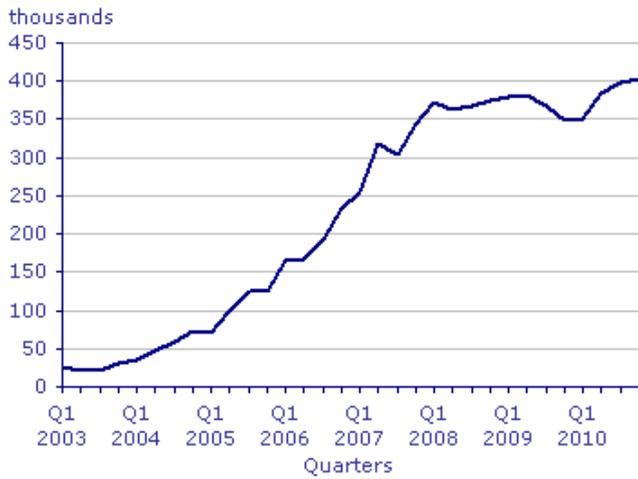


## Polish migrating to the UK



On 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004, Poland joined the EU which allows the freedom of movement between countries. Since 2004, there has been over 830,000 Polish migrants moving to the UK making Poland the largest importer of non-original country citizens now living in the UK. With Polish being the second most spoken language in England after English.

Poland's GDP is significantly lower than Britain's (\$514.5 billion, compared to the UK's \$2.43 trillion); there is high unemployment (averaging 12 per cent since 2008) and the

minimum hourly wage is less than half that paid in Britain. In 2005, the average unemployment in Poland was 18.5% with youth unemployment being 40%. Rural unemployment was even higher being at 40%. While in the UK in 2005, the unemployment rate was 5.1%. The average wage in Poland in 2005 was \$12,700, while in the UK it was \$30,900.

According to their research migrants from the European Economic Area (EEA) have put more money into the system than they took out; between 2001 and 2011 EEA immigrants contributed 34% more to the fiscal system than they took out, equivalent to a net contribution of around 22 billion GBP. Furthermore, recent immigrants are 45% less likely to claim benefits or tax credits than the UK's native population.

Over £2.5 billion contributed to the UK economy a year, with experts arguing that Polish migrates meant to 0.5% of the economic growth. Over £1.9 billion a year in tax is paid by Polish workers. 80% of the migrants are economically active (18-35 year olds) who pay tax and limited benefits required. Only 4.6% of the migrants were over the age of 60. 25.2% of migrants from Poland had a degree.

30% of the NHS doctors are non-UK and 10% of nurses. Over 40% of Poles are classed as skilled workers such as managers or professionals, however work in low skilled work. A qualified nurse will earn more money in the UK doing agricultural work than nursing in Poland. However, it is argued that the large numbers of Polish migrants willing to work for minimum wage has taken jobs from native British people and held wages low in the UK. The average UK wage for low skilled work increased by 3% between 2004 and 2014, however the cost of living increased by 9%.

There are 10 Polish churches in London alone, in locations such as Balham and Ealing, and road signs are translated into Polish in villages around Cheshire showing how multi-cultural the UK has become with growing levels of respect and tolerance to other cultures. Of the 371,000 non-UK nationals claiming unemployment benefit, 13,940 are Polish. In 2010, 6,777 Poles were convicted of crimes in Britain.





75.2% of Polish migrants live in privately rented housing forcing rental prices up in high demand areas. It is estimated that migration has led to urban sprawl to increase by 12% in the last 10 years in the UK causing pressure on greenbelts around many towns and cities. These areas are highly protected for wildlife and ecosystems. It has led to the Government in 2014 to reduce the regulations on building on greenbelts to help the building of houses to meet the ever increasing demand on housing in the UK. However, local councils have been working with property developers to ensure wildlife damage is limited with natural ponds/lakes being built around, bat boxes, bird boxes and areas left as wild meadows.

In the UK general election in 2015, over 13 million citizens voted for UKIP who have promoted anti-migration policies especially those from Eastern Europe due to the argument that they have kept wages low and increased huge pressure on the state – education, housing, NHS etc. Some experts would argue that immigration was one of the reasons for the UK population to vote to leave the EU in May 2016 showing clear signs that migration is viewed by the native population as a negative process. However, politicians understand the need for migration for highly skilled staff from around the world to help ensure the British economy continues to grow so have encouraged skilled migration by extending the Graduate Entrepreneur Scheme which is aimed at the most gifted degree graduates to settle in the UK to encourage the economic growth of the UK.

With over 60% of Poles sending money back to Poland which is over £4 billion is sent back to Poland each year. This is called remittance. This money is used by families to send children and younger siblings to school, improve housing and pay for healthcare for family members. It is claimed that children who have a close relative who sends back to Poland is 40% more chance of going to university showing clear improvements to the social and economic aspects of the country. Poland's divorce rate has doubled in the past 7 years. This has been attributed to long-term absence of partners and for returning Poles, a decline in the standard of living, which puts an added strain on relationships.

Poland has seen average wage rises by 5% a year with construction seeing wage increases of over 9% due to lack of workforce. It is estimated over 600 doctors move from Poland to the UK showing a brain drain in Poland whereby the most skilled members in the workforce leave the country. Waiting times have increased in Poland with skilled doctors and surgeons leaving the country.

The £4 billion sent back to Poland each year allows an increase in disposable income for families. This in turn creates the positive multiplier effect, whereby more people spend money which means more companies open which take on more staff who then have more money and the cycle continues. This has led to Poland's GDP being over 3% for the last 10 years which helps to boost the support for the Government since the country feels like it is moving forward.

Polish officials have stated how the mass migration to the UK and other European countries has reduced Poland's landfill by 6%. This has helped to reduce environmental issues especially the burning of waste products.



Krakow, Poland

	 <b>POLAND</b>	 <b>UK</b>
■ Net household income	<b>£8,759</b>	<b>£38,547</b>
■ Working hours per week	<b>40.6</b>	<b>36.4</b>
■ Hours of sunshine per year	<b>1,514</b>	<b>1,387</b>
■ Retirement age	<b>59.3</b>	<b>63</b>
■ Life expectancy	<b>76.2</b>	<b>80.4</b>
■ Number of days holiday	<b>38</b>	<b>28</b>
■ Education spending (of GDP)	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>
■ Health spending (of GDP)	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>11.2%</b>
■ Diesel (price per litre)	<b>£1.07</b>	<b>£1.38</b>

Source uSwitch.com