

Statistical bulletin

Household projections for England: 2018-based

Indication of the future number of households in England and its regions and local authorities. Used for planning in areas such as housing and social care.

Contact:
Population and Household
Projections team
pop.info@ons.gov.uk
+44 (0) 1329 444661

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Next release:
April to May 2025

Notice

24 March 2021

We have moved the 2016-based [household projections totals](#), [household projections by type](#) and [variant household projections](#) releases because of a problem linking between publications.

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1 . Main points

- The number of households in England is projected to increase by 1.6 million (7.1%) over the next 10 years, from 23.2 million in 2018 to 24.8 million in 2028; this level of growth is very similar to the 2016-based projections.
- Growth in the number of households is fastest where the household reference person (HRP) is of older age; 64% of the total growth in households is accounted for by households where the HRP is aged 75 years or over.
- The highest regional rate of growth in households is projected to take place in the South West, while the North East is projected to have the slowest rate.
- 95% of the projected increase in households by 2028 is attributable to one-person and multiple adult households without dependent children.
- The number of people aged 75 years and over living on their own is projected to increase by 461,000 in the 10 years to 2028.

Household projections are not a prediction or forecast of how many houses should be built in the future. Instead, they show how many additional households would form if assumptions based on previous demographic trends in population growth and household formation were to be realised. Projections do not factor in the effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) or attempt to predict the impact of political circumstances.

Statistician's comment

“The latest household projections show a continued rise in the number of households in England, at a level closely in line with what was previously projected. There continues to be much variation across age groups, regions and household types. We project the majority of household growth over the next 10 years will be because of an increase in older households without dependent children, particularly those where the household reference person is aged 75 years and over. This shows the potential impact of an ageing population on future household formation.”

Andrew Nash, Population and Household Projections, Office for National Statistics

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2 . Change in number of households

Total number of households is projected to increase 7.1% by 2028

Projected growth in households is very similar to that in the 2016-based projections. Between 2018 and 2028, the number of households in England is projected to grow from 23.2 million to 24.8 million, an increase of 7.1% (1.6 million). This equates to an average of 164,000 additional households per year. For the same period in the 2016-based projections, we projected an average of 165,000 additional households per year.

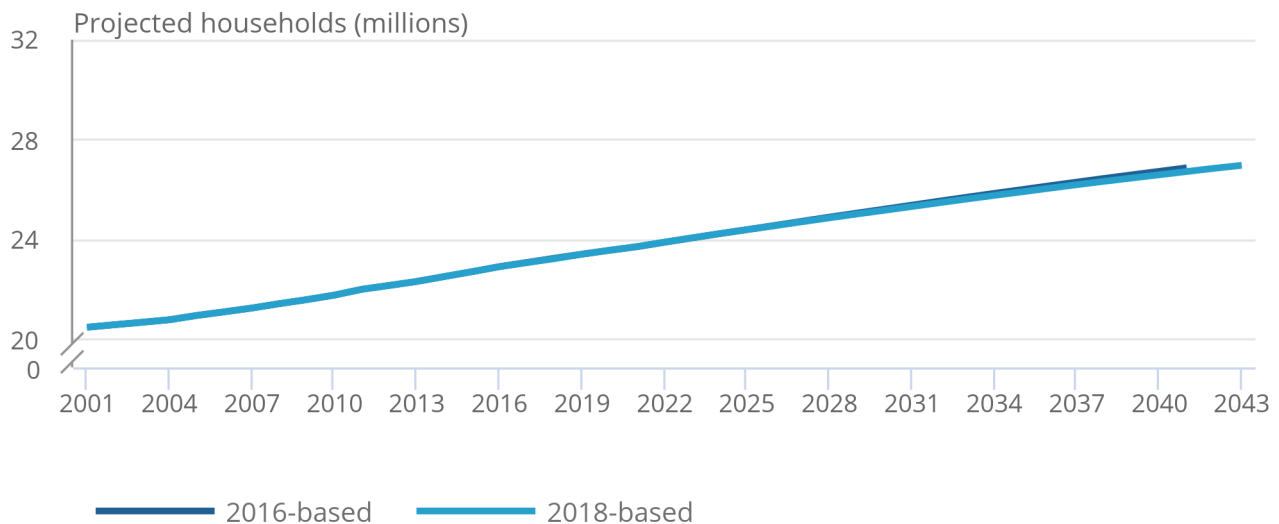
Over the entire 25-year projection period, the number of households is projected to increase by 16.2% to 27.0 million in 2043. Again, this is broadly similar to the level of growth in the 2016-based projections (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Projected growth in the number of households is broadly similar to the 2016-based projections

