Statistical bulletin

Population estimates by output areas, electoral, health and other geographies, England and Wales: mid-2021 and mid-2022

National population estimates broken down into small geographical areas (Super Output Areas, health geographies, electoral wards, Parliamentary constituencies and National Parks).

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1 . Main points

- The population of England and Wales at mid-year 2022 was estimated to be 60.2 million, an increase of around 578,000 (1.0%) since mid-year 2021.

- This bulletin provides population estimates for statistical, health, and electoral geographies that are consistent with our [Population estimates for England and Wales bulletin](#), published in November 2023.

- In almost two-thirds (66.5%) of the 7,264 Middle layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs) in England and Wales, we estimate that the population increased in the year to mid-2022.

2 . Super Output Area population estimates

Super Output Areas (SOAs) are statistical geographies designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics. They are built from groups of census Output Areas, are of a consistent population size, and are not subject to boundary changes between censuses.

The reference period, mid-2021 to mid-2022, coincides with the year immediately following the ending of coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic restrictions. In this period, international migration to the UK reached very high levels, detailed in our Long-term international migration bulletin. Of the 7,264 Middle layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs) in England and Wales we estimate that, in the year to mid-2022, the population increased in 4,830 (66.5%), decreased in 2,402 (33.1%) and was unchanged in 32 (0.4%). In most MSOAs, the population change between 2021 and 2022 was relatively small, with 81.1% (5,893) changing by plus or minus 2% or less; 96.4% (6,999) had population change of plus or minus 5% or less.

Table 1 shows the 10 MSOAs that are estimated to have had the greatest population increase between 2021 and 2022. All but one of these areas, Brent 035, are in local authorities that had faster population increases than England and Wales as a whole. For the majority of these areas, the increase in population coincides with increases in the number of dwellings, while in some others, a likely cause is an increase in the student population in the post-pandemic period.

Four of the 10 fastest growing MSOAs form an almost contiguous area in central Manchester and Salford. At a local authority level, both Manchester and Salford (3.3% and 2.7%, respectively) grew much faster than England and Wales as whole (1.0%). A second group of three MSOAs are in London but are spread across three separate local authorities. The other three MSOAs in the top 10 are located in the city centres of Leeds, Coventry and Birmingham and are areas with universities and accommodation for university students.

Table 1: Middle layer Super Output Areas (MSOA) with the highest percentage population increases between mid-2021 and mid-2022

	Population mid-2021	Population mid-2022	% Change	Change	% change for local authority
Manchester 060	6,200	8,200	31.1%	1,900	3.3%
Brent 035	7,400	9,500	28.3%	2,100	0.6%
City of London 001	8,700	10,800	24.8%	2,200	24.8%
Manchester 057	7,700	9,500	23.4%	1,800	3.3%
Manchester 055	9,800	12,100	23.0%	2,300	3.3%
Leeds 111	9,200	11,300	22.9%	2,100	1.6%
Coventry 031	10,900	13,300	22.0%	2,400	3.3%
Camden 028	6,000	7,300	21.9%	1,300	3.4%
Salford 033	7,900	9,600	21.0%	1,700	2.7%
Birmingham 135	6,000	7,200	20.6%	1,200	1.3%

Source: Population estimates from the Office for National Statistics

Notes

1. Population estimates have been rounded to the nearest 100. Population change has been calculated on unrounded estimates.

Table 2 shows the 10 areas that are estimated to have had the largest decreases in population between mid-2021 and mid-2022. In eight of these MSOAs, the population change between 2021 and 2022 is at least partly related to changes in the number of people resident in military bases or prisons. Islington 014 and Kensington and Chelsea 002 are the two exceptions. Four of the MSOAs are in local authorities which had slower population growth between 2021 and 2022 than England and Wales as a whole.

Table 2: Middle layer Super Output Areas (MSOA) with the highest percentage population decreases between mid-2021 and mid-2022

	Population mid-2021	Population mid-2022	% change	change	% change for local authority
Liverpool 005	8,900	8,500	-4.9%	-400	2.4%
West Northamptonshire 004	9,100	8,700	-4.8%	-400	0.5%
Guildford 002	8,100	7,700	-4.7%	-400	1.2%
Dorset 047	6,200	5,900	-4.4%	-300	0.5%
Nottingham 007	8,000	7,700	-4.1%	-300	2.7%
Peterborough 010	10,100	9,700	-3.8%	-400	0.6%
Greenwich 002	14,100	13,500	-3.7%	-500	0.5%
Medway 024	7,400	7,100	-3.7%	-300	1.0%
Islington 014	10,500	10,100	-3.6%	-400	1.5%
Kensington and Chelsea 002	6,000	5,800	-3.4%	-200	1.3%

Source: Population estimates from the Office for National Statistics

Notes

1. Population estimates have been rounded to the nearest 100. Population change has been calculated on unrounded estimates.

3 . Population estimates releases in 2024 and beyond

On 26 March, we will publish mid-2022 population estimates at a local authority level for the whole of the UK. This will be followed by mid-2023 local authority population estimates for England and Wales, which we plan to publish in June or July 2024.

We also plan to publish a revised backseries of estimates for output areas, electoral, health and other geographies population estimates for 2011 to 2020, consistent with Census 2021, between April and June 2024. This series of estimates will use Census 2021 geographies (2011 Census geographies will no longer be provided) and aggregations on a best fit basis to health, electoral and other geographies.

