

Main types of income-related benefits

The **Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)** is available under certain conditions for those who are actively looking for employment and can prove it. There are two main types. The *contribution-based JSA* is provided for 182 days if the jobseeker has paid sufficient National Insurance contributions in the two years prior to the application for the benefit. The income-based JSA is applicable after 182 days of receiving the contribution-based JSA, or to those whose income was under £153 per week over the previous two years. In both cases, the amount received varies according to the income and the age of the beneficiary. In the case of the income-based JSA, other household incomes such as pensions, earnings or savings are taken into account in the eligibility criteria and the amount received. Those who work less than 16 hours a week (a total of 24 hours a week for couples), who have a low income or no income, are pregnant/carers/single parents/unable to work because of sickness or disability receive **Income Support** if their savings are under £16,000. The amount received depends on the income and the age of the beneficiaries. The maximum weekly amount of JSA or Income Support is £73.10 for a single person aged 25 or above and £114.85 for couples aged over 18 (European Commission, 2016; GOV.UK, 2016). The **Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)** is available for those who are ill and disabled. It provides financial support to those who cannot work and need personal help. Depending on the beneficiary's circumstances the allowance goes up to £109.30 per week and a variable premium is possible in case of disability (up to £61.85 a week).

Access to income-related benefits for migrants

Since 2013, access to welfare benefits for EEA nationals is being increasingly restricted. From 2014 onwards, EEA citizens are not entitled to income-based JSA, other childcare-related benefits or housing benefits for the first three months of their stay in the UK. In addition, EEA citizens must meet new eligibility criteria designed to prove that they are "habitually resident", concept that has no fixed legal definition (Sumption, & Allen, 2015). Since January 2014 there are no longer restrictions in access to employment or benefits for all A8 countries with the exception of Croatia (McInnes, 2014). The European Commission confirmed in 2013 that the UK would be referred to the EU Court of Justice, arguing that certain requirements for non-UK EEA citizens are discriminatory (McInnes, 2014).

Non-EEA nationals without an indefinite residence permit are not entitled to a wide range of benefits that include the income-based JSA, Income Support and income-related ESA (McInnes, 2014).

Unemployment rates of foreign-born individuals

Unemployment rates are similar for UK-born and foreign-born individuals but there is a lack of data that distinguishes between UK citizens born outside the UK and non-UK citizens born outside the UK. Migrant women have slightly higher rates of unemployment than UK-born women and foreign-born men (Figure 1) (The Migration Observatory, 2016). Furthermore, nationality is not an eligibility criterion for benefits and therefore there is no systematic registration of the nationality of benefit claimants (McInnes, 2014).

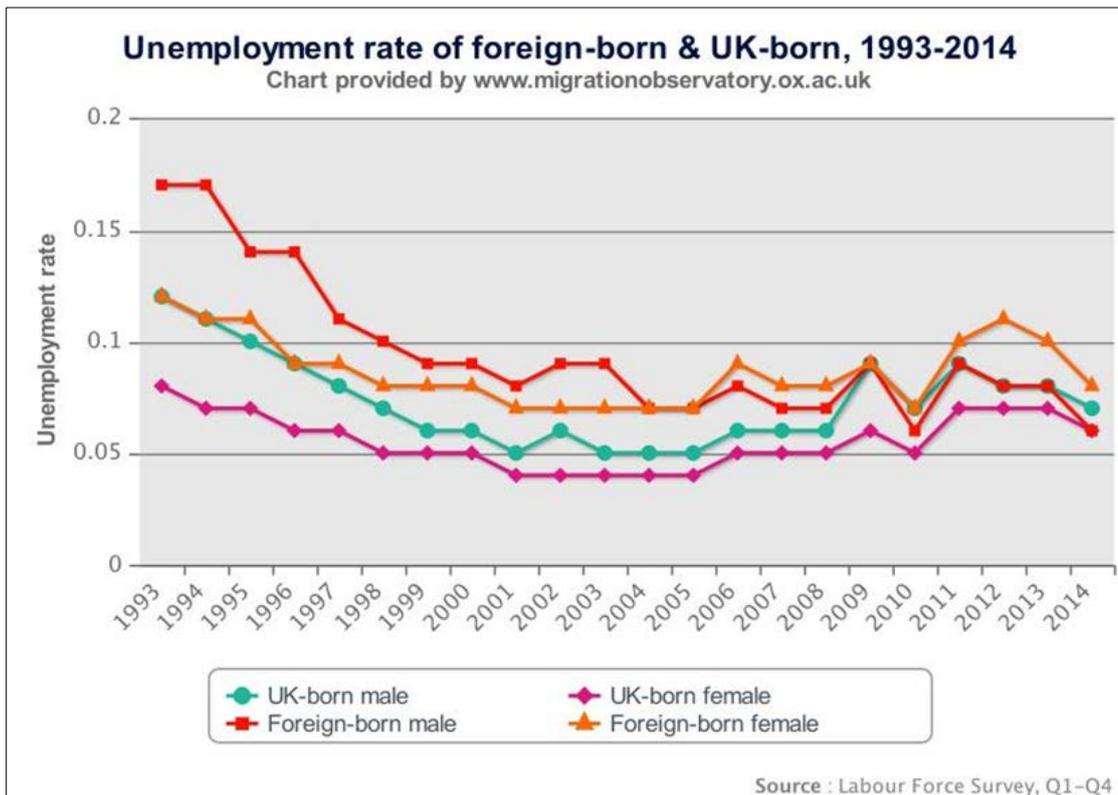
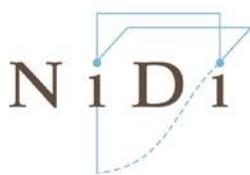


Figure 1. Unemployment rate of foreign-born & UK-born, 1993 – 2014
Source: Labour Force Survey

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