Projected number of households, 2016-based and 2018-based household projections, England, 2001 to 2043

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Projected number of households, 2016-based and 2018-based household projections, England, 2001 to 2043



Source: Office for National Statistics - Household Projections

3 . Change by age of household reference person (HRP)

Overall growth is driven by an increase in the number of older households

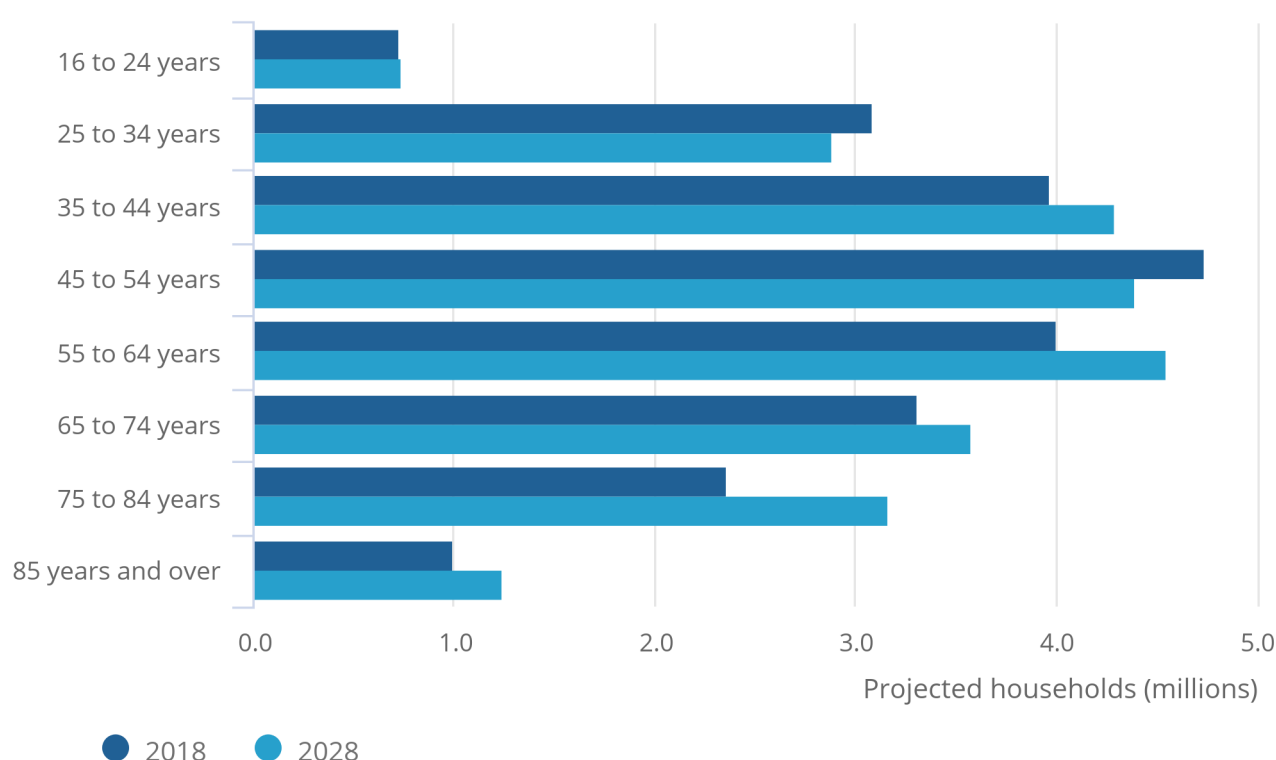
For the 2018-based household projections, the household reference person (HRP) is defined as the eldest economically active person in the household, or the eldest inactive person if there is no economically active person. The number of households where the HRP is aged 55 years or over is projected to increase by 17.5% in the 10 years to 2028, while there are projected to be 1.8% fewer households with an HRP aged under 55 years.

