the UK, directly impacting on the ability of the partners to stay together in the UK. Secondly, non-UK partners might also be affected in terms of their ability to maintain economic activity in the UK, thereby impacting on the socio-economic position of the family. Finally, the nationality and citizenship status of the children of bi-national couples might become uncertain, affecting such children both in terms of their identity and from the perspective of their socio-economic status in the UK which is directly related to the status of their parents. This

research aims to fill the evidence gap by shedding light on the characteristics of EU migrants and the prevalence of European intermarriage / partnership in the UK i.e. unions between two partners of different European nationality.

Data and Methodology

This research is based upon secondary data analysis of the microdata files of the *2011 Census of England and Wales*. The 2011 Census safeguarded file consists of a 5% sample of all individuals at local authority geographical level, providing person level data on 245 variables for over 2 million individuals.

Results

The majority of the population of England and Wales (more than 86 per cent) were born in the UK, with a small minority (4.3 per cent of men and about 4.7 per cent of women) born in other EU countries (Table 1). This equates to 2,509,900 individuals born elsewhere in the EU who were living in England & Wales in 2011. Amongst these, around a quarter (24%) were born in Poland and a further 22% were born in countries of the ‘new EU’, i.e. countries which joined the EU between April 2001 to March 2011. 16% were born in Ireland, 11% in Germany and 27% were born in other countries of the ‘old EU’ (i.e. countries who were EU members before April 2001) (Figure 1).

	Male	Female	All
Born in the UK	86.5%	86.1%	86.3%
Born in the EU	4.3%	4.7%	4.5%
Born in the rest of the world	9.2%	9.2%	9.2%

Table 1: Percentage of individuals in England and Wales by sex and country of birth (2011)

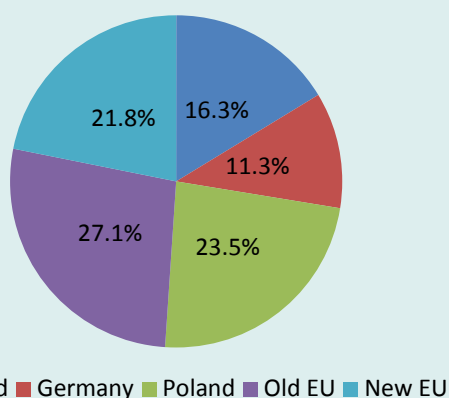


Figure 1: Country of Birth for EU born individuals in England and Wales

Our study finds that the age structure of EU migrants living in England & Wales is very different to that of the UK born population (Figure 2). Of the EU-born population, around two-thirds (69%) were aged between 20 and 60; this compares with just over half (51%) of those born in the UK. Just 13% of the EU-born population were aged under 20 and 18% were over 60, compared with 26% and 23% respectively of those born in the UK.

Turning to examine differences in socio-economic status, Figure 3 shows the economic activity status

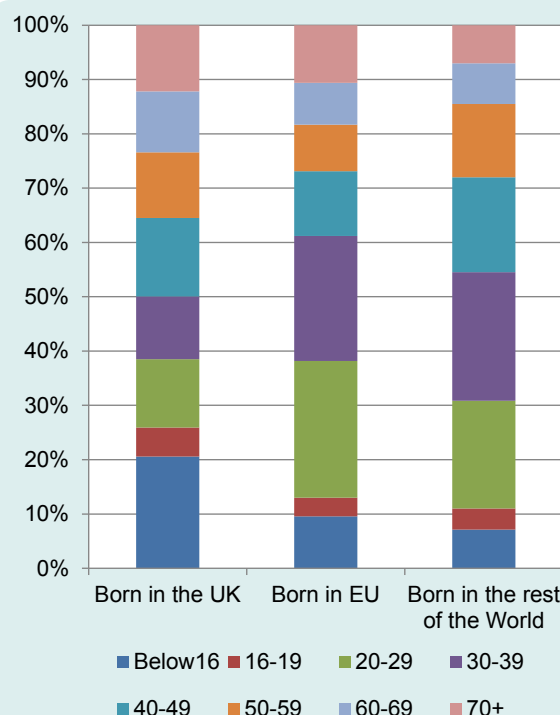


Figure 2: Age Structure by Country of Birth

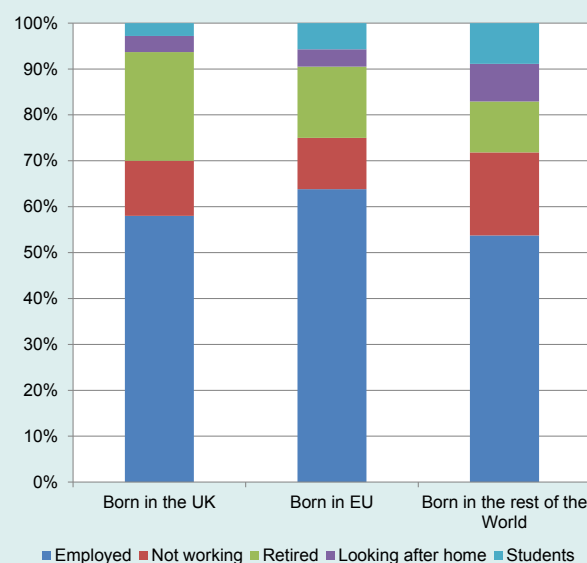


Figure 3: Economically Active by Country of Birth

among those aged 18 and over, distinguishing between those born in the UK, those born in other countries in the EU and those born in the rest of the world. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of EU-born adults were employed compared with 58% of those born in the UK and 54% of those born in the rest of the world. A further 6% were students and only 16% were retired, compared to 3% and 24% respectively amongst the UK-born population, in part reflecting the younger age structure amongst EU migrants.

