

Census 2021: Country of Birth

Topic briefing

21 November 2022



BUILDING A
BETTER BRENT

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Summary

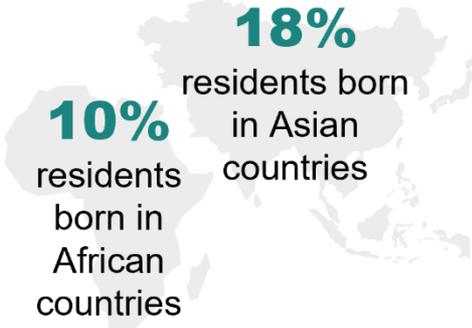
census 2021

Country of birth
Topic summary

56% 
of Brent residents born outside the UK – the highest rate in England & Wales

32% 
residents hold a non-UK passport – the 5th highest rate across England & Wales

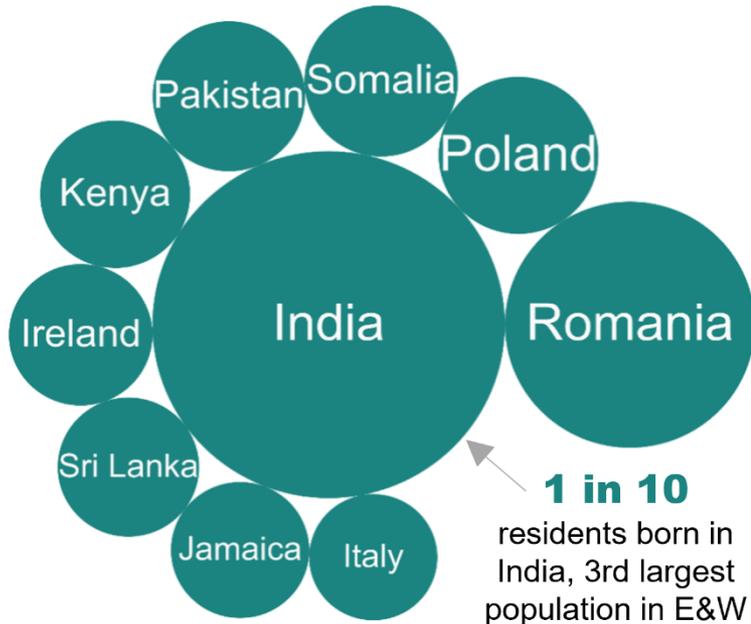
16% 
of Brent residents were born in European Union countries

10% 
residents born in African countries

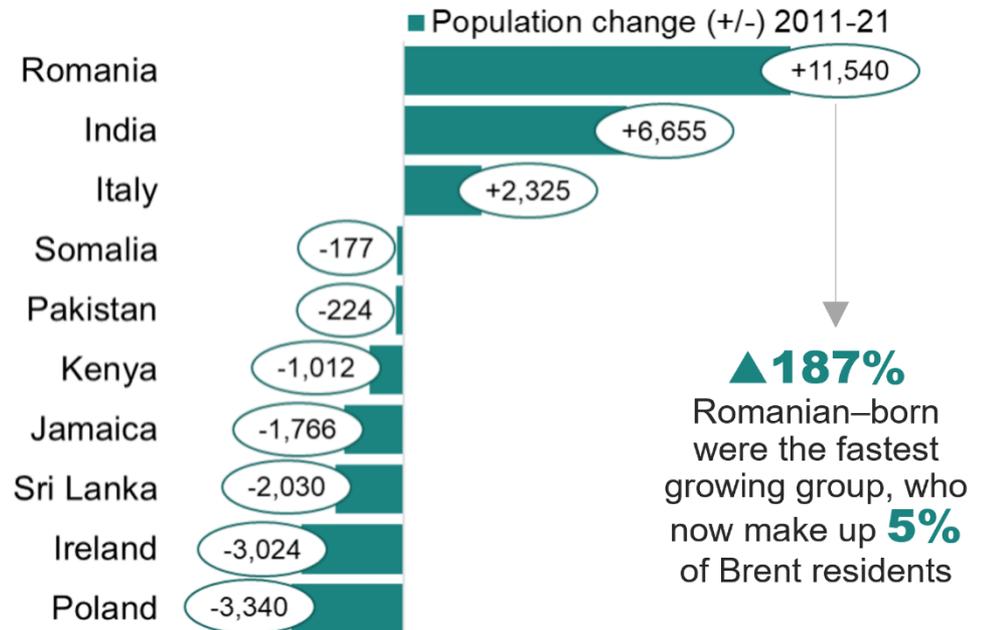
18% 
residents born in Asian countries

Top ten countries of birth, Brent, 2021*

Population size ranges from 4,662 (Italy) up to 35,203 (India)



Top ten: population change between 2011 and 2021



Headlines (1)

This briefing summarises 2021 census data about residents by their country of birth. The analysis explores what the new statistics tell us about Brent's migrant population and how things have changed since 2011. Key findings:

- **Population size:** On census day (21 March 2021), the population of Brent was estimated to be around 339,800. Over half (56%) of the borough's population were born in countries outside the UK – the highest rate across all local authority areas in England & Wales, and well above the London average (41%).
- **Year of arrival:** The migrant population in Brent is extremely diverse and includes older residents who migrated to the UK years ago, alongside more recent arrivals. Over a third of the migrant population (36%) were long established residents who had arrived in the UK more than twenty years ago (i.e. before 2001) while 41% arrived during the last decade (between 2011-21). Most arrived in the UK when they were young adults or children: 70% arrived before the age of 30, with 22% arriving as children.
- **World region:** The majority of Brent's migrant population were born in countries in Asia, Europe or Africa. Around 18% of residents were born in Asian countries, numbering 62,752 – the 8th largest in England & Wales. Around 1 in 6 residents were born in European Union countries (16%), well above the London and national averages (13% and 6%), and the 4th largest EU-born population in England & Wales. One in ten residents were born in African countries, the 5th largest nationally.
- **Indian-born population:** One in ten Brent residents were born in India – this remains the borough's largest single migrant population, numbering 35,203. Brent has the 3rd largest Indian-born population across England & Wales. The size of Brent's Indian-born population rose by 23% between 2011 and 2021 (+6,655).
- **Romanian population:** The borough's second largest group is the Romanian-born population who now make up 5% of Brent residents. The population numbers 17,722 and has almost trebled in size since 2011, reflecting the impact of working restrictions for Romanian citizens being lifted in 2014. Brent has the second largest Romanian population in England & Wales, after Harrow.