Figure 2: The largest projected growth in the number of households occurs at older ages

Projected households by age of household reference person (HRP), England, 2018 and 2028

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Projected households by age of household reference person (HRP), England, 2018 and 2028



Source: Office for National Statistics - Household Projections

Figure 2 and Table 1 show that the largest projected percentage growth in households in the 10 years to 2028 occurs at the oldest ages. The number of households where the HRP is aged 75 to 84 years is projected to increase by 34.5%, reaching almost 3.2 million by 2028. Households with HRPs aged 85 years and over are also projected to increase markedly over the same period, growing by 24.1%. Overall, households with an HRP aged 75 years or over account for 64.2% of the total growth in households between 2018 and 2028.

These age patterns substantially result from population change in the 2018-based subnational population projections. The projected increase in households where the HRP is of older age strongly reflects an ageing population; between 2018 and 2028, the number of people aged 75 to 84 years in England is projected to increase by 33.9%, and aged 85 years and over by 22.8%.

Additionally, it is evident that a decreasing population for certain age groups translates into fewer projected households; households with an HRP aged 25 to 34 years are projected to fall by 6.5% in the 10 years to 2028, reflecting the projected 5.9% fall in population for this age group over the same period.

Table 1: Projected households by age of household reference person, England, 2018 to 2028

Age of HRP	Mid-2018	Mid-2028	Total change 2018 to 2028	Average annual change 2018 to 2028	Percentage change 2018 to 2028
16 to 24 years	732,000	735,000	3,000	300	0.4
25 to 34 years	3,082,000	2,882,000	-200,000	-20,000	-6.5
35 to 44 years	3,974,000	4,300,000	326,000	32,600	8.2
45 to 54 years	4,747,000	4,395,000	-352,000	-35,200	-7.4
55 to 64 years	4,002,000	4,547,000	545,000	54,500	13.6
65 to 74 years	3,311,000	3,576,000	265,000	26,500	8.0
75 to 84 years	2,355,000	3,168,000	813,000	81,300	34.5
85 years and over	1,000,000	1,241,000	241,000	24,100	24.1

Source: Office for National Statistics - Household Projections

Notes

1. Figures may not sum because of rounding.
2. Number of households for mid-2018 and mid-2028 are rounded to the nearest thousand.

4 . Change by region and local authority

Number of households is projected to grow fastest in the South West

The number of households is projected to grow in every region in England by 2028. The number of households in the South West is projected to increase by 9.0% between 2018 and 2028, closely followed by the East Midlands, where growth is projected to be 8.7%.

Household growth in the north of England is projected to take place at a slower rate than the rest of the country. The three slowest growing regions are located in the north; the North East is projected to have the lowest growth, with the number of households increasing by 4.3% between 2018 and 2028.

Table 2: Projected households for English regions, 2018 to 2028

	Mid-2018	Mid-2028	Percentage change 2018 to 2028
South West	2,399,000	2,615,000	9.0
East Midlands	2,002,000	2,177,000	8.7
London	3,495,000	3,769,000	7.8
West Midlands	2,403,000	2,588,000	7.7
East of England	2,560,000	2,743,000	7.2
South East	3,754,000	4,011,000	6.9
North West	3,121,000	3,297,000	5.7
Yorkshire and The Humber	2,306,000	2,430,000	5.4
North East	1,165,000	1,215,000	4.3
England	23,204,000	24,844,000	7.1

Source: Office for National Statistics – Household Projections

Notes

1. Figures may not sum because of rounding.
2. Number of households for mid-2018 and mid-2028 are rounded to the nearest thousand

At local authority level, numbers of households are projected to grow in all but five of the 326 local authorities in the 10 years to 2028. The fastest growing local authorities are not concentrated in a particular region; this differs from the 2016-based projections in which many of the fastest growing local authorities were in London, when compared over the same period. This also reflects the shift away from London as the region with the fastest population growth.

Figure 3 is an interactive tool that illustrates how the number of households in each local authority in England is projected to change in the 10 years to 2028. By choosing a local authority, you will see the total and percentage change in the number of households, alongside the projected number of households in 2018 and 2028.

