

Article

Quarterly update on population and migration statistics: November 2025

Latest article on improvements to how we estimate UK population and migration, providing an update on our progress and plans.

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1 . Census 2031 topic consultation

Census 2031 will be a central component of our population statistics system. Building on the success of Census 2021, it will be designed to provide high-quality statistics that meet user needs. It will also provide a strong foundation for meeting future population statistics needs across the decade, using the best available sources.

Our [Census 2031: consultation on content for England and Wales](#) is a public topic consultation gathering evidence about which topics should be included. The consultation was launched on 28 October 2025 and it is scheduled to close on 4 February 2026.

The consultation's primary aim is to support the selection of topics for Census 2031, and to collect evidence to support the development of the census questions and outputs. Additionally, the consultation will inform Office for National Statistics (ONS) activities beyond Census 2031, including prioritising the development of admin-based statistics and the ongoing review of the UK-wide Government Statistical Service (GSS) [harmonised standards for data collection](#). We are working closely with the devolved governments to support coherence across the UK, while meeting the unique needs of each nation.

Alongside this topic consultation, the GSS is also consulting on the [harmonised standard for data collection on ethnicity](#). The purpose of the ethnicity consultation is to gather views on response options that may be required for the new standard. This consultation also closes on 4 February 2026.

By taking part in the topic consultation, participants will shape which topics we include, so that the data collected will support:

- better decisions
- stronger communities
- a clearer picture how people live and work

To find out more information and to complete the topic consultation, [view our Census 2031 topic consultation page on Citizen Space](#).

2 . Population estimates

On 30 July, we published our official [mid-2024 population estimates for England and Wales](#). These estimates were based on our [population estimates methodology](#), which we also used in our previous release. [Alongside our official estimates, we also published admin-based population estimates \(ABPEs\)](#) to allow users to make comparisons and offer feedback.

As part of our ongoing work relating to the Office for Statistics Regulation's (OSR's) requirements, we have contacted stakeholders to understand what work has been done to compare ABPEs with official estimates. We have also asked for their views on their confidence in ABPEs, which we will build into our work plan for the next few months. As part of our ongoing commitment to improve population estimates, we aim to publish a progress update on developments and how we will use this research for our mid-2025 population estimates.

As part of our ongoing commitment to improve population estimates, we aim to publish:

- an updated [action plan](#) to address the requirements detailed in OSR's assessment of ABPEs
- an updated [Assessment article](#), responding to the criteria outlined in our [Criteria for moving to ABPEs as official estimates of population article](#)

The OSR published a [letter on 18 August](#), responding to a [letter from the ONS, published on 30 July](#) regarding ABPEs. The letter recognised the substantial amount of progress that had been made in developing these statistics, as well as areas where more work needs to be done.

The OSR has indicated they will undertake a compliance check to review mid-year population estimates and ABPEs. We expect to hear feedback in early 2026.

3 . International migration

Improved methods for estimating the migration of British nationals and [EU+ nationals](#) will be implemented in our next release of [Long-term international migration estimates to June 2025](#). This will remove any reliance on the International Passenger Survey and improve the information we provide.

On 18 November we will be publishing research articles that explain our new methodology, alongside a release explaining its [impact on overall net migration estimates from 2021 to 2024](#). This will be published ahead of our [release of new long-term international migration data](#) on 27 November, which will cover the period to June 2025.

Since our [International migration research, progress update](#), published in February 2025, we have made considerable progress with research into our methods that use new data sources. The research has been through several steps of independent methods assurance, including the [Methodological Assurance Review Panel: Migration Statistics sub-group](#), and subsequently discussed with the Migration Statistics User Group and the [National Statistician's Advisory Panel on Migration Statistics](#).

We carefully considered the feedback and recommendations from these groups before deciding to implement improvements for November's publications. The feedback from these groups recognised the importance of continuing research into methods, and of communicating the impact of these improvements.

You can hear about these statistics at the [2025 Migration Statistics User Forum](#) on 11 December 2025. This is an all-day forum that brings together producers and users of migration statistics, with presentations from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Home Office, Full Fact, the Resolution Foundation and question and answer sessions.

4 . Population projections

Following user engagement, we are planning the release of 2024-based national population projections (NPPs) in April 2026, and will confirm our plans in the coming months.

We have undertaken a review of potential methods for setting migration assumptions for NPPs, with input from external stakeholders. With the NPPs committee, we are undertaking further quality assurance of the method developed for the migration category variant. We are considering whether the mid-2024 NPPs will use a method of this type to develop the assumptions for the principal projection, and will update using newsletters and future editions of this article series.

We are also aiming to provide an update on our plans for future releases of subnational population projections, based on user feedback and available input data, in late-2025.

