

Statistical bulletin

# Ward level mid-year population estimates (experimental): Mid-2011 (census based)

People living in each electoral ward in England and Wales, annual population changes and age distributions.

Contact:  
Pete Large  
pop.info@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Release date:  
30 May 2013

Next release:  
26 November 2013

## Table of contents

1. [Annual mid-year population estimates for wards, 2011](#)
2. [Summary](#)
3. [Introduction](#)
4. [Methodology](#)
5. [Mid-2011 ward population estimates](#)
6. [Comparison with 2011 Census estimates](#)
7. [Small area population estimates for other UK countries](#)
8. [Publications in 2013](#)
9. [Background notes](#)

# 1. Annual mid-year population estimates for wards, 2011

- Mid-2011 ward population estimates are based on the results of the 2011 Census and are available for the 2011 electoral ward boundaries
- Across England and Wales wards have a mean population size of 6,600
- On average wards in Wales have smaller populations than those in England, with a mean population size of 3,500 compared to 6,900 in England
- The largest wards by population size are city areas in the Midlands and north of England
- Wards with the youngest population age structures are all areas containing universities, in particular the ward with the youngest median age was Heslington in York at 20.2 years
- Ward population estimates are particularly important for use in local government for the planning and monitoring of services, as well as providing detailed information on the population of small local areas for academics and commercial organisations

## 2. Summary

This bulletin presents the 2011 mid-year population estimates for electoral wards in England and Wales. These estimates are based on the results of the 2011 Census and are available for 2011 electoral ward boundaries – the boundaries in place at the reference date of the estimates. Ward estimates are part of a wider suite of small area population estimates.

In general, small area population estimates are used by both central government departments and local authorities for a range of purposes including planning and monitoring of services; as denominators for the calculation of various rates and indicators and as a base for population projections and forecasts. Ward population estimates are of particular interest to local government organisations, academics and commercial organisations.

## 3. Introduction

Mid-year population estimates for 2011 for England and Wales, regions within England and local authorities within England and Wales, based on the results of the 2011 Census, were published on 25 September 2012. The estimates refer to the usually resident population as at 30 June of the reference year and are published annually. In mid-2011 the population of England and Wales was 56,170,900, an increase of 7.3% over the ten years since mid-2001.

### Small area population estimates

Mid-year population estimates for wards form part of the suite of small area population estimates for England and Wales, which are produced annually, usually approximately three to four months after the publication of the national, regional and local authority level estimates. However, these estimates for mid-2011 have been published approximately eight months after the national estimates due to the additional time required to incorporate the results of the 2011 Census.

There are two main types of small area population estimates:

- Super Output Area (SOA) estimates – National Statistics including estimates for middle and lower layer SOAs
  - [Mid-2011 estimates for SOAs](#) were published on 11 April 2013
- Estimates for other geographies – Experimental Statistics including estimates for National Parks, parliamentary constituencies and wards
  - [Mid-2011 estimates for parliamentary constituencies](#) have been published alongside this release
  - Mid-2011 estimates for National Parks are provisionally due to be published in July/August 2013

The mid-2011 ward population estimates, referred to in this bulletin, are based on the 2011 Census, updated to account for population change during the period between Census day (27 March 2011) and the mid-year point (30 June 2011). They are fully consistent with population estimates for SOAs and higher levels of geography including local authorities and the national total for England and Wales.

## 4. Methodology

Small area population estimates for other geographies, including the ward estimates, are produced using Census Output Areas (OAs) as building blocks. Therefore the population of each small area is the sum of the population of the OAs which provide the 'best-fit' to the actual geographic boundaries of the area. This approach is in accordance with the [Geography Policy for National Statistics \(55.9 Kb Pdf\)](#) published in July 2010.

Mid-2011 population estimates for OAs have been produced from the SOA estimates published in April 2013 using an apportionment method based on 2011 Census data. Full descriptions of the methods used to calculate mid-2011 small area population estimates, for both SOAs and other geographies, are available from the ONS website.

For further information on the quality and use of these statistics, please see the [Quality and Methodology Information \(234.9 Kb Pdf\)](#) for Small Area Population Estimates.