Headlines (2)

- **Polish:** The Polish-born population is the borough's third largest migrant group¹, down from 2nd place in 2011. The population declined by a third between 2011 and 2021 and now numbers 7,235 (2.1% of the population).
- **Other significant populations:** Other groups with relatively large populations (> 5,000) include those born in: Somalia (6,678), Pakistan (6,585), Kenya (6,370), Ireland (5,850), Sri Lanka (5,672) and Jamaica (5,423) – each of these groups comprises between 1.6% and 2.0% of the Brent population.
- **Highly ranked:** Brent has the largest Philippines-born population in England & Wales (numbering 4,415, 1.3% of the population). In addition to India and Romania, Brent also ranks in the top 3 nationally for populations born in: Somalia (2nd largest), Iraq (2nd), Other Middle East² (2nd), Portugal (2nd), Kenya (3rd) and Ireland (3rd).
- **Growing populations:** In addition to Romania and India, the following groups also saw significant growth between 2011 and 2021 (i.e. rises of more than 1,000 in population):
 - The Italian-born population, which doubled in size and now numbers 4,662;
 - The Spanish-born population, which saw a similar rise (+85%) and now numbers 2,670.
 - Those born in South American countries, up from 5,289 up to 7,606 in 2021 (+44%);
 - Those born in North African countries, up from 3,564 up to 5,304 (+48%) ;
 - Those born in the 'Other Middle East' group², who saw a marked rise, doubling from 3,886 to 7,946 (+104%).
- **Declining populations:** In addition to the Polish, other groups to see significant declines in population during 2011-21, included: those born in Ireland (-3,024), Sri Lanka (-2,030), Jamaica (-1,766) and Kenya (-1,012).
- **Nationality:** Almost two thirds (64%) of Brent residents hold a UK passport. Around one third (32%) hold a non-UK passport – the 5th highest rate in England & Wales. The remaining 4% had no passport. The five most common non-UK passports held by residents were: Romanian, Portuguese, Indian, Polish and Irish – together these accounted for over half of all residents holding non-UK passports.

Headlines (3)

- **EU nationals:** Over one in five (22%) Brent residents held EU passports, the highest rate in England & Wales. The number of EU nationals is higher than the number of residents born in EU countries (74k vs. 55k). While this could, in part, reflect the different citizenship rules* that apply to EU migrants and their children, it is also likely that some EU nationals were born elsewhere in the world. For example, the number of residents with Portuguese passports is four times larger than the number born in Portugal (14,218 vs. 3,528), suggesting that many were born outside Portugal. The comparison underlines the complexity surrounding the interpretation of statistics about nationality, and the caution required.
- **Future census data:** This report focuses mainly on country of birth and will not capture UK-born children of migrant residents, or subsequent generations. For this reason, it can only provide a partial picture of the size of different communities in Brent. Further census statistics are expected shortly about ethnicity, religion and language – these will provide further insight about diversity within Brent's population.

Introduction

About this report

This briefing summarises 2021 Census data about country of birth, which provides important intelligence on the size of first generation migrant populations in the borough. Country of birth is often the preferred measure when looking at long-term changes in migration as a person's place of birth does not change. The analysis explores what the new statistics tell us about Brent's migrant population and how things have changed since 2011.

About the data

- In this report the term 'migrant' is used to refer to a person born outside the UK.
- The report is based on the topic summary datasets relating to country of birth and migration, that were released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on 2 November 2022.
- Census figures were released for 59 different country of birth categories at local authority level. While many were individual countries, some were grouping of countries (e.g. South America, North Africa).
- All percentages in the narrative have all been rounded to the nearest percentage point.
- National rankings are out of 331 local authority areas (unitary/district level) in England & Wales.
- Disclosure control: ONS has made adjustments to census statistics to ensure no individual can be identified from the data. This process means that population totals for Brent presented here may differ marginally from census totals published elsewhere.
- Copyright: Census statistics in this report are from the Office for National Statistics and are licenced under the Open Government Licence v.3.0 © Crown Copyright.