Figure 3: Projected percentage change in number of households for local authorities in England, 2018 to 2028

5 . Household type projections

Number of households is projected to grow because of increases in older households without children

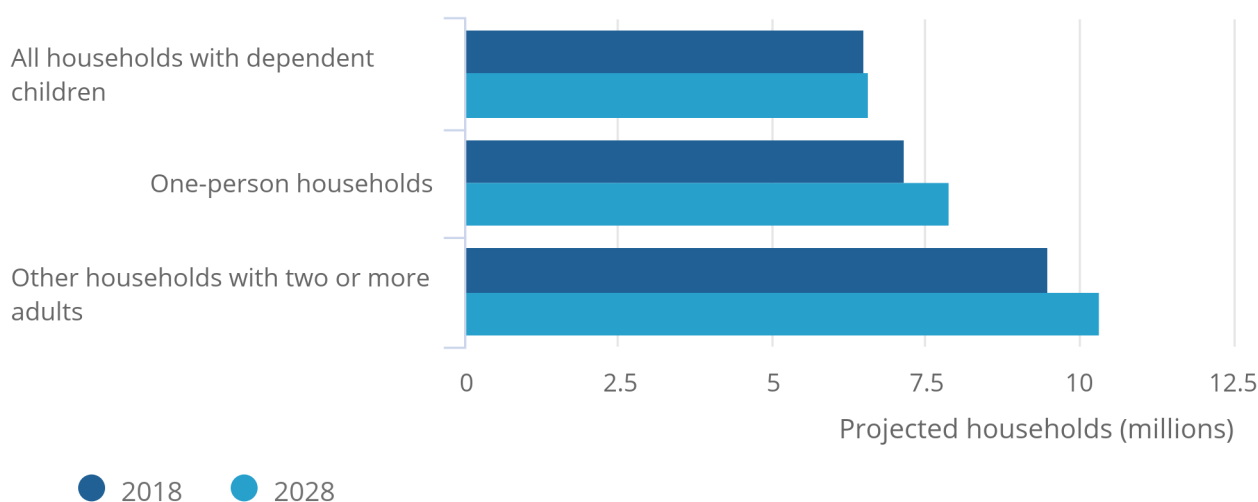
Most of the projected growth in households between 2018 and 2028 will come from one-person and multiple adult households without dependent children (referred to as “other households with two or more adults”). The number of households with dependent children will only increase by approximately 80,000 (1.2%), while one-person households and other households with two or more adults will increase by 727,000 (10.1%) and 833,000 (8.8%) respectively (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Households without dependent children are projected to drive overall growth

Projected number of households by household type, England, 2018 and 2028

Figure 4: Households without dependent children are projected to drive overall growth

Projected number of households by household type, England, 2018 and 2028



Source: Office for National Statistics - Household Projections

In 2018, 28.0% of all households were projected to have dependent children. Because of slower growth compared with other household types, this is projected to fall to 26.5% in 2028. Among households with dependent children, 88.4% of the projected 80,000 additional households over the next 10 years will be households with just one dependent child; there is very little growth in the number of households with more than one dependent child.

The growth in the number of one-person households and other households with two or more adults is driven by increases at older ages (Figure 5). The largest projected growth for one-person households and other households with two or more adults in the 10 years to 2028 is where the household reference person (HRP) is aged 75 to 84 years; 29.5% and 39.1% respectively.

For households with an HRP aged under 55 years, increases in numbers of these two household types between 2018 and 2028 for some age groups are offset by decreases in others. This is particularly marked for other households with two or more adults where the HRP is aged 45 to 54 years, which are projected to fall by around 195,000 by 2028.

