

International migration

Census 2021

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Version: 1.0 (published)

Last updated: November 2022

International migration data from the 2021 census was published by the Office for National Statistics on 2 November 2022. This report summarises the main points of the data for Luton.

Executive summary

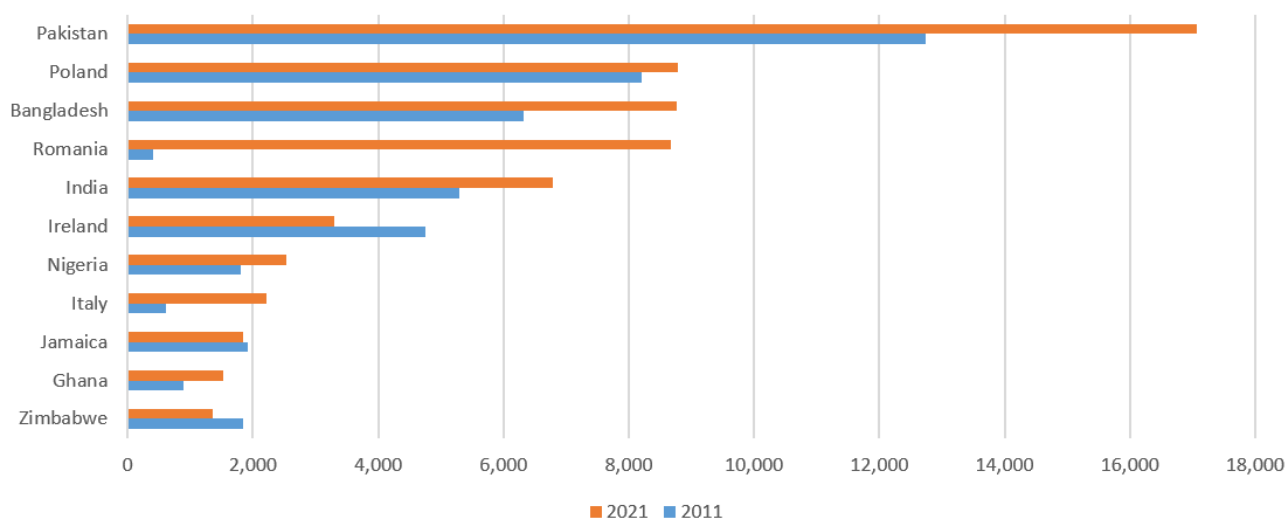
- The 2021 census showed that nearly two in five of Luton’s residents were not born in the UK, this is one of the biggest proportions of non-UK born residents outside of London. Nationally 16.8 per cent of people were born outside of the UK.
- 86,587 (38.4 per cent) of Luton’s residents were born outside of the UK. This has increased from 62,872 (30.9 per cent) in 2011.
- Pakistan was the most common non-UK birthplace, which has increased to 17,067 (7.6 per cent of the population in Luton), up from 12,739 in 2011.
- Residents born in Poland, has increased to 8,779 (3.9 per cent), up from 8,203 in 2011.
- Residents born in Bangladesh, has increased to 8,766 (3.9 per cent), up from 6,316 in 2011.
- 8,666 (3.9 per cent) of Luton’s residents were born in Romania, this increased from 401 in 2011. This is the most significant change having increased by more than 2000 per cent in 10 years.
- Of Luton’s non-UK born residents, 37,391 (43.2 per cent) have arrived since 2011.
- 44.9 per cent of Luton’s non-UK born residents were aged between 18 and 29 when arriving in the UK and 29.9 per cent were under 18.

International migration – Census 2021

The number of people in Luton born outside of the UK has increased by 23,715 since 2011, latest census data shows.