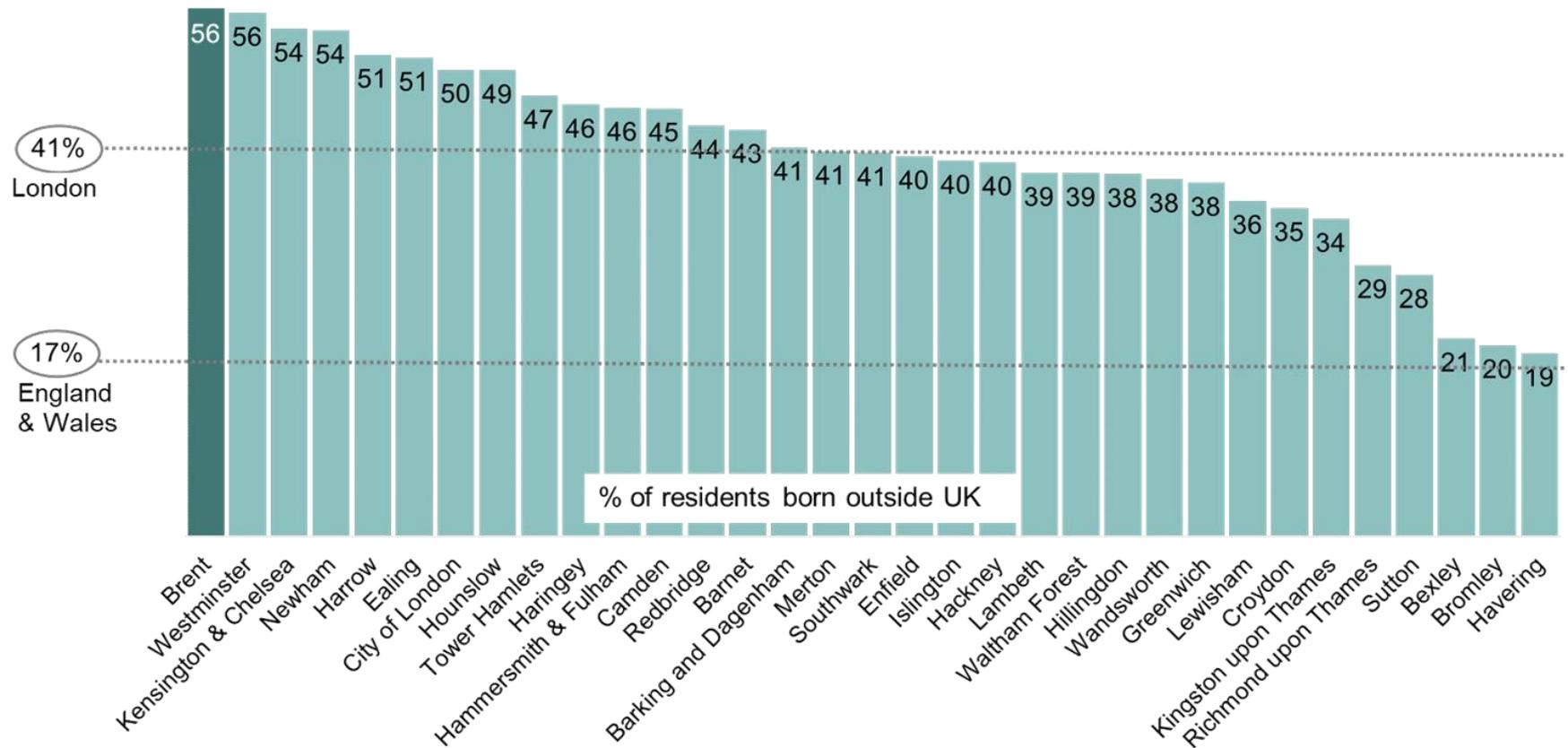
Pandemic impacts

The 2021 census took place in March 2021 when a range of pandemic lockdown restrictions were still in place. It is likely that some residents were temporarily away at this time (e.g. students, furloughed and migrant workers). While some will still have been captured on the census at their usual address, others will not have been. Census results need to be viewed in this context: as a snapshot of the population as at March 2021. Note: all figures that follow relate to the 'usually resident' population, that is, they do not include short-term residents who may have been staying in Brent on census day. Appendix 1 provides more detail about census definitions.

Migrant population, London Boroughs, 2021

On census day (21 March 2021), the resident population of Brent was estimated to be around 339,800. Over half (56%) of the Brent population were born in countries outside the UK (190,575 residents), well above the average across London (41%) and nationally (17%). Brent has the highest percentage of migrant residents across all local authorities in England & Wales, just above the percentage in Westminster (56.1% vs. 55.6%).

Percentage of residents born outside the UK, London Boroughs & the City, 2021

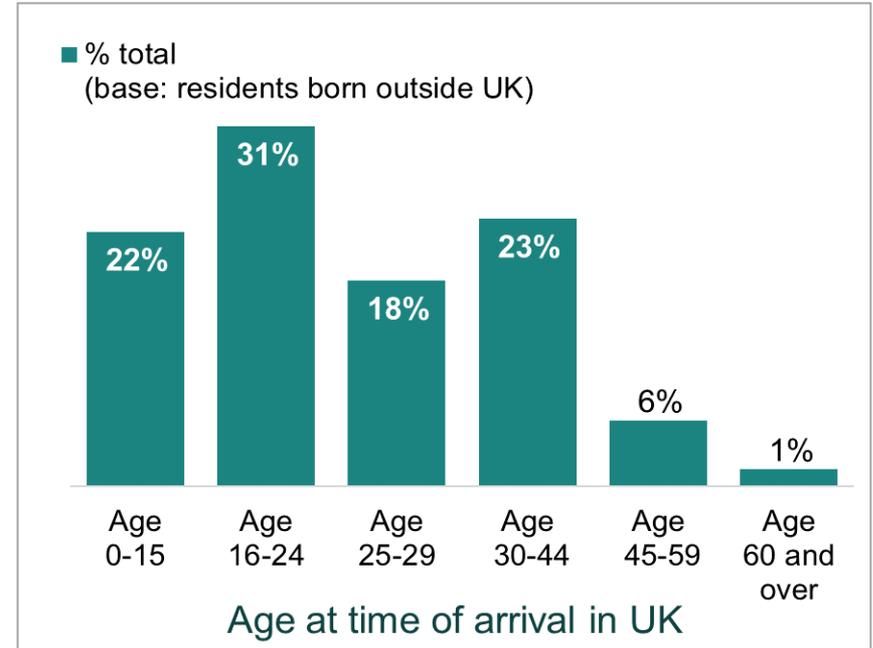
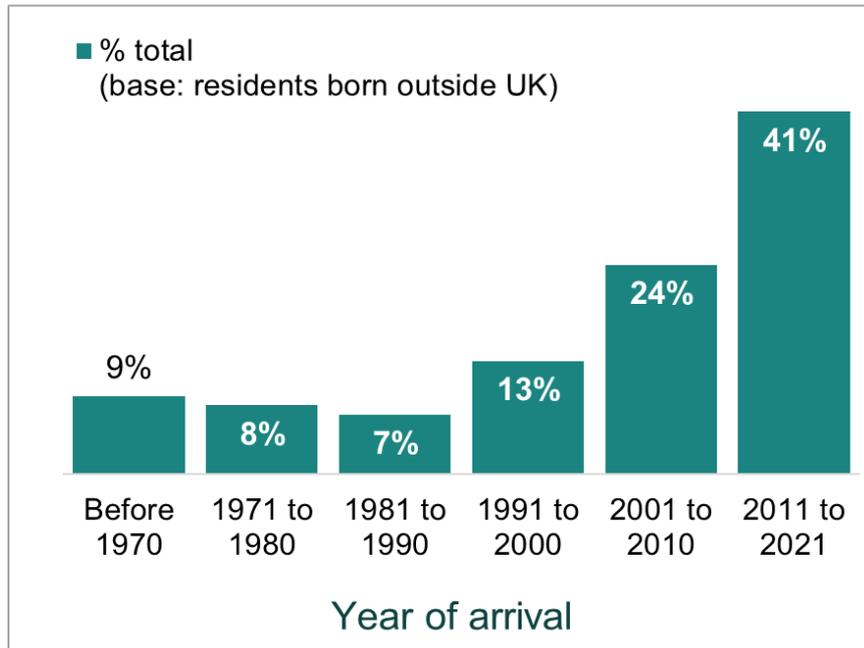


Year of arrival and age at arrival

- The migrant population in Brent is extremely diverse and includes older residents who migrated to the UK years ago, alongside more recent arrivals. Of the borough's migrant population, 36% were long established residents who had arrived in the UK over twenty years ago (i.e. before 2001) while 41% were more recent arrivals who arrived between 2011-21.
- The majority arrived in the UK when they were young adults or children. Around 70% arrived before the age of 30, and over one in five (22%) arrived as children aged under 16.

Note: figures provide a snapshot of the current migrant population – they don't capture all population inflows over time.