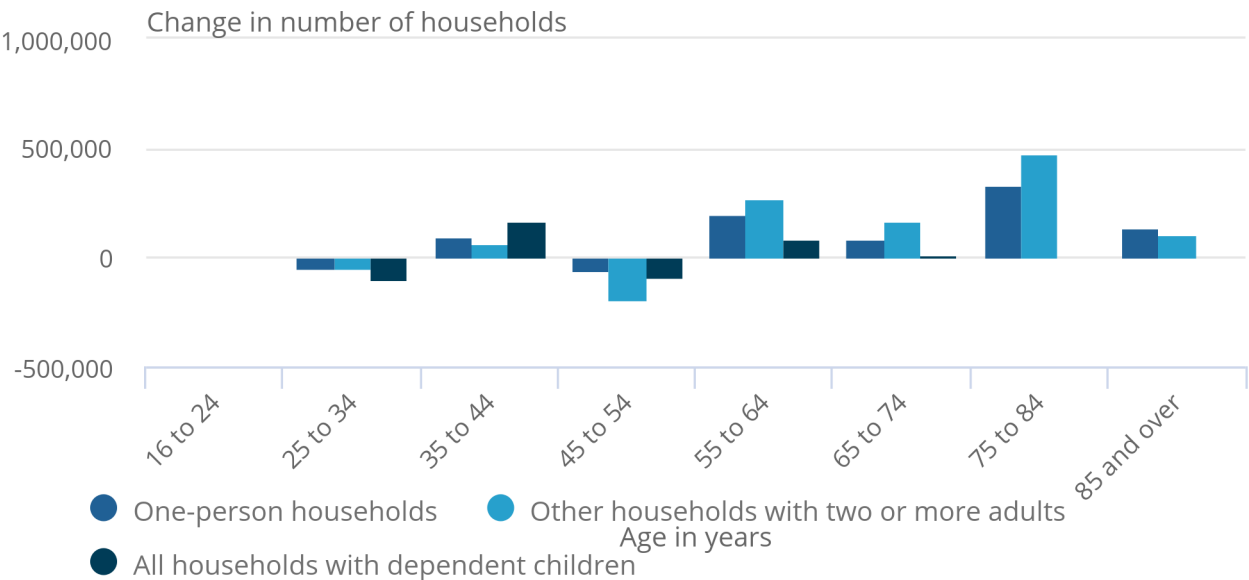
Figure 5 also shows that while overall growth in the number of households with dependent children is small, the change varies widely between age groups.

Figure 5: One-person households and other households with two or more adults are projected to grow fastest where the household reference person (HRP) is aged 75 to 84 years

Projected change in number of households by household type and age of household reference person (HRP) between 2018 and 2028, England

Figure 5: One-person households and other households with two or more adults are projected to grow fastest where the household reference person (HRP) is aged 75 to 84 years

Projected change in number of households by household type and age of household reference person (HRP) between 2018 and 2028, England



Source: Office for National Statistics - Household Projections

Figure 6 is an interactive tool that illustrates how the number of households in each local authority in England is projected to change over the next 10 years, for each household type. By choosing a local authority, you will see the percentage change in the number of households for each household type between 2018 and 2028, alongside a summary table of the number of each household type in 2028.

Figure 6: Projected change in number of households for local authorities in England by household type, 2018 to 2028

6 . Variant household projections

All statistics in this bulletin are from our main (principal) household projection. However, we have also published a range of variant projections. These are:

- a high international migration variant
- a low international migration variant
- an alternative internal migration variant
- a 10-year migration variant
- a projected household representative rates (HRR) variant, in which the HRR is projected through to 2043, rather than being held constant from 2022 as in the principal projection; this allows us to see the potential effect on household formation if the recent trends we have observed continue into the future

These variants provide an indication of the future number of households in England under a range of alternative assumptions. Detailed data for each variant are published in the data tables. Variant projections can also be found in our [Household Projections Analysis tool](#). The tool enables users to analyse the principal and variant household projections at local authority level.

7 . Household projections for other countries in the UK

Scotland

National Records of Scotland (NRS) publishes household projections every two years. The 2018-based household projections are currently scheduled for publication in September 2020. These will be based on the [2018-based subnational population projections for Scotland](#), which were released on 24 March 2020.

Wales

Household projections for Wales are published by the Welsh Government approximately every three years. In February 2020, Wales published its 2018-based subnational population and household projections. However, because of an error identified in the 2018-based national population projections for Wales, the Chief Statistician for Wales made the decision to withdraw the 2018-based household projections. Corrected 2018-based household projections for Wales are scheduled for publication in Summer 2020.

The latest available projections are the [2014-based household projections](#), which were published on 23 March 2017.

Northern Ireland

Household projections for Northern Ireland are produced by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). Their household projections are commissioned outputs, and so do not automatically follow releases of population projections.

The latest projections available are the [2016-based household projections](#), published on 6 December 2018.

8 . Household projections data

[Household projections for England: detailed data for modelling and analysis](#) Datasets | Released 29 June 2020 A range of datasets containing all the 2018-based household projections data. This includes summaries and detailed data, as well as a household projections analysis tool for more detailed analysis, and supporting documentation to help you understand how the household projections are produced.

