



Title: **Impacts of Students on Demographic Projections**
Date: **3rd October 2018**
From: **Nick Ireland, Director, IcenI Projects**

Some participants in the Examination have raised issues regarding the affect which student migration might have had on the robustness of demographic projections, pointing in particular to Coventry. The evidence and analysis on these issues appears to have principally predated two things:

- Adjustments to ONS methodology for estimating population change, resulting in revisions to its Mid-Year Estimates for 2012-16; and
- Release of ONS 2016-based Sub-National Population Projections which take these into account.

In this note, I have sought to summarise the implications of the above and to provide links to the relevant ONS reports dealing with these issues, at the request of the Inspector.

ONS Revised Mid-Year Population Estimates mid 2012 – mid 2016

ONS published revised Mid-Year Population Estimates for mid 2012 to mid 2016 on 22nd March 2018. These take into account methodological improvements made by ONS including to its estimates of local authority international emigration, which it sets out has particularly influenced the distribution of people in their 20s and 30s.

ONS' Statistical Bulletin is available here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/annualmidyearpopulationestimates/mid2012tomid2016>

The recalculated emigration estimates use an improved distribution model that includes a wider range of administrative and survey data than before and (in ONS' words) improved matching methods to better distinguish between students, workers and other international in-migrants.

Data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency on student numbers and moves has fed into calculations of both internal and international in- and out-migration. This is clear from the ONS' methodology document which is available here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/methodologies/methodologyguideformid2012tomid2016ukpopulationestimatesenglandandwalesmarch2018>

There has also been an adjustment made to Coventry and Warwick student locations in mid 2014 and mid 2015.

The model which ONS had used previously to calculate each area's share of emigration previously included no variables directly related to students. ONS has set out that its updated model better captures outflow from student areas by including variables that increase an area's share of emigration with higher levels of immigration in the mid-year estimates and of EU students in their final year of higher education aged 20 to 25 years. This has the result of increasing the emigration in areas that are dominated by students and, in particular, EU students.

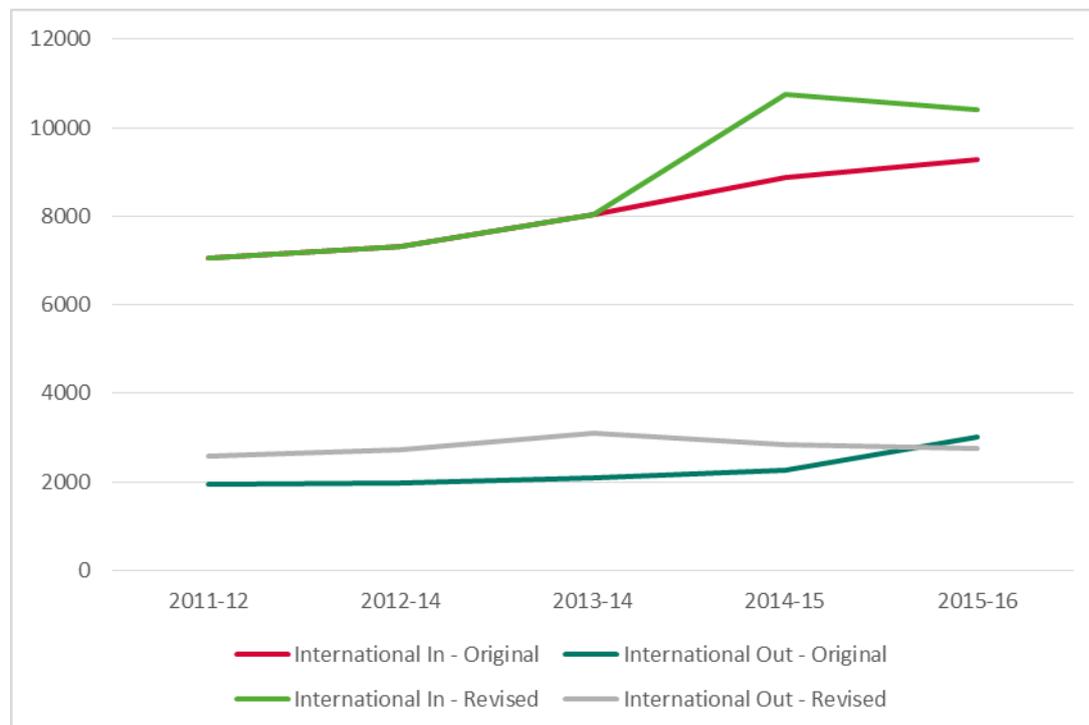
Implications for Coventry

The revisions to the Mid-Year Estimates for particular areas can be analysed using the 'revision tool' published by ONS which is available here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesrevisiontool>

In the chart below, I have analysed the changes to international migration estimates to/from Coventry. ONS has revised upwards its assumptions on international migration between 2011-15, however the impact of this is counterbalanced by higher estimates of international in-migration since 2014. The result is that the City's population is estimated to stand 300 persons higher in 2016 in the revised MYEs at 353,200.

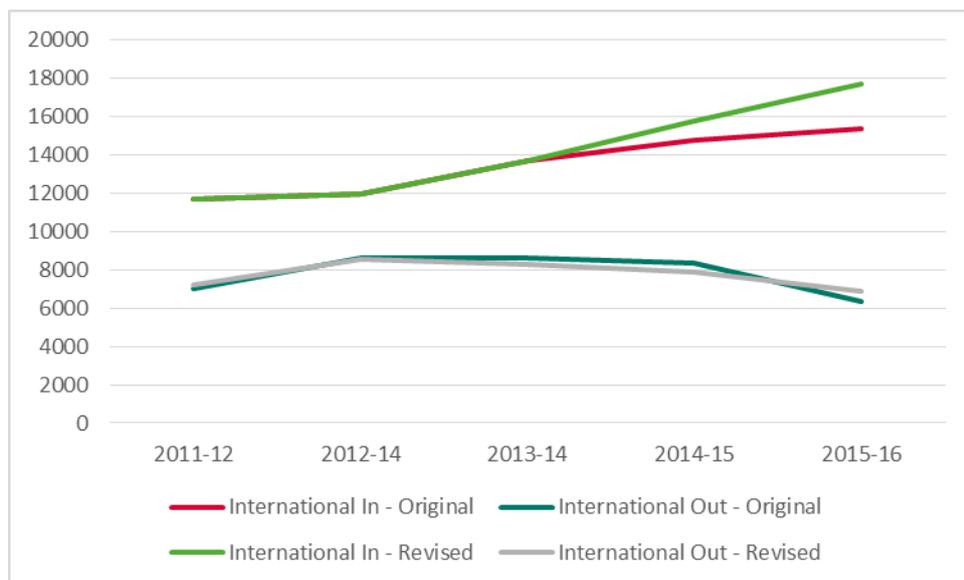
Revisions to Estimated International Migration to Coventry



Implications for Birmingham

A similar analysis for Birmingham shows a minimal impact on the figures for emigration, but shows upward revisions to immigration over the 2014-16 period. Again the overall impact is of an upward adjustment of 3,500 persons in 2016 to a population of 1,128,100.

Revisions to Estimated International Migration to Birmingham



Implications for Housing Need

ONS has made specific adjustments to its demographic data to address and respond to the issues raised regarding the accuracy of recording of student moves, and in particular emigration of students after they finish their courses. Its revisions however do not point to population growth having been over-estimated in either Coventry or Birmingham.

The revised Mid-Year Population Estimates have fed into the 2016-based Sub-National Population Projections, and Household Projections which are based on these. These have been considered in a separate note.