In terms of educational qualifications (Figure 4), just under a third (31%) of EU-born migrants aged

18 and over living in England & Wales in 2011 had a degree or higher academic or professional qualifications and only 18% had no qualification; this compares with 27% and 24% respectively amongst UK-born adults.

Despite their higher educational qualifications, EU-born adults were less likely to live in owner-occupied housing than UK-born adults (41% v 70%) and much more likely to live in private rented accommodation (42% v 11%). They were also more likely to report having good health (85% v 76%).

Looking at marital status, amongst those aged 18 and over, 42% of those born in the EU were single, 41% were married, 11% were separated/divorced and just 6% were widowed. This compares with 33%, 47%, 12% and 8% respectively amongst the UK-born population.

Table 2 shows the country of birth for the respondents and their partner. Linking partners within the Census is complex. Here we focus on those individuals who report being legally married or partnered with the household reference person, Around one-third (34%) of EU-born adults in a union, were in partnerships with people who were born in the UK. In addition just over half (58%) are partnered with people also born in the EU and 9% with people born outside the EU (including countries elsewhere in Europe such as Russia).

Amongst those partnerships involving EU-UK partners, around a third had a dependent child, as did 44% of EU-EU partnerships and 45% of EU-other partnerships.

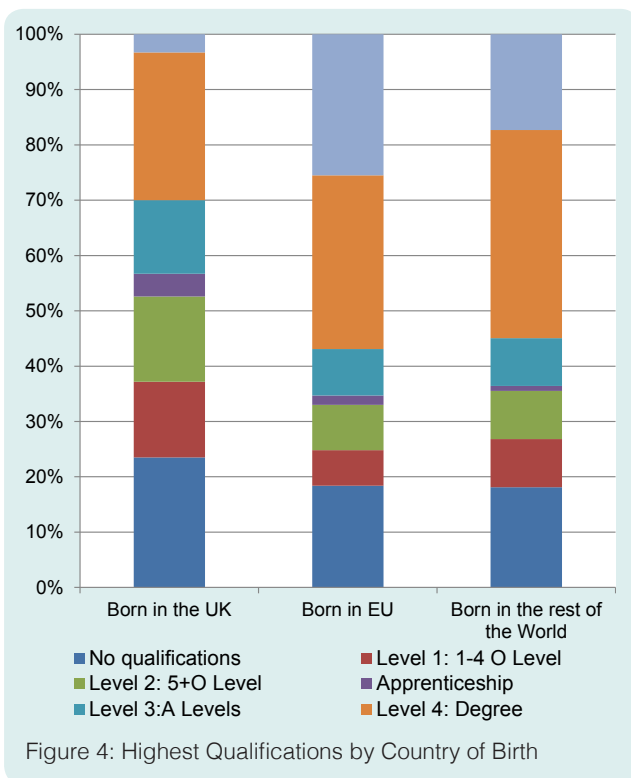


Figure 4: Highest Qualifications by Country of Birth

		Country of birth of respondents		
		Born in the UK	Born in the EU	Born in the rest of the world
Country of birth of household reference person	Born in the UK	94.9%	33.9%	30.3%
	Born in the EU	1.5%	57.5%	3.3%
	Born in the rest of the world	3.6%	8.6%	66.4%
Total		100%	100%	100%

Table 2: Country of birth of respondents and their partner among those who are legally married or partnered with the household reference person, Census 2011.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

Analysis of the 2011 Census highlights that compared to those born in the UK, EU-born migrants are more likely to be young, in employment, skilled with qualifications, living in privately rented accommodation and in good health. Many are also in partnerships with UK-born partners and a significant minority have children

If the outcome of the forthcoming UK referendum was to leave the European Union, this could lead to the departure of skilled workers. Moreover, the decision could affect significant numbers of UK citizens as partners and children of bi-national partnerships.

Authors

Jane Falkingham
(University of Southampton, CPC)

Maria Evandrou
(University of Southampton, CPC)

Zhixin Feng
(University of Southampton, CPC)

Athina Vlachantoni
(University of Southampton, CPC)

*Edited by Teresa McGowan
(University of Southampton, CPC)*

www.cpc.ac.uk

ESRC Centre for Population Change

Building 58
Faculty of Social and Human Sciences
University of Southampton
SO17 1BJ

Tel: +44(0)2380592579
Email: cpc@southampton.ac.uk



@CPCpopulation



/CPCpopulation



Centre-for-population-change



Centre-for-population-change