## 5. Mid-2011 ward population estimates

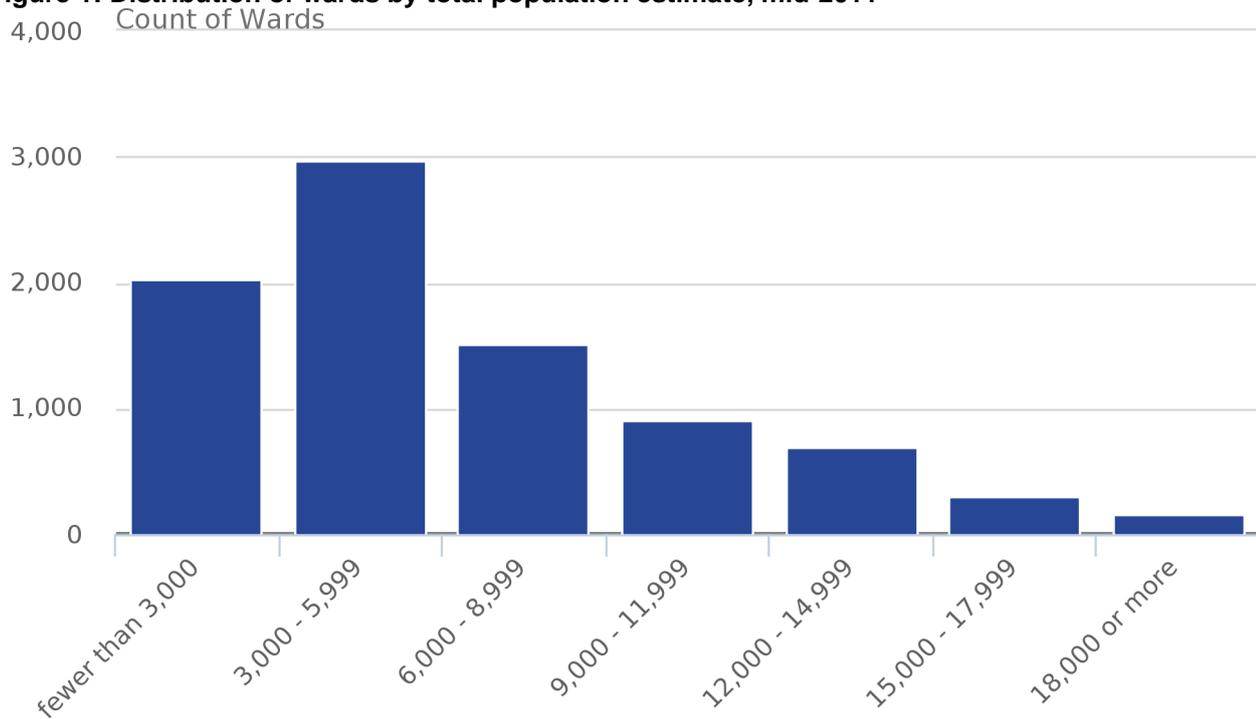
Electoral wards are a key building block of UK administrative geography. They are the spatial units used to elect local government councillors in metropolitan and non-metropolitan districts, unitary authorities and London boroughs in England; and unitary authorities in Wales. In some areas (Wales, and some unitary authorities in England) they are legally termed as 'electoral divisions', however they are frequently referred to as wards and are referenced as such throughout this article. The five parishes of the Isles of Scilly are also treated as electoral wards for statistical purposes.

Electoral wards are subject to annual updates and boundary changes. Mid-2011 population estimates are therefore provided for the 8,588 electoral wards in England and Wales as at 31 December 2011, with the exception of 18 wards which do not meet the minimum population requirements for data confidentiality (40 resident households and 100 resident people in the 2011 Census).

At mid-2011, the mean population of wards in England and Wales was 6,600. However, population sizes vary widely across the country ranging from 140 in St. Martin's ward in the Isles of Scilly to 36,200 in Central ward in Sheffield. On average, wards in England have larger populations than those in Wales with mean populations of 6,900 and 3,500 respectively.

Figure 1 below presents the overall population size distribution of wards in mid-2011. The majority of the wards with the largest populations of 18,000 and over are in cities in the Midlands and north of England, such as Birmingham, Sheffield, Manchester and Leeds. In particular 75% of the very largest wards (with population greater than 24,000) are in Birmingham.

**Figure 1: Distribution of wards by total population estimate, mid-2011**



Source: Office for National Statistics

The majority (82%) of the smallest wards by population, with fewer than 1,000 people, are in the Isles of Scilly, City of London and Gwynedd Unitary Authority in Wales.

## Age distribution

The median age of the population of England and Wales in mid-2011 was 39.5, an increase of 1.6 years since mid-2001.

The median age of wards within England and Wales varies widely between different areas. In mid-2011 the ward with the youngest median age (20.2) was Heslington ward in York, which contains the University of York's Heslington campus. All of the top ten areas, shown in table 1 below, contain universities.

**Table 1: Wards with youngest median age, mid-2011**

Rank	Ward	Local Authority	Median Age
1	Heslington	York	20.2
2	University	Lancaster	20.5
3	Blean Forest	Canterbury	20.5
4	Llanbadarn Fawr-Sulien	Ceredigion	20.6
5	Duryard	Exeter	20.8
6	Wollaton East and Lenton Abbey	Nottingham	20.9

7	Menai (Bangor)	Gwynedd	21.1
8	Loughborough Ashby	Charnwood	21.2
9	Keele	Newcastle-under-Lyme	21.3
10	Holywell	Oxford	21.3

Source: Office for National Statistics

The highest median age in mid-2011 was 69.4 in Highcliffe ward in Christchurch. The top ten wards with the highest median ages, as shown in table 2 below, are located in areas of southern and eastern England which are known for their large populations of people of retirement age.