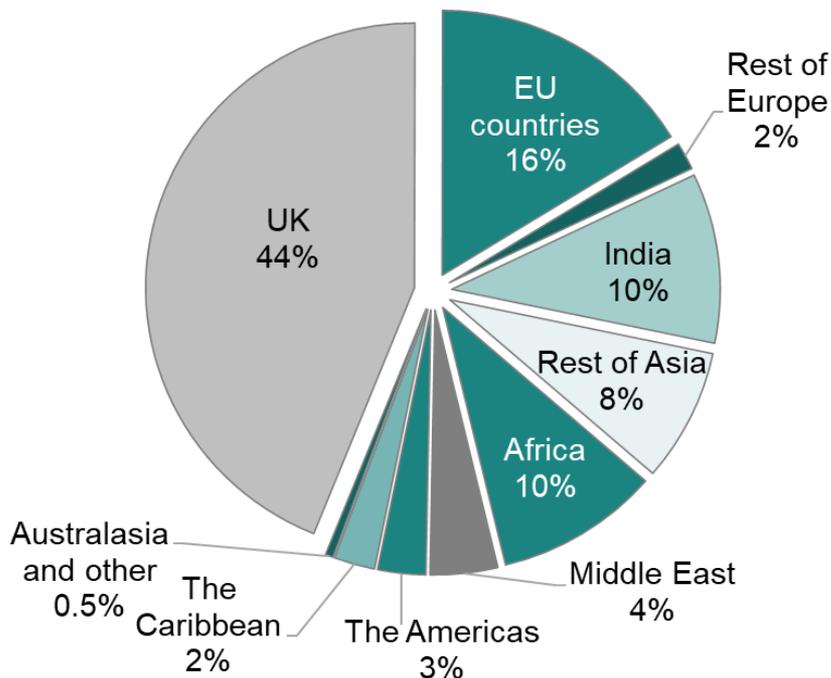
Population born outside UK by year of arrival and age at time of arrival, Brent, 2021



Country of birth: world regions

- The majority of Brent's migrant population were born in countries in Asia, Europe or Africa.
- Around 18% of residents were born in Asia, with more than half being born in India. Those born in Asia number 62,752 in total, the 8th largest population across all local authority areas in England & Wales.
- Around 16% of residents were born in European Union (EU) countries, compared with 13% across London and 6% across England & Wales. The EU-born population in Brent numbers 55,078 residents and is the 4th largest in England & Wales.
- One in ten Brent residents were born in African countries, a population of 33,517 – the 5th largest nationally.

Population by country of birth, Brent, 2021



Country of birth, Brent, London and E&W, 2021				
	Brent	Brent	London	England & Wales
	Count	% total	% total	% total
TOTAL	339,817	100%	100%	100%
Born in UK	149,242	44%	59%	83%
Born outside UK:	190,575	56%	41%	17%
EU countries	55,078	16%	13%	6%
Rest of Europe	5,676	2%	3%	1%
Africa	33,517	10%	7%	3%
Middle East	13,784	4%	2%	1%
Asia	62,752	18%	11%	5%
- India	35,203	10%	4%	2%
- Rest of Asia	27,549	8%	8%	3%
The Americas	9,809	3%	3%	1%
The Caribbean	8,362	2%	1%	0%
Australasia and other	1,597	0%	1%	0%

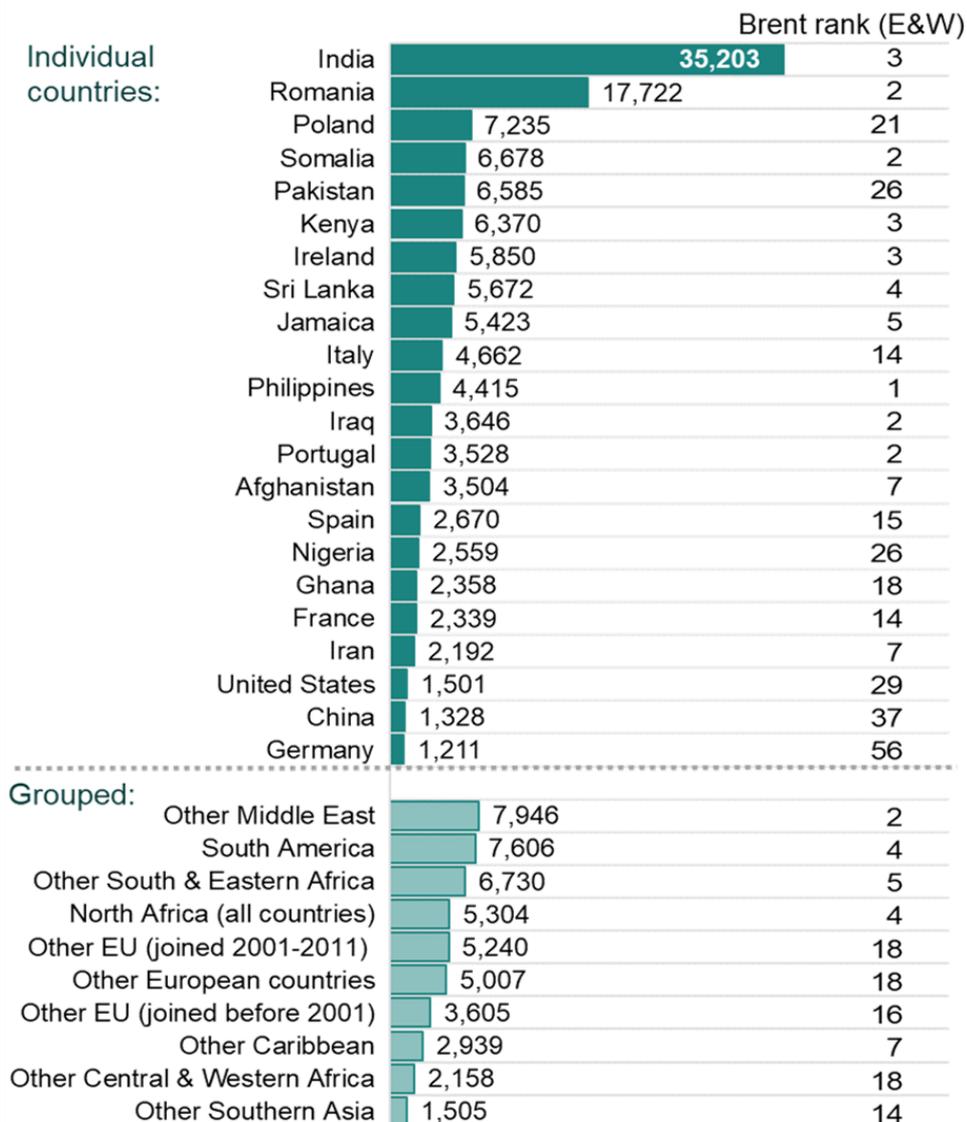
Country of birth: individual countries/areas

Figures were released for 59 groups: while many were individual countries others were groupings of countries. The chart shows those with populations over 1,000 – these make up 95% of the migrant population.

- Those born in India remain the borough’s largest migrant group, comprising 10% of the population. Brent has the 3rd largest Indian-born population in England & Wales, after Leicester and Hounslow.
- Those born in Romania make up 5% of the Brent population: 17,722 in number and the 2nd largest population nationally, after Harrow.
- Other groups with relatively large populations (>5,000) include: Poland, Somalia, Pakistan, Kenya, Ireland, Sri Lanka and Jamaica. These each comprise between 1.6% and 2.1% of the population.
- Brent has the largest Philippines-born population in England & Wales (4,415 – 1.3% of the population).
- Other groups where Brent ranks in the top 3 nationally include: Somalia, Iraq and Portugal (2nd largest), Kenya and Ireland (3rd). Brent also has the 2nd largest ‘Other Middle East’ population (Middle Eastern countries, excluding Iran/Iraq).

