

Updated Short-Term Migration Estimates, mid-2004 and mid-2005

1. Introduction

1.1 In October 2007 a first set of experimental estimates of short-term migration based on the International Passenger Survey (IPS) were published. As part of the further development of this product ONS has undertaken a detailed review of the methodology and processing of the short-term migration estimates.

1.2 ONS combined long and short-term migration estimates and compared these to some key administrative data that cover those migrants who register, regardless of their length of stay. This comparison indicated that the combined migration estimates were potentially too low, especially for short-term migrant workers (this work is reported separately, see reference 1). As a result of the review of the methodology used to produce experimental short-term migration estimates, ONS has been able to improve these estimates and the re-released estimates are shown in this report. These figures show a substantial increase on existing experimental short-term in-flows for mid-2004 and mid-2005, the majority of the increase is to estimates of migrants whose reason for stay is to work.

1.3 The estimates presented in this report supersede those published in the October 2007 'Research Report on Short-term Migration'². However, the research report should still be consulted for further information on definitions and stock methodology.

1.4 The comparison to administrative sources has been repeated, using the re-released short-term migration estimates, and this shows a much closer reconciliation between the two sets of figures. The full results of these comparisons are reported elsewhere.¹

2. Further Details on the Review of Methodology and Processing

2.1 How have the experimental short-term migration estimates changed?

2.1.1 The changes have resulted in an increase in all short-term migration estimates. However, estimates of short-term migrant workers have increased most significantly and particularly for shorter lengths of stay. A summary of the key changes to estimates of in-flows are presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: New and previous estimates of short-term in-flows of overseas residents into England & Wales (in thousands)

Reason for Visit	3-12 month length of stay					
	mid-2004			mid-2005		
	Previous Estimate	New Estimate	% Change	Previous Estimate	New Estimate	% Change
All Reasons	227	295	30	260	335	29
Employment	23	59	157	46	90	96

Reason for Visit	1-12 month length of stay					
	mid-2004			mid-2005		
	Previous Estimate	New Estimate	% Change	Previous Estimate	New Estimate	% Change
All Reasons	912	1,122	23	1,018	1,246	22
Employment	40	113	183	78	175	124

2.1.2 Overall, estimates of in-flows and in-stocks have increased by between 20 and 30 per cent, depending on the length of stay definition, for both mid-2004 and mid-2005. However, the main effect is on estimates of short-term migrants coming to work, most of which have increased by over 100 per cent.

2.1.3 A similar table to Table 1 is not shown for outflows as the effect of the changes on outflows is much smaller. Outflows are about UK residents going overseas for 3-12 months or 1-12 months. The effect on these figures is approximately a 1 per cent increase overall. Revised out-flows are given in Table 3.

2.1.4 Further detail of revised estimates is given in section 3.

2.2 What did the review cover?

2.2.1 The review of the methodology that is used to produce experimental estimates of short-term migration covered all aspects of the production process as follows:

- A full assessment of how the short-term migration data is extracted from the overall International Passenger Survey (IPS) dataset.
- A review of the methodology surrounding which types of record should be included (e.g. different reasons for visit or locations of stay).
- A complete check of all stages of the production process.

2.3 What did the review find?

2.3.1 The review found that some records had been excluded from the experimental estimates. These records were ones which had missing data on UK location of stay and a large proportion were short-term migrants coming to work.

2.3.2 There were two types of missed records:

- Those who had no recorded UK location. These were migrant workers with a definite job to go to in the UK. They had no recorded location as the IPS did not ask this question to this category of migrant worker as the information was not required previously.
- Those where location had been recorded as 'UK Unspecified'. These occurred for all reasons for visit.

2.3.3 In order to create improved estimates for England and Wales, the methodology has been amended to impute a location for the records where this information is missing. The missing records are randomly allocated a location of stay (either 'England and Wales' or 'not England and Wales') according to proportions implied by the available data. This assumes that short-term migrant workers have the same likelihood of visiting England and Wales as all other migrants. At this point there is no other evidence available on which to base an alternative assumption.

2.3.4 The imputation process described above is not robust enough to allocate a more precise location of stay than 'England and Wales' and therefore a further breakdown between London and non-London would not be reliable. Therefore these estimates are currently not available, however, ONS are continuing to research the feasibility of further geographical breakdowns.

3. Re-released Short-term Migration Flow Estimates

3.1 Within this section estimates for the period from 1st July 2003 to 30th June 2004 are referred to simply as "mid-2004". Similarly, estimates for the period from 1st July 2004 to 30th June 2005 are referred to as "mid-2005".

3.2 Estimates of short-term moves to mid-2004 and mid-2005 are presented in the tables below. For flows both estimates and standard errors* are presented. The standard errors are given as a percentage of the estimates, and IPS based values with a standard error greater than 25% should be treated with caution as they are subject to a high level of uncertainty.

* The standard error is an indication of the accuracy of an estimate and how much a sample estimate is likely to differ from the true value because of random effects.

