# Foreign-born mothers now account for nearly one in seven births in England and Wales, with London hospitals leading the shift



Recent analyses have unveiled a significant shift in the demographic landscape of maternal health in England and Wales, revealing that nearly one in seven maternity units is now predominantly attended by foreign-born mothers. This trend has become particularly prominent in hospitals located in London, where profound disparities are observed in the proportions of non-UK-born mothers giving birth.

At Northwick Park Hospital in Harrow, an alarming 84.2% of live births in 2023 were to mothers who were not born in the UK. Following closely behind are Newham's University Hospital at 77.1%, Hillingdon Hospital at 72.1%, and North Middlesex Hospital at 71.2%. Meanwhile, a notable trend on the other end of the scale shows that some hospitals, particularly those in Wales, reported much lower rates. For instance, at Royal Glamorgan in Llantrisant, only 5.7% of births were to non-UK-born mothers, highlighting regional disparities that prompt questions about local demographics and immigration patterns.

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), almost one-third of all births in England and Wales in 2023 were to mothers from abroad. This figure marks an increase from 30.3% in 2022, continuing a long-term upward trend that began around two decades ago, when the percentage was just under 20%. The data indicates that 37.3% of live births involved at least one parent born outside the UK, showcasing the evolving family structures and cultural diversity within the population.

India has emerged as the most common country of origin for non-UK-born mothers, representing 3.6% of all live births, followed by Pakistan, Romania, Nigeria, and Poland. In 2023, Ghana made its debut in the top ten, reflecting ongoing shifts in migration trends. The increase in births among foreign-born mothers may also correlate with higher fertility rates: non-UK-born mothers generally have more children than their UK counterparts, a pattern particularly pronounced among South Asian communities.

The overall birth rate in England and Wales continues to raise alarm bells, with 2023 witnessing the lowest number of live births (591,072) since 1977—a reduction of 14,407 compared to the previous year. This decline aligns with a historical drop in the total fertility rate, which has reached a record low of 1.44 children per woman, notably below the replacement level. Several factors contribute to this phenomenon, including economic pressures, shifting societal values regarding family size, and an increasing tendency to delay parenthood.

Professor Sarah Harper, a population and migration expert at the University of Oxford, remarked that non-UK-born women have historically exhibited higher fertility rates. She pointed out that post-Brexit immigration patterns have shifted, with a notable rise in immigrants from South Asia compared to the EU, influencing the current demographic landscape. As fertility rates plummet, calls for policy interventions to support families and create child-friendly environments become increasingly urgent.

Economic challenges such as housing affordability, coupled with an evolving attitude towards family formation, have been cited as significant barriers to childbearing. A report from UCL suggests that while there is a visible desire for families, the realities of modern life often necessitate a reconsideration of when and how many children people wish to have.

Ireland, like many other advanced economies, faces similar demographic challenges, with low birth rates creating concerns about future workforce sustainability. Experts advocate for enhanced family-friendly policies, better access to reproductive healthcare, and support for parents to mitigate the effects of declining birth rates. The implications of these trends extend beyond personal choices, raising critical questions about the future economic landscape and societal structure in Britain.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14679271/babies-born-British-immigration.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/livebirths/bulletins/parentscountryofbirthenglandandwales/2023> - In 2023, 31.8% of all live births in England and Wales were to non-UK-born mothers, an increase from 30.3% in 2022. This continues a general upward trend in the percentage of live births to non-UK-born mothers. Additionally, 37.3% of live births were to parents where either one or both were born outside the UK, up from 35.8% in 2022. India remained the most common country of birth for non-UK-born mothers and fathers, with Pakistan remaining second. London had the highest proportion of such births at 67.4%, while Wales and the North East of England had the lowest at 17.5% and 20.5%, respectively. The proportion of births to mothers born outside the UK generally increases with the mother's age, from 15.8% for those under 20 to 53.9% for those aged 45 and over.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/03a14332-3048-4bf9-88a8-d965815c34cf> - The birth rate in England and Wales fell to its lowest level since records began nearly 90 years ago, according to official data that highlights Britain's demographic challenges. The total fertility rate dropped to 1.44 children per woman in 2023, its lowest value since records began in 1938, the ... . The current rate is well below the ... . Falling birth numbers could lead to a ... Jonathan Portes, professor of economics ... "over the longer term, it ... ", he added. "Relatively high rates of immigration ... ," he said. The figures were released ahead of the ... Last month, the Office for Budget ... The ONS noted there were various ... Research from UCL also found that ... "While those without children may be ... ," said Alina Pelikh, ... The ONS said that over the ... Most advanced and developing countries face similar ... All advanced economies except Israel have birth ... Experts warn that raising labour force participation ... Ann Berrington, professor of ... . "We need to improve the training of ... ," she said. Geeta Nargund, senior ... "a wake-up call" to addressing "barriers to parenthood". She called on ministers to "end the NHS postcode lottery for ... " access, reduce waiting lists for ... "family-friendly policies".
4. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/livebirths/bulletins/parentscountryofbirthenglandandwales/2022> - In 2022, 30.3% of all live births in England and Wales were to non-UK-born mothers, an increase from 28.8% in 2021. This continues the long-term trend of a generally increasing proportion of live births to non-UK-born mothers. Additionally, 37.3% of live births were to parents where either one or both were born outside the UK, up from 35.8% in 2021. India replaced Romania as the most common country of birth for non-UK-born mothers, and Pakistan remained the most common country of birth for non-UK-born fathers. London had the highest proportion of such births at 67.4%, while Wales and the North East of England had the lowest at 17.5% and 20.5%, respectively. The proportion of births to mothers born outside the UK generally increases with the mother's age, from 15.8% for those under 20 to 53.9% for those aged 45 and over.
5. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_England> - In 2023, the percentage of live births where either one or both parents were born outside of the UK was 38.2%. 32.7% of all live births in England were to mothers born outside of the UK (9.0% born in the EU, 23.7% born outside of the EU).
6. <https://www.ft.com/content/30e0469a-900c-4ef1-9af5-ff5902f6e129> - In London, birth rates are highest among women over 40 years old compared to other regions in England and Wales. The delay in parenthood is largely attributed to high housing costs and career establishment. London’s fertility rate for women aged 40-44 was 20.9 per 1,000 in 2023, significantly higher than other regions. However, overall fertility rates are low, with London's general fertility rate being the lowest in the country at 1.35 children per woman. Factors contributing to this include high living costs, large student populations, and a trend of postponing childbirth for personal and biological reasons. Additionally, changing immigration patterns post-Brexit have influenced these demographic shifts. Despite more fertility clinics aiding older mothers, the number of births in London has declined by 19% over the past decade. This trend is seen as indicative of broader patterns observed in advanced economies globally, driven by economic pressures and shifting societal norms around family formation.