Appendix 2 provides more detail for all groups.

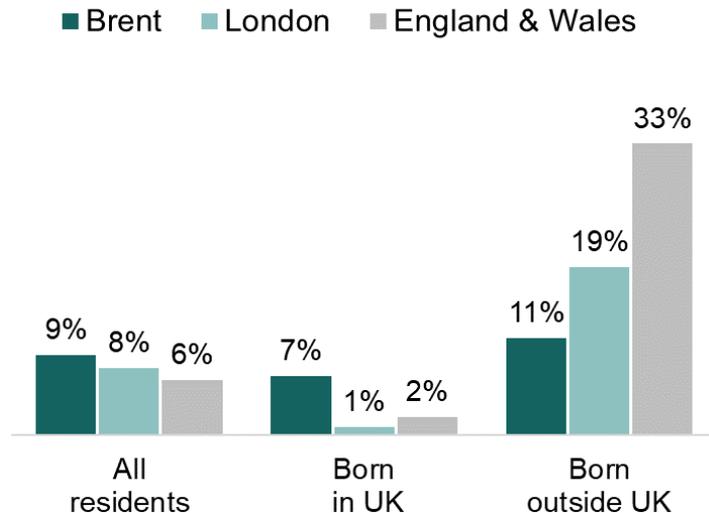
Migrant population by country of birth, Brent, 2021



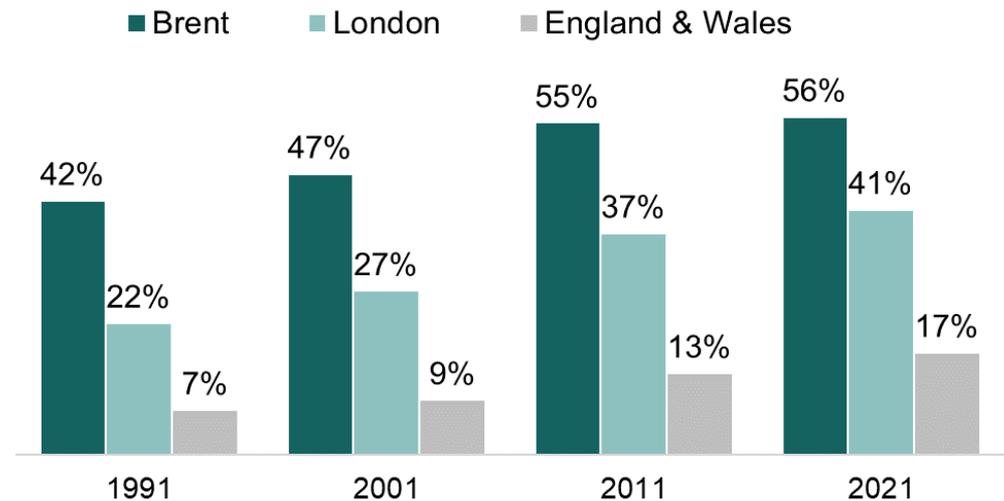
Population change by country of birth

- The Brent population grew by 9% between 2011 and 2021. The UK-born population grew by 7% and the migrant population by 11%. As a result, the percentage of the Brent population born outside the UK rose marginally from 55% to 56% between 2011 and 2021.
- London and England & Wales have seen more pronounced rises in the size of their respective migrant populations (up 19% and 33% respectively). Nationally, one in six (17%) of the population in England & Wales were born outside the UK in 2021, up from 13% in 2011.
- The recent growth in the size of the migrant population continues a longer-term upward trend, both in Brent and elsewhere. The chart below illustrates this and shows trends over the last four censuses (1991-2021).

Percentage change in population by country of birth, Brent, 2011-2021



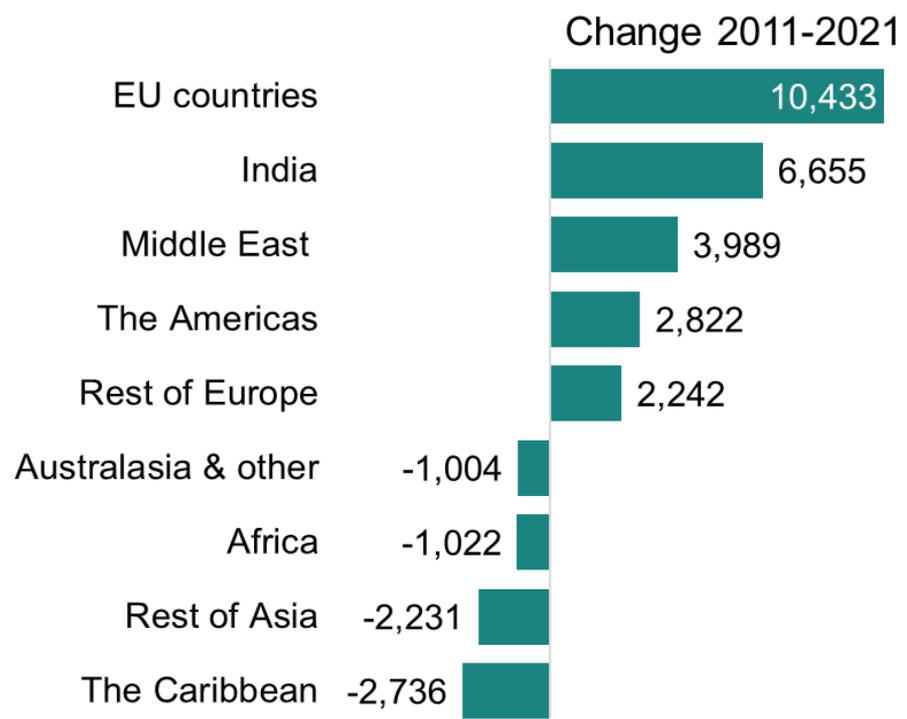
Percentage of the population born outside the UK, long-term trends 1991-2021



Change 2011-2021: world region

The chart and table below explore change in the size of Brent's migrant population between 2011 and 2021 across world regions. The groups with the biggest rises in number, were: the EU-born* and Indian-born populations (rises of +10,433 and + 6,655, both up 23%). Those born in the Middle East rose by +3,989 – a rise of 41%. The Caribbean-born population saw the biggest fall in number (-2,736), down 25%. Those born in the Australasia/Other group saw the largest fall in percentage terms (-39%, down 1,004), mainly reflecting a drop in the number of residents born in Australia and New Zealand.