The 2021 census counted 86,587 people in Luton born outside of the UK which is 38.4 per cent of the 225,255 population. This is one of the largest non-UK born populations outside of London. Nationally 16.8 per cent of people were born outside of the UK. The areas with the biggest non-UK born population are Brent (56.1 per cent), Westminster (55.6 per cent) and Kensington and Chelsea (53.9 per cent). Only two areas outside of London are in the top 20 places with most non UK born residents, Slough (44.0 per cent) and Leicester (41.1 per cent). Luton has one of the biggest non-UK populations outside of London.

Figure 1: Top ten non-UK countries of birth in 2021 with 2011 for comparison, Luton



Source: Census 2011 & 2021, Office for National Statistics

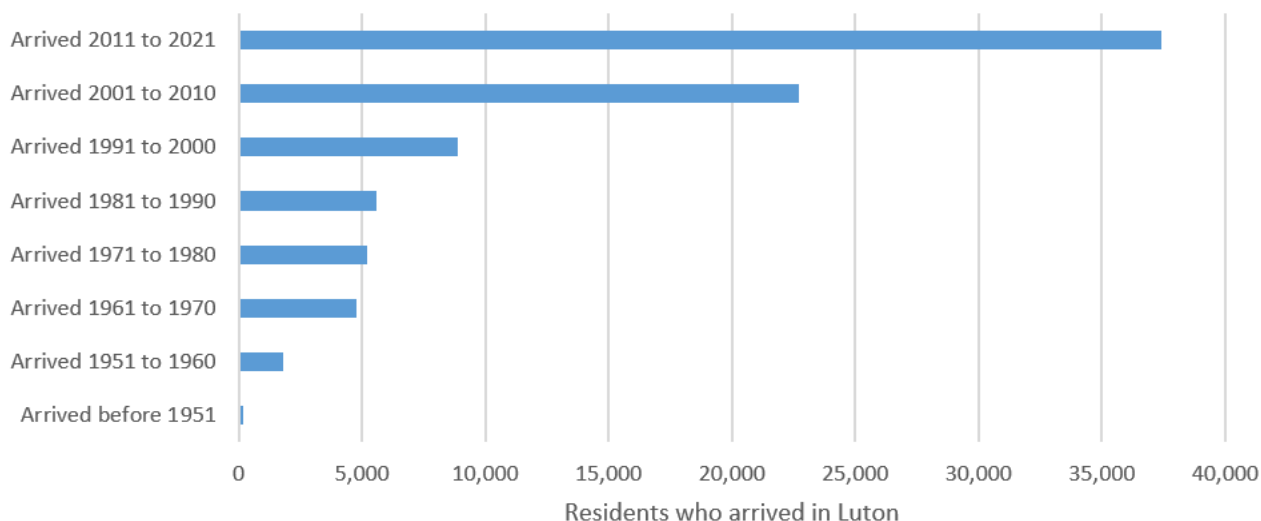
Those who listed Romania as their country of birth increased to 8,666 in 2021, from 401 in 2011, an increase between censuses of 8,265 (2061 per cent), making Romania the fourth most common non-UK country of birth in Luton. This increase was the highest out of any country and is driven by working restrictions for Romanian citizens being lifted in 2014. Italy also entered the top 10 non-UK countries of birth, rising to 2,213 from 609 between 2011 and 2021, a 263 per cent increase.

The three most common non-UK countries of birth for usual residents in 2021 were the same as in 2011:

- Pakistan, which has increased to 17,067 (7.6 per cent of the population in Luton), up from 12,739 in 2011.
- Poland, which has increased to 8,779 (3.9 per cent), up from 8,203 in 2011.
- Bangladesh, which has increased to 8,766 (3.9 per cent), up from 6,316 in 2011.

Ireland retained its position in the top 10 between 2011 and 2021, but there was a decrease in numbers, a decline of 30.4 per cent, from 4,754 in 2011 to 3,307 in 2021.