5 . Recent developments

- We published feasibility research into using administrative data and Census 2021 data to produce [Veterans statistics](#), in August 2025.
- We published [mid-2024 population estimates for the UK](#) in September 2025.
- Our new [Longitudinal Study \(LS\) dataset](#) now incorporates Census 2021 data, and was released following a launch event in October.
- We published our [2022-based household projections for England](#) in September 2025.
- We have launched the [Census 2031 topic consultation](#) and public engagement programme to foster awareness, encourage inclusive participation and ensure clarity around its scope and objectives.
- The Government Statistical Service (GSS) is consulting on the [ethnicity harmonised standard](#) to gather views on additional tick-box response options, as part of the GSS Harmonisation team's ongoing review.
- We [continue to work with our partners](#) in devolved governments to enable data sharing.
- We have securely onward-shared HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Pay As You Earn Real Time Information (PAYE RTI) data with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA); these data were processed by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for analytical purposes before they were shared, and we also plan to share them with the National Records of Scotland.
- We have published our [Impact of the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic on England and Wales Census 2021](#).
- We have also published our [Population estimates by output areas, electoral, health and other geographies bulletin](#) for England and Wales between 2023 and 2024, including revised mid-2022 estimates.

6 . Future developments

Autumn 2025

- We will publish our revised long-term international migration (LTIM) series alongside research updates on 18 November.
- We will release LTIM estimates for year ending (YE) June 2025 on 27 November; these will include mid-2025 provisional estimates for the UK.
- We are continuing research into estimating the number of temporary international migrants, who come to the UK for less than 12 months, using Home Office Borders and Immigration data.
- We will release 2023 data on marriages and civil partnerships in England and Wales later in November.

Winter 2025 to 2026

- We aim to publish updated research on admin-based household estimates (ABHEs) for local authorities (LAs) in England and Wales in December 2025.
- Our [National life tables, life expectancy in the UK: 2022 to 2024 bulletin](#) will be published on 10 December.
- The [2025 Migration Statistics User Forum](#) will take place on 11 December 2025; this is an all-day forum which brings together producers and users of migration statistics, with presentations from Full Fact and the Resolution Foundation, as well as question and answer sessions.
- The Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) will publish its findings from the population estimates compliance check.
- Update on our plans for making greater use of admin data to inform mid-year population estimates.
- We will communicate plans for the future of subnational population projections.
- We are planning to run a data collection exercise for 2025 electoral statistics in England and Wales, with a view to producing and publishing electoral statistics in 2026.
- We will publish LA case studies, which will analyse the performance of the ABPEs in a sample of areas discussed in our [July 2025 release](#).
- We will publish [Admin-based population estimates of internal migration between local authorities in England and Wales](#).
- We are engaging with users to better understand the need for data on living arrangements and the wider data landscape; we will consider whether to focus on improvements to our existing Admin-based living arrangements dataset or whether new design options could better meet user needs.
- We intend to publish a Census 2031 England and Wales design update.
- We will close the Census 2031 topic and harmonisation consultations and publish details of the evaluation criteria we will use to finalise the topics for the census.
- We are exploring the possibility of establishing an internal migration working group to support the development of an improved methodology, as set out in our [Plan for economic statistics](#); please [email us](#) if you would like to be involved in this project.
- We will engage on the uses of our [Long-term international student migration, provisional estimates dataset](#) to inform plans for analysis on the reason for migration.

Spring 2026

- We aim to publish our 2024-based national population projections in April, and we will update users on our plans for publication of future national and subnational population projections.
- We will update users on our research and development of population statistics, including plans for mid-2025.
- On 21 May, we will publish long-term international migration statistics to December 2025; we anticipate these estimates to be based on methodology consistent with our [November 2025 release](#).
- We plan to publish a research update on our new methods for population estimates at the Lower layer Super Output Area level, to enable users of small-area population estimates to help determine our approach to population estimates for all the geographies in our subnational release.
- We will update our [Publication schedule for admin-based population and migration statistics](#) in light of our decision not to publish LA-level provisional estimates for mid-2025.

Summer 2026

- We will publish our mid-2025 population estimates for England and Wales.
- We will publish our full response to the [Census 2031 topic consultation](#) through topic reports, which will provide an updated initial view on Census 2031 content for England and Wales.

7 . Provide feedback

Please [sign up to our monthly newsletter](#) for updates on our publications and events, including our planned new programme of webinars on population and migration statistics.

A new edition of this article series is published quarterly, as our development work and analysis progress. In line with best practice in the continuous improvement of statistical outputs, this article series supports our ongoing commitment to engage with users as we develop our outputs. We will continue to engage with our users in a range of ways. For example, bilateral conversations, user engagement groups, and conferences.

User feedback plays an essential part in our ability to improve our statistics. Please email pop.info@ons.gov.uk with any questions or feedback.

8 . Cite this article

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