Change in size of the migrant population by region, Brent, 2011-2021



Population by country of birth, 2011-2021,				
	2011	2021	Change	% change
TOTAL	311,215	339,817	28,602	9%
Born in UK	139,788	149,242	9,454	7%
Born outside UK	171,427	190,575	19,148	11%
EU countries	44,645	55,078	10,433	23%
Rest of Europe	3,434	5,676	2,242	65%
Africa	34,539	33,517	-1,022	-3%
Middle East	9,795	13,784	3,989	41%
India	28,548	35,203	6,655	23%
Rest of Asia	29,780	27,549	-2,231	-7%
The Americas	6,987	9,809	2,822	40%
The Caribbean	11,098	8,362	-2,736	-25%
Australasia & other	2,601	1,597	-1,004	-39%

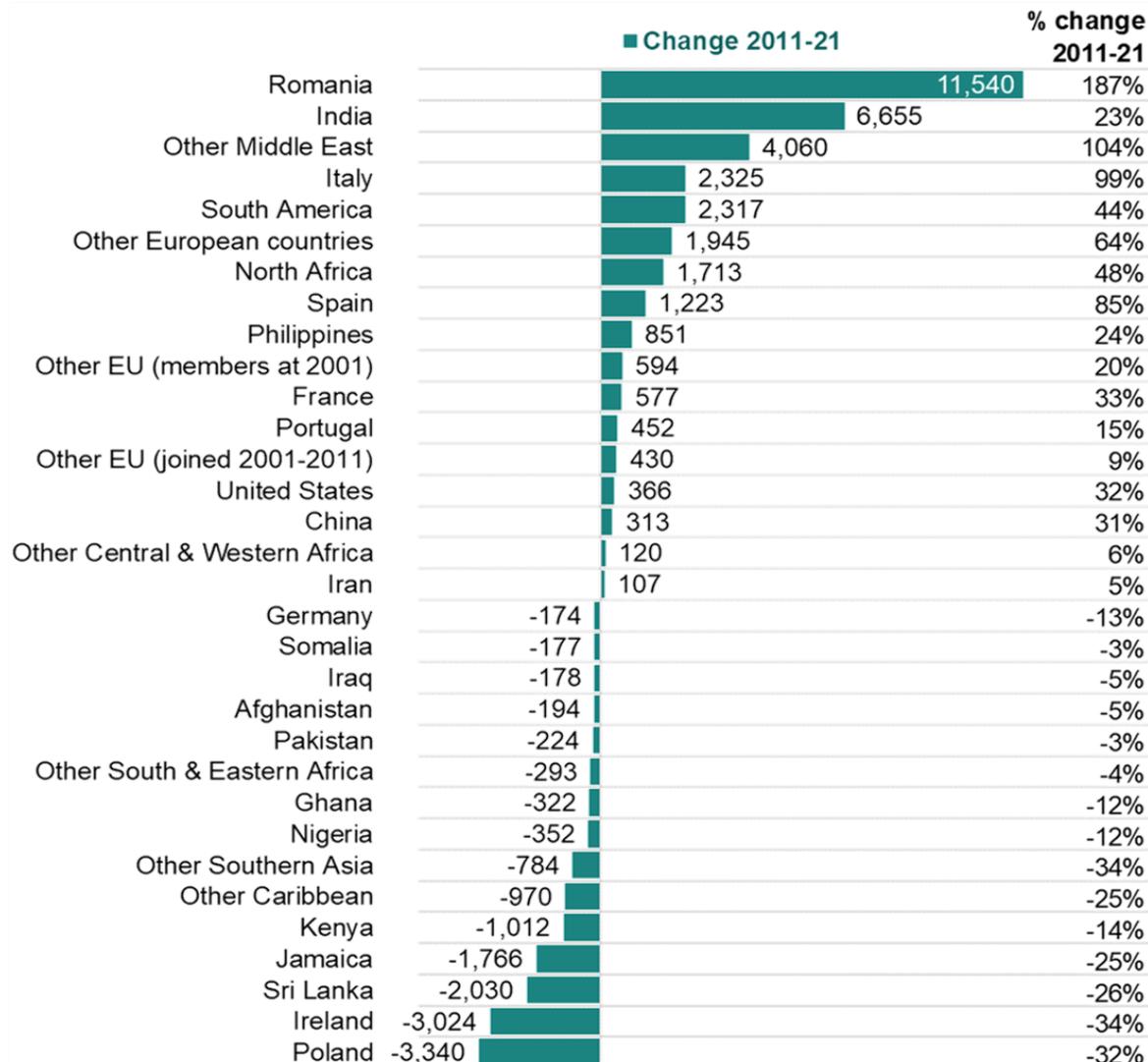
Country of birth: change 2011-21

This chart shows more detail on change at individual country level.

- The Romanian-born population saw the biggest rise, almost trebling in size, from 6,182 up to 17,722 between 2011 and 2021. This is likely to reflect the impact of working restrictions for Romanian citizens being lifted in 2014.
- The Indian-born population increased by 6,655 - a rise of 23%.
- The Italian and Spanish-born populations both almost doubled in size between 2011-21.
- Groups of countries that saw strong growth included: Other Middle East* (+104%), South America (+44%) and other European countries (non-EU not captured elsewhere), up 64%.
- Groups to see significant declines in population, of 1,000 or more, included: those born in Poland, Ireland, Sri Lanka, Jamaica and Kenya.

Appendix 3 provides more detail, including detail for smaller groups.

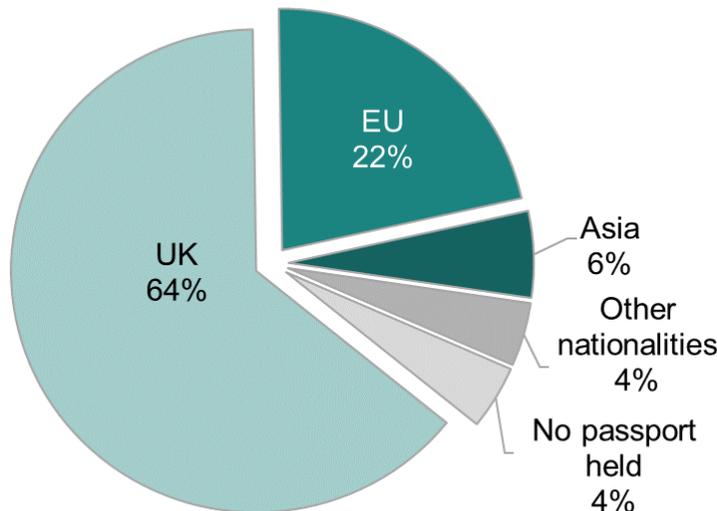
Change 2011-21 by country of birth (populations >1,000), Brent