Figure 2: Non-UK born Luton residents’ year of arrival in UK

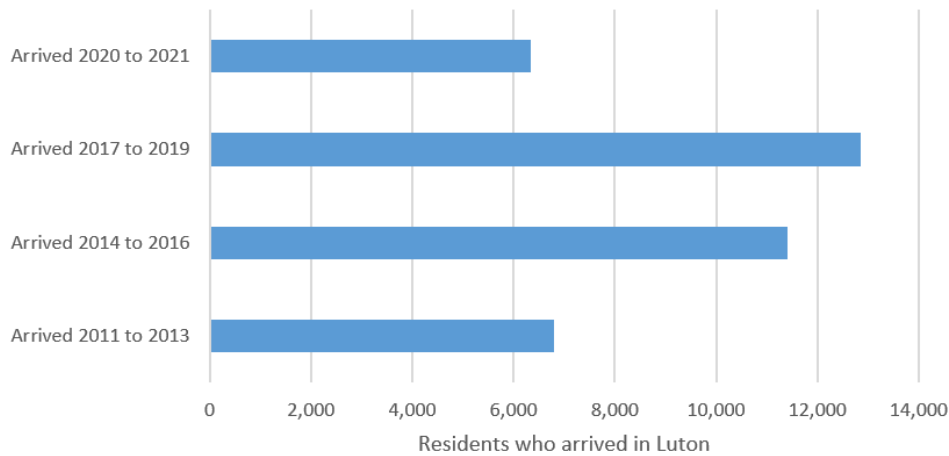


Source: Census 2021, Office for National Statistics

Of the 86,587 residents in Luton in 2021 who were not born in the UK:

- 37,391 (43.2 per cent) had arrived since 2011
- 22,704 (26.2 per cent) had arrived between 2001 and 2010
- 26,492 (30.7%) had arrived before 2001

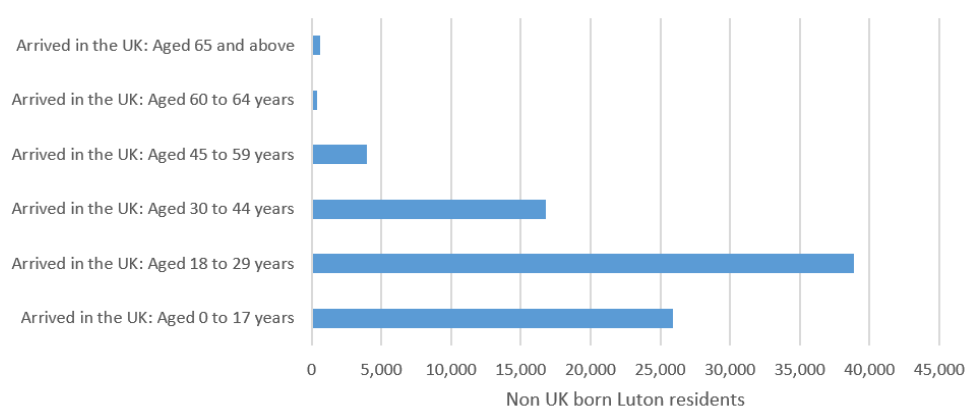
Figure 3: Non-UK born Luton residents' year of arrival in UK, 2011-2021



Source: Census 2021, Office for National Statistics

Over the last decade the most non-UK born Luton residents arrived in the country between 2017 and 2019. There was a fall in international migration in 2020 and 2021 with impact of the pandemic and changes in entry laws after the exit from the EU.

Figure 4: Non-UK born Luton residents' age when arriving in UK, 2011-2021



Source: Census 2021, Office for National Statistics

Of Luton's non-UK born residents:

- 25,873 non-UK born Luton residents were below the age of 18 years when they arrived in the UK (29.9 per cent of all non-UK born usual residents)
- 38,893 were aged 18 to 29 years (44.9 per cent)
- 16,833 were aged 30 to 44 years (19.4 per cent)
- 4,002 were aged 45 to 59 years (4.6 per cent)
- 986 were aged 60 years and above (1.2 per cent).

More census analysis will be added to the [Luton information observatory page](#) as data is published.

[Please see link to the 2021 census data.](#)