

2.1 IMMIGRATION: THE BASICS

WHAT ARE IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION?

Emigration and immigration happen when people move from one country to another. Emigration is movement from a country. Immigration is movement into a country.

So, for example, a Polish resident who comes to the UK to look for work has emigrated from Poland and is now an immigrant in the UK. A UK resident who retires to southern France has emigrated from the UK and is now an immigrant in France.

People choose to move country for many reasons. These include *personal reasons* (e.g. they might want a change in lifestyle, or to be close to relatives or partners). Or people might move for *economic reasons* (e.g. to find work or to take up a job they have been offered. Or they might move to study. They might move permanently, or just for a few years.

An immigrant is not the same as a refugee. A refugee is someone who has been *forced* to leave their country and cannot return home safely. This might be because of, for example, war or religious persecution. The Citizens' Assembly on Brexit is not looking at refugees, just at immigrants. This is because Brexit won't affect the UK's responsibilities towards refugees.

MIGRATION TO AND FROM THE UK

The UK has a long history of both immigration and emigration. Migration to and from the UK has been unusually high in recent years. In 2016, about 588,000 people moved into the UK. (That's moved to stay for at least a year – it doesn't include people who came for holidays, business trips, or other visits of less than a year.) In the same year, about 339,000 people left.

That means that *net migration* – the difference between the number who immigrated and the number who emigrated – was 248,000 people.

Net migration of British citizens was -60,000, meaning that more British citizens left than arrived. Net migration of citizens of other EU countries was 133,000. Net migration of citizens of countries outside the EU was 175,000.

The total number of people currently living in the UK who were born abroad is about 8.7 million. That's up from 3.8 million in 1993.

People from the UK also move to live abroad. There are about 1.2 million people who were born in the UK who currently live in other EU countries.

You will find more information about immigrants and emigrants in Paper 2.3: Immigration: The Numbers.