Table 2: In-flow of overseas residents into England & Wales, by length of stay and reason for visit (in thousands)

Reason for Visit	3-12 month length of stay				1-12 month length of stay			
	mid-2004		mid-2005		mid-2004		mid-2005	
	In-flow	SE (%)	In-flow	SE (%)	In-flow	SE (%)	In-flow	SE (%)
Employment	59	16	90	14	113	12	175	10
Study	78	14	70	13	218	8	193	8
Employment or Study	138	11	160	10	331	6	368	6
Other	157	9	175	8	791	4	878	4
All Reasons	295	7	335	6	1,122	4	1,246	3

3.3 Estimates of short-term migrant workers have increased by a much larger percentage than estimates of migrants with any other reason for visit. This has resulted in a change in the relationship between employment, study and other reasons for visit. For example, the employment figure in Table 2 for mid-2005, for a 3-12 month length of stay (90,000), is now higher than the corresponding estimate of students (70,000), in contrast to the previous estimates. Overall, employment now makes up a higher proportion of the 'Employment or Study' category. For 3-12 month stays, the number of migrants visiting for either employment or study is much closer to the number visiting for other reasons. However, visits for other reasons continue to make up the vast majority of 1-12 month stays.

3.4 The term in-flow refers to short-term migration visits made by individuals who are usually resident outside the UK. Out-flow refers to short-term migration visits by individuals who are usually resident in the UK. Return moves of individuals who have been in the UK as short-term migrants are not counted as out-flows. For this reason in-flow and out-flow will not balance as they refer to different migration streams.

3.5 Table 3 shows that when considering all reasons for visit there are more England & Wales residents making short-term visits abroad than short-term migrants from overseas entering England & Wales. However, the majority of visits are for 'other' reasons. The revisions have resulted in only small increases to these figures and the migration patterns shown in the re-released estimates remain unchanged.

Table 3: Out-flow of England & Wales residents by length of stay and reason for visit (in thousands)

Reason for Visit	3-12 month length of stay				1-12 month length of stay			
	mid-2004		mid-2005		mid-2004		mid-2005	
	Out-flow	SE (%)	Out-flow	SE (%)	Out-flow	SE (%)	Out-flow	SE (%)
Employment	28	21	24	21	64	13	46	15
Study	11	35	9	33	28	21	35	22
Employment or Study	39	18	33	18	92	11	81	13
Other	370	5	358	5	2,136	2	2,319	2
All Reasons	409	5	391	5	2,227	2	2,399	2

4. Re-released Short-term Migration Stock Estimates

4.1 The stock refers to the average population present in an area over a specified period, whereas a flow is the number of visits made in a given period. Flows are not equal to stocks over a 12 month period for short-term migration as many of those who enter have left by the end of the year. The stock over a specified period will always be lower than the flows over the same period.

Table 4: In-stock of short-term migrants in England & Wales by reason for visit (in thousands) and mean length of stay (in months)

Reason for Visit	3-12 month length of stay				1-12 month length of stay			
	mid-2004		mid-2005		mid-2004		mid-2005	
	In-stock	Mean Length of Stay	In-Stock	Mean Length of Stay	In-stock	Mean Length of Stay	In-stock	Mean Length of Stay
Employment	20	5.1	36	5.3	28	3.8	50	3.8
Study	34	6.0	30	5.8	54	3.6	52	3.4
Employment or Study	54	5.6	67	5.5	82	3.6	102	3.6
Other	62	4.8	67	4.7	147	2.4	157	2.4
All Reasons	116	5.2	134	5.1	229	2.8	259	2.7

4.2 The impact of the changes on the in-stock of short-term migrants in England & Wales is an increase of between 25 and 35 per cent. This is broadly in line with the impact on the in-flow estimates.

4.3 The stock of short-term migrants in England & Wales is referred to as 'in-stock' whereas the stock of England & Wales residents temporarily out of the country is referred to as 'out-stock'.

Table 5: Out-stock of short-term migrants overseas by reason for visit (in thousands) and mean length of stay (in months)

Reason for Visit	3-12 month length of stay				1-12 month length of stay			
	mid-2004		mid-2005		mid-2004		mid-2005	
	Out-stock	Mean Length of Stay	Out-stock	Mean Length of Stay	Out-stock	Mean Length of Stay	Out-stock	Mean Length of Stay
Employment	13	5.5	11	6.0	18	3.5	14	4.1
Study	5	5.4	3	4.4	8	3.6	7	2.4
Employment or Study	19	5.5	14	5.6	26	3.6	21	3.5
Other	155	5.2	150	5.3	380	2.4	401	2.3
All Reasons	173	5.3	164	5.3	406	2.4	422	2.3

4.4 These estimates of out-stocks are similar to those published in October 2007, as the impact of the changes is small.

5. Next Steps

5.1 ONS aim to publish short-term migration estimates for mid-2006 in August 2008. These will be provided on the same basis as the estimates presented in this paper. Research is also underway to assess the feasibility of producing estimates at local level.

5.2 In the longer term, ONS will develop estimates of short-term migration further with the aim of achieving 'National Statistics' status.

References

- Office for National Statistics (2008) A Reconciliation Exercise between IPS Based Estimates of International Immigration and Counts from Administrative Sources, available at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/population/future/imps/updates/downloads/Reconciliation_Exercise.pdf
- Office for National Statistics (2007) Research Report on Short-term Migration, available at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/population/future/imps/updates/downloads/STM_Research_Report.pdf