We are transforming the population and migration statistics system for England and Wales, making use of the best available data sources with a focus on the use of administrative data (see our Overview of the transformation for more information). This transformation also covers our small area population estimates. Our latest thinking on how these might be produced in the future was published in Small Area Population Estimates in the transformed population estimation system: methods development in December 2023.

For more information on our future plans for improving migration statistics, see our article, What is coming up on population and migration statistics. As part of this work, we intend for future publications of official population estimates to be based on our admin-based population estimates, using the Dynamic Population Model. The National Statistician will make a recommendation for the future of population statistics in 2024.

4 . Population estimates by output areas, electoral, health and other geographies data

[Lower layer Super Output Area population estimates (supporting information)](#)
Dataset | Released 19 March 2024
Mid-year (30 June) estimates of the usual resident population for Lower layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England and Wales by single year of age and sex.

[Lower layer Super Output Area population estimates (Accredited official statistics)](#)
Dataset | Released 19 March 2024
Mid-year (30 June) estimates of the usual resident population for Lower layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England and Wales by broad age groups and sex.

[Middle layer Super Output Area population estimates (supporting information)](#)
Dataset | Released 19 March 2024
Mid-year (30 June) estimates of the usual resident population for Middle layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs) in England and Wales by single year of age and sex.

[Middle layer Super Output Area population estimates (Accredited official statistics)](#)
Dataset | Released 19 March 2024
Mid-year (30 June) estimates of the usual resident population for Middle layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs) in England and Wales by quinary age groups and sex.

[Health geographies population estimates (Accredited official statistics)](#)
Dataset | Released 19 March 2024
Mid-year (30 June) estimates of the usual resident population for clinical commissioning groups and Integrated Care Boards in England, Local Health Boards for Wales, by single year of age and sex.

View all data used in this statistical bulletin on the [Related data](#) page.

5 . Glossary

Population estimates

Population estimates provide statistics on the size and age structure of the population in the UK at country, region, county, and local authority level. They are the official source of estimated population size in between censuses and inform a wide range of official statistics.

Mid-year

Mid-year refers to 30 June of any given year.

Usually resident population

These data estimate the "usually resident population". This is the standard United Nations (UN) definition and includes only people who reside in a country for 12 months or more, making them usually resident in that country. As such, visitors and short-term migrants are excluded.

6 . Measuring the data

There are two broad types of small area population estimates, both of which are included in this release.

The main products are the estimates for Super Output Areas (SOAs), which are based on Census 2021 and rolled forward annually using a ratio change methodology. This approach uses the change in the population recorded in the Personal Demographics Service (based on GP registrations) as an indicator of the change in the true population. Estimates for Lower layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) by broad ages and Middle layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs) by five-year age groups hold accredited official statistics status. Estimates at greater levels of disaggregation, for example by single year of age, are provided as supporting information only. More information can be found in our Small Area Population Estimates: Summary of methodology review and research update.

The remainder of the small area population estimates products relate to a range of different geographic areas and are derived directly from the SOA figures. First, estimates for LSOAs are broken down to Output Area (OA) level using an apportionment approach. These OA estimates are then aggregated to produce estimates for electoral wards and Westminster Parliamentary constituencies on a best-fit basis. Estimates for National Parks are also calculated from the OA-level data. Electoral wards, Westminster Parliamentary constituencies and National Parks are official statistics in development. Estimates for health geographies are aggregated directly from LSOAs and hold accredited official statistics status.

This bulletin has described estimates for MSOAs. This data, along with estimates for output areas and geography lookups from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Open Geography Portal enable additional geographic breakdowns to be produced.

Nomis

Population estimates for mid-2021 to mid-2022, as covered by this release, are also available through Nomis. Nomis holds additional geographic breakdowns not published on the ONS website, such as by major towns and cities and by built-up areas.

7 . Strengths and limitations

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 and as denominators for the calculation of various rates and indicators.

The mid-2021 and mid-2022 small area population estimates covered by this bulletin are fully consistent with the population, including local authorities, regions, and the national total for England and Wales. A full description of the methods used to calculate all small area population estimates is available in our methodology note.

Mid-2012 to mid-2020 estimates for output areas, electoral, health and other geographies, have not yet been rebased in line with Census 2021, and are inconsistent with the mid-2021 and mid-2022 estimates described in this bulletin. We plan to release a rebased backseries of estimates for mid-2012 to mid-2020 between April and June 2024.

In some local authorities, the number of people included on the Personal Demographics Service in 2022 has increased or decreased in a large number of LSOAs and MSOAs compared with 2021 data. This may be because of changes in administrative practices or may reflect genuine population change. The process of constraining LSOA and MSOA estimates to previously published local authority population estimates means that this pattern is not automatically reflected in the mid-year estimates.

All population estimates are subject to statistical uncertainty, and this is generally highest for estimates of small areas, areas with high levels of population churn and at the end of the inter-census period.

This bulletin covers mid-2021 to mid-2022, which coincides with the year immediately following the ending of coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic restrictions and during which international migration to the UK reached very high levels.

National Parks

We are unable to provide mid-2022 estimates for National Parks at present as these require different data and methods. These will be released later in 2024.

8 . Related links

Population Estimates for Small Areas, Northern Ireland
Web page | Updated regularly
Population estimates for small areas in Northern Ireland produced by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Regency Agency (NISRA).

Small Area Population Estimates, Scotland
Web page | Updated regularly
Population estimates for small areas in Scotland produced by National Records of Scotland (NRS).

Rural population and migration statistics, England
Web page | Updated 28 October 2021
Population and migration statistics for rural and urban areas in England produced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

9 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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