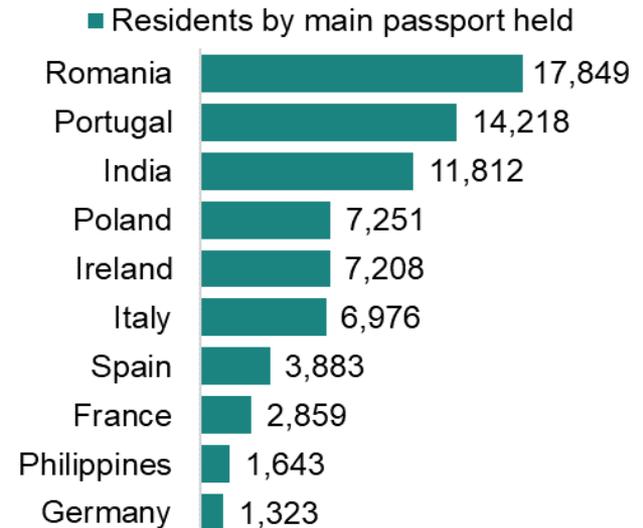
Nationality / passports held

- The 2021 census collected information on passport(s) held by residents, providing proxy data about nationality.
- Around 64% of Brent residents hold a UK passport and around one third (32%) hold a non-UK passport – the 5th highest rate in England & Wales. The remaining 4% had no passport – this compares with 6% across London and 13% nationally.
- The five most common non-UK passports held were: Romanian, Portuguese, Indian, Polish and Irish. Considered together, these accounted for over half of all residents holding non-UK passports.
- Over one in five (22%) Brent residents held EU passports, the highest percentage in England & Wales (and 2nd highest in number, after Birmingham). EU nationals account for over two thirds of all those with non-UK passports.

Residents by main passport held, Brent, 2021



Top 10 non-UK passports held, Brent, 2021

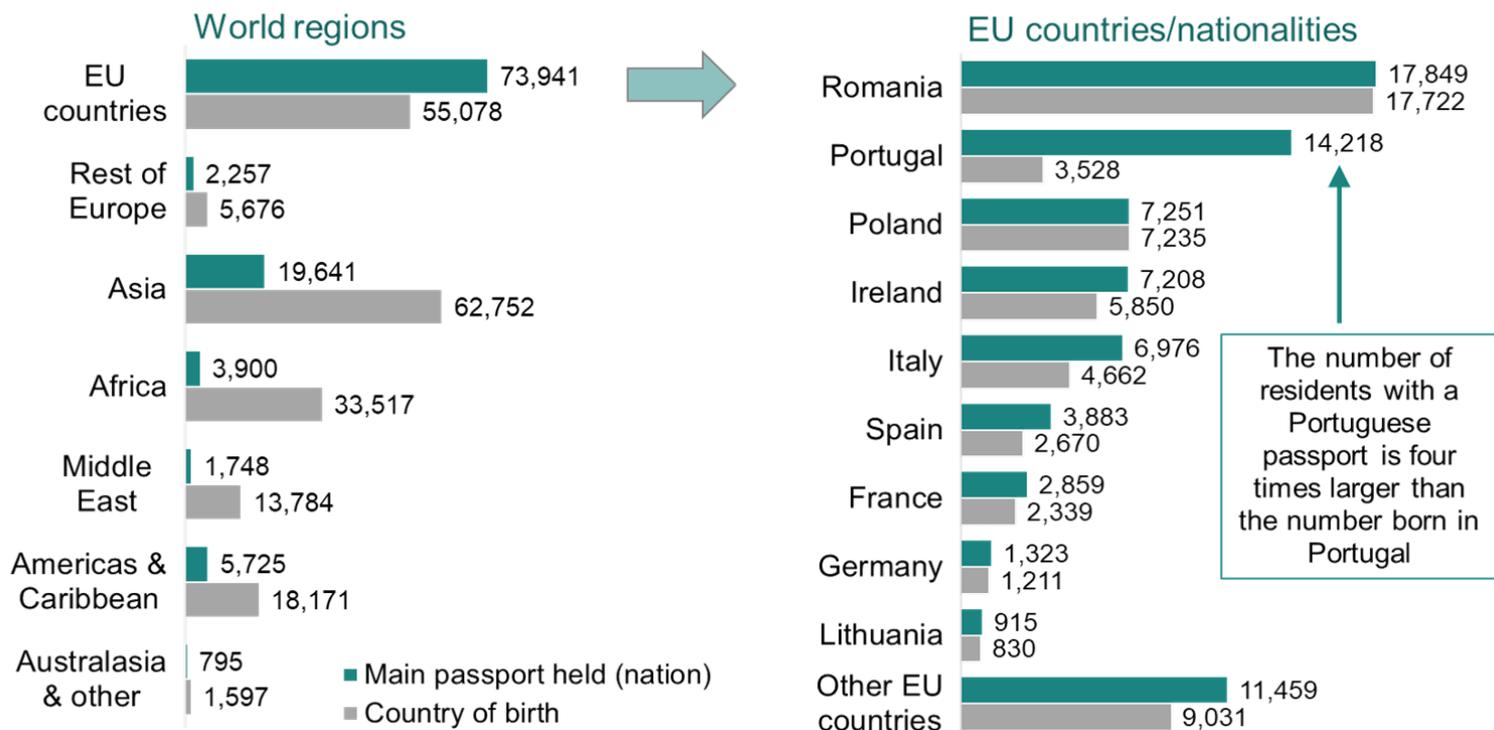


! Dual citizenship and data limitations: People can hold multiple passports but the census figures above only count residents in one category using the following priority order: 1-UK passport, 2-Irish passport, 3-Other country passport. This means census figures are likely to undercount the number of Irish and non-UK passport holders who also hold a UK passport (as they will be classed as UK passport holder first).

Passports vs. country of birth: EU nationals

- Overall, the number of Brent residents born outside the UK far outnumbers the number with non-UK nationality (191k vs. 108k), consistent with the fact that many who come to the UK, settle here, and go on to become UK citizens.
- However, for EU residents, patterns are reversed: the number of EU nationals is higher than the number born in EU countries (74k vs. 55k). While this is likely to reflect the different citizenship rules that apply to EU migrants (and their children)*, it could also reflect the fact that some EU nationals were born elsewhere in the world. Indeed, the number of residents with Portuguese passports is four times larger than the number born in Portugal (14,218 vs. 3,528), suggesting that many were born elsewhere (e.g. Brazil). The figures underline the complexity surrounding the interpretation of statistics about nationality.

