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Coverage  
England and Wales

## Almost 250,000 come for short-term work or study

The first experimental estimates of the number of short-term migrants to England and Wales show that overseas residents made 247,000 work or study visits of one to 12 months in the year to mid-2005. The estimates, which are still under development, have been published in a research report today by the Office for National Statistics.

Short-term migrants are distinguished from other visitors by the length of time they spend in the country and the reason for their visit (for example work or study). The UN-recommended definition of a short-term migrant is a person whose visit is for three to 12 months for work or study. The report concludes that a single definition such as this would not suit the needs of all users.

As a result, ONS is publishing separate estimates of short-term migrants, using three alternatives to the UN definition. The report sets out the background to these alternatives, which are:

- a visit of three to 12 months for all reasons
- a visit of one to 12 months for work or study
- a visit of one to 12 months for all reasons.

Estimates show that in the year to mid-2005:

- A total of 247,000 visits of between one and 12 months were made by overseas residents to England and Wales for work or study purposes, of which 170,000 were for study and 78,000 were for work. There were almost twice as many for work as in the year to mid-2004 (40,000).
- The number of short-term migrants whose visits met the more restrictive UN recommended definition was 105,000. This was 15 per cent higher than the comparable estimate for the year to mid-2004 (91,000).
- Of these, 46,000 (44 per cent) visited for work and 59,000 for study. The number visiting for work doubled between the year to mid-2004 and the year to mid-2005. Expansion of the European Union in May 2004 is likely to have contributed to this rise.

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- Around 40 per cent of all short-term migrants whose visits fitted the UN definition in the year to mid-2005 spent the majority of their visit in London. The proportion of the England and Wales population as a whole who lived in London was 14 per cent in the same year, so that London received a significantly higher relative share of the short-term migrants, when compared with its total population.
- For the year to mid-2005, according to the UN definition, the average number of short-term migrants in England and Wales at any one time was estimated to be 43,000. On average, these short-term migrants stayed for five months.
- It is estimated that the total number of overseas residents visiting for three to 12 months for any reason (not just for work or study) in the year to mid-2005 was 260,000. Many more people (over 1 million) visited for one to 12 months for all reasons. This higher figure will include visits for holidays, business, and visiting friends and relatives, as well as other reasons.
- In contrast, England and Wales residents made 2.37 million visits overseas for one to 12 months for any reason, but only 33,000 of these residents met the UN definition of a short-term migrant.

These statistics are being published as experimental statistics. Further work is needed before they will acquire National Statistics status. This will include further reconciliation work with administrative sources, assessment over a longer time period, and feedback from users.

In comparison, previously published National Statistics show that the number of long-term migrants moving to England and Wales for more than 12 months was 551,000 in the year to mid-2005. This was an increase of 11 per cent on the year to mid-2004 figure.

## BACKGROUND NOTES

1. Estimates of short-term migration are available in the paper 'Research report on short-term migration'. This also includes information on definitions, methods and future work plans and is available at:  
[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/population/future/imps/updates/downloads/STM\\_Research\\_Report.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/population/future/imps/updates/downloads/STM_Research_Report.pdf)
2. It should be noted that mid-year to mid-year long-term migration data for 2004 and 2005 are due to be revised in 2008. Revised calendar year long-term migration data will be published on 15 November 2007. These revisions are being made to reflect the use of improved methodologies.
3. Estimates of short-term migrants refer to the number of visits made in the reference period. These could include multiple visits by a single migrant. They are based on data from the International Passenger Survey. Unlike for long-term migrants, data are collected at the end of the person's stay so reflect actual, rather than intended, lengths of stay. The purpose of visit recorded is the main purpose for the visit. So, for example, overseas residents who come to visit friends and relatives but do some work while visiting would be recorded as visiting friends and relatives.
4. These statistics have been assigned an **experimental** status, which should be borne in mind when using the data. They have not yet met the high quality standards required of National Statistics and will undergo further development, described in the research report. They are published to help involve users and other interested parties in the development, as a means to improve their quality at the earliest stage. They are produced free from any political interference. More information on Experimental Statistics and National Statistics is provided in the National Statistics Code of Practice: Protocol on Data Presentation, Dissemination and Pricing available at:  
[www.statistics.gov.uk/about/national\\_statistics/cop/protocols\\_published.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/national_statistics/cop/protocols_published.asp)
5. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office. © Crown copyright 2007.