**Table 2: Wards with oldest median age, mid-2011**

Rank	Ward	Local Authority	Median Age
1	Highcliffe	Christchurch	69.4
2	South Downham	King's Lynn and West Norfolk	69.2
3	Homelands	Tendring	65.4
4	Sutton on Sea North	East Lindsey	63.3
5	St Leonards and St Ives West	East Dorset	63.2
6	Collington	Rother	63.1
7	Haven	Tendring	63.0
8	Barton	New Forest	63.0
9	Sidmouth Town	East Devon	62.9
10	Ferndown Central	East Dorset	62.8

Source: Office for National Statistics

## 6. Comparison with 2011 Census estimates

The mid-2011 census-based population estimates are not directly comparable with the 2011 Census results at ward level for the following reasons:

- The reference point of the two datasets is different. The mid-year estimates refer to 30 June 2011 and the census estimates to 27 March 2011. The mid-year estimates account for any population change that has occurred between these dates
- In order to ensure that the members of the armed forces were enumerated consistently, the 2011 Census was designed so that members of the armed forces were enumerated at their 'permanent or family home' (this is considered to be their usual residence for census purposes). The mid-year estimates definition of usual residence for armed forces is different as it may be either their 'permanent or family home' or the armed forces base, depending on individual circumstances. For the purposes of calculating mid-year population estimates, an adjustment has been applied to the 2011 Census data at Output Area (OA) level to reallocate members of the home armed forces from their 'permanent or family home' to their place of residence at the armed forces base, where these are different

The 2011 Census estimates also provide data for a wider range of population characteristics such as economic activity, ethnicity or religion. Data for 2011 electoral wards can be obtained from either:

- the [Neighbourhood Statistics](#) website (NeSS)
- the [Nomis](#) website

## 7. Small area population estimates for other UK countries

Small Area Population estimates for Scotland and Northern Ireland are produced by National Records of Scotland (NRS) and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) respectively. A paper, [Small Area Population Estimates across the UK](#) which provides a broad description of the different methodologies used to produce the wider set of small area population estimates in each constituent country of the UK, is available on the NISRA website.

Small area population estimates for Scotland are based on data zones and are available from the [NRS website](#). The latest estimates for mid-2011 based on 2001 Census data were published in August 2012.

Population estimates for wards in Northern Ireland are available from the [NISRA website](#). The latest estimates are for mid-2010 and are also based on 2001 Census data.

## 8. Publications in 2013

This list below shows the other small area population estimates products which are planned for publication in 2013. The majority of the dates given below are provisional. Final confirmed dates will be available on the UK National Statistics Publication Hub [release calendar](#) at least four weeks before publication.

- Population estimates for parliamentary constituencies, mid-2011: published alongside this release
- Population estimates for Clinical Commissioning Groups, mid-2011: July 2013
- Population estimates for National Parks, mid-2011: July/August 2013
- Super Output Area (SOA) population estimates, mid-2002 to mid-2010 revised: August/September 2013
- Super Output Area (SOA) population estimates, mid-2002 to mid-2010 revised: August/September 2013
- Small area population estimates for wards, parliamentary constituencies and National Parks, mid-2002 to mid-2010 revised: November/December 2013
- Small area population estimates for wards, parliamentary constituencies and National Parks, mid-2012: November/December 2013

Further research work on small area population is planned to be completed following the publication of the products listed above. This is likely to include:

- Detailed assessment of the difference between 2011 Census SOA population estimates and the estimates for mid-2011 based on the 2001 Census
- Review of the methods used to produce small area population estimates in the light of the results of the 2011 Census

## 9. Background notes

1. [An Overview of Population Statistics](#) is available on the ONS website
2. Published tables include population estimates for wards by five year age/sex groups
3. A report describing the [methodology](#) used to create the ward population estimates is available on the ONS website
4. This is the first release of mid-2011 population estimates for wards in England and Wales. No revisions of this dataset have been made
5. [Mid-2011 population estimates](#) for England and Wales and for local authorities are also available on the ONS website
6. Mid-2011 population estimates for Output Areas are provided as supporting information to this release
7. Next publication: November/December 2013

Issued by:  
Office for National Statistics  
Government Buildings  
Cardiff Road  
Newport  
NP10 8XG

Media contact:  
Tel: Media Relations Office 0845 6041858  
Emergency on-call 07867 906553  
Email: [media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

8. © Crown copyright 2013

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence

To view this licence, go to: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/> or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU Email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

9. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html) or from the Media Relations Office email: [media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)