Residents by country of birth and passports held, Brent residents, 2021



Further information

- **2021 Census data:** 2021 Census topic summary datasets can found on the [NOMIS website](#). NOMIS also provides access to statistics from previous censuses.
- **ONS mapping tool:** ONS has produced an interactive [mapping tool](#) which allows exploration of the data for different countries of birth across local authority areas.
- **Future census data:** This ‘topic summary’ data is part of the phase 1 release of the 2021 Census datasets. More detailed results are expected during 2023. A timetable summarises the release timetable can be found on the [ONS website](#).
- **Brent Open Data:** For more facts and figures about the borough of Brent please see the [Brent Open Data website](#).
- **Contact:** This report was produced by Brent Council's Data and Insight team. For more information please email the team at: open.data@brent.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1: About the data

Census question wording

The Census question on country of birth simply asked: What was your country of birth? For those not born in UK countries, or the Irish Republic, a write in box was provided to allow respondents to specify their country of birth. A follow up question was then asked to ascertain when those born outside the UK had arrived.

Respondents were also asked what passports they held and could either tick the UK, Irish, or none boxes, or if they held a non-UK passport they could write in the nationality. Respondents could tick more than one if they held multiple passports.

Country groupings: For more detail on what countries are included under the grouped categories in this report – see the [ONS country classification](#).

Usually resident population definition

This report explores the breakdown of the usually resident population and excludes people who may have been staying in Brent temporarily. A usual resident is anyone who, on 21 March 2021, is in the UK and has stayed, or intends to stay, in the UK for 12 months or more or has a permanent UK address and is outside the UK and intends to be outside the UK for less than 12 months. The usual resident population definition excludes short-term residents and visitors. A census short-term UK resident is anyone born outside the UK who has stayed, or intends to stay, in the UK for a period of three months or more but less than 12 months.

2021 census questions on country of birth, year of arrival and passports held

10 What is your country of birth?

- England → GO TO 13
- Wales → GO TO 13
- Scotland → GO TO 13
- Northern Ireland → GO TO 13
- Republic of Ireland
- Elsewhere, write in current name of the country

11 If you were not born in the United Kingdom, when did you most recently arrive to live here?

↻ Do not count short visits away from the UK

Month Year

20 What passports do you hold?

↻ Tick all that apply

- United Kingdom
- Ireland
- Other, write in

OR none

Appendix 2: Country of birth - reference table

Population estimates by country of birth, Brent, 2021 Census (reference table with detailed counts)

Brent population 339,817	→ All born outside UK 190,575		
UK-born 149,242 England 145,986 Northern Ireland 832 Scotland 1,405 Wales 962 UK nes 57	EU countries 55,078	Asia 62,752	The Caribbean 8,362
	Romania 17,722	India 35,203	Jamaica 5,423
	Poland 7,235	Pakistan 6,585	Other Caribbean 2,939
	Ireland 5,850	Sri Lanka 5,672	
	Italy 4,662	Philippines 4,415	Africa 33,517
	Portugal 3,528	Afghanistan 3,504	Ghana 2,358
	Spain 2,670	China 1,328	Nigeria 2,559
	France 2,339	Bangladesh 958	Kenya 6,370
	Germany 1,211	Hong Kong 891	Somalia 6,678
	Lithuania 830	Malaysia 691	South Africa 862
Croatia 186	Singapore 233	Zimbabwe 372	
Other EU (joined < 2001) 3,605	Other Southern Asia 1,505	North Africa 5,304	
Other EU (joined 2001-11) 5,240	Other Eastern Asia 685	Other Central & Western Africa 2,158	
	Other South-East Asia 969	Other South & Eastern Africa 6,730	
	Central Asia 113	Africa not otherwise specified 126	
Other Europe (non-EU) 5,676	The Americas 9,809	Australasia & other 1,597	
Turkey 669	United States 1,501	Australia 900	
Other European countries 5,007	Canada 480	New Zealand 496	
Middle East 13,784	Other North America 22	Other Australasia 2	
Iran 2,192	Central America 200	Other 199	
Iraq 3,646	South America 7,606		
Other Middle East 7,946			

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2021 Census (Table TS012). Note: ONS has made adjustments to census statistics to ensure no individual can be identified from the data. This process means the population total for Brent shown above may differ marginally for other totals published for Brent.

Appendix 3: Change 2011-21 - reference table

Population by country of birth, Brent, 2011-2021

	Population 2011	Population 2021	Change 2011-21	% change 2011-21
TOTAL	311,215	339,817	28,602	9%
Born in UK	139,788	149,242	9,454	7%
Born outside UK	171,427	190,575	19,148	11%
EU countries				
Romania	6,182	17,722	11,540	187%
Poland	10,575	7,235	-3,340	-32%
Ireland	8,874	5,850	-3,024	-34%
Italy	2,337	4,662	2,325	99%
Portugal	3,076	3,528	452	15%
Spain	1,447	2,670	1,223	85%
France	1,762	2,339	577	33%
Germany	1,385	1,211	-174	-13%
Lithuania	1,064	830	-234	-22%
Croatia	122	186	64	52%
Other EU (joined before 2001)	3,011	3,605	594	20%
Other EU (joined 2001-2011)	4,810	5,240	430	9%
Other Europe				
Turkey	372	669	297	80%
Other European countries	3,062	5,007	1,945	64%
Africa				
Somalia	6,855	6,678	-177	-3%
Kenya	7,382	6,370	-1,012	-14%
Nigeria	2,911	2,559	-352	-12%
Ghana	2,680	2,358	-322	-12%
South Africa	1,123	862	-261	-23%
Zimbabwe	395	372	-23	-6%
North Africa	3,591	5,304	1,713	48%
Other Central & Western Africa	2,038	2,158	120	6%
Other South & Eastern Africa	7,023	6,730	-293	-4%
Africa not otherwise specified	541	126	-415	-77%

	Population 2011	Population 2021	Change 2011-21	% change 2011-21
Middle East				
Iran	2,085	2,192	107	5%
Iraq	3,824	3,646	-178	-5%
Other Middle East	3,886	7,946	4,060	104%
Asia				
India	28,548	35,203	6,655	23%
Pakistan	6,809	6,585	-224	-3%
Sri Lanka	7,702	5,672	-2,030	-26%
Philippines	3,564	4,415	851	24%
Afghanistan	3,698	3,504	-194	-5%
China	1,015	1,328	313	31%
Bangladesh	875	958	83	9%
Hong Kong	847	891	44	5%
Malaysia	833	691	-142	-17%
Singapore	182	233	51	28%
Other Eastern Asia	672	685	13	2%
Other Southern Asia	2,289	1,505	-784	-34%
Other South-East Asia	1,117	969	-148	-13%
Central Asia	177	113	-64	-36%
The Americas & Caribbean				
United States	1,135	1,501	366	32%
Canada	405	480	75	19%
Other North America	25	22	-3	-12%
Central America	133	200	67	50%
South America	5,289	7,606	2,317	44%
Jamaica	7,189	5,423	-1,766	-25%
Other Caribbean	3,909	2,939	-970	-25%
Australasia & other				
Australia	1,315	900	-415	-32%
New Zealand	1,055	496	-559	-53%
Other	231	201	-30	-13%