[Household projections for England](#) Dataset | Released 29 June 2020 Household projections for England, by region and local authority, mid-2018 to mid-2043. Formerly referred to as live tables on household projections.

9 . Glossary

Dependent child

Any person aged 0 to 15 years living in a household, or a person aged 16 to 18 years in full-time education and living in a family with their parent(s) or grandparent(s). It does not include any people aged 16 to 18 years who have a spouse, partner or child living in the household. References in this article to “child” or “children” should be assumed to refer to dependent children.

Household

The household projections are based on the census [definition of a household](#), which in 2011 was: “one person living alone, or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking facilities and share a living room or sitting room or dining area.”

This includes sheltered accommodation units in an establishment where 50% or more have their own kitchens (irrespective of whether there are other communal facilities) and all people living in caravans on any type of site that is their usual residence. This will include anyone who has no other usual residence elsewhere in the UK.

A household must contain at least one person whose place of usual residence is at the address. A group of short-term residents living together is not classified as a household, and neither is a group of people at an address where only visitors are staying.

Household population

The household population is the difference between the total usual resident population and the usual resident population living in communal establishments.

Household reference person (HRP)

The HRP is a person chosen for statistical reasons by virtue of economic activity, age and/or sex as the representative of a household. The 2018-based household projections define the HRP as the eldest economically active person in the household, then the eldest inactive person if there was no economically active person.

Household projections prior to the 2016-based set defined the HRP as the eldest male within the household, then the eldest female if there was no male. The full explanation of the current HRP definition can be found on [page 23 of the 2011 Census Glossary](#).

Household representative rate (HRR)

The HRR is the proportion of people in a particular demographic group (for the 2018-based household projections this is based on geography, age group and sex) who were the HRP. The value of the HRR will be between zero and one.

Household type

Household types classify each household by the number of adults and dependent children living within it and the nature of those relationships.

Usual resident population

The usual resident population includes people who reside, or intend to reside, in the country for at least 12 months, whatever their nationality.

10 . Measuring the data

The 2018-based household projections provide statistics on the potential future number of households in England at region, county and local authority level up to 2043. They show the household numbers that would result if the assumptions based in previous demographic trends in population and household formation were to be realised in practice. They are used as a common framework for informing local-level policy and planning as they are produced in a consistent way. Trends in household projections are a result of trends in household formation between the census years 2001 and 2011, and population change indicated by the [subnational population projections](#). This publication supersedes the 2016-based household projections.

The projections are calculated using a two-stage process. The first stage takes the mid-2018 population estimates and subnational population projections by quinary age group and sex and applies an adjustment to remove those living in communal establishments (for example, prisons, care homes) using census data. These populations are then projected forward and are multiplied by household representative rates (HRR) to produce projected numbers of households. Totals for the regions are then constrained to the England total, with figures for local authorities constrained to the relevant regional totals.

The second stage projects households by household types using headship rates, which are then constrained to the totals calculated in the first stage. More detail on this methodology is available in the [2018-based methodology report](#).

In these projections we have incorporated two small changes: we constrained the household population to both regions and England, whereas it previously was not constrained, and we applied a small adjustment to males aged 20 to 24 years in Richmondshire – more details can be found in the household projections [Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\) report](#). The QMI report helps users to understand the strengths and limitations of the data, appropriate uses, and how the data were created. It will also help users to reduce the risk of misusing the data.

Proposed timing of next projections

We usually publish household projections every two years. However, we are currently proposing not to produce 2020-based household projections, which would theoretically be published in spring 2022. This is because the first 2021 Census results are also expected in spring 2022; we therefore propose that the next round of household projections will be based on 2021, enabling them to use the updated base population that the 2021 Census results will offer, and also a revised back-series of earlier years of input data.

At this stage, this is not a definitive policy and we cannot be certain of exact timings. Factors that will affect our plans include how different the 2021 Census results are from the current population estimates and our evaluation of the causes of any differences. However, we aim to produce national population projections using a mid-2021 population base by around the end of 2022; subnational population projections and the household projections would then follow approximately six months later.

We would welcome any feedback on this proposed approach – please let us know your thoughts by emailing pop.info@ons.gov.uk.

Further updates on the timing of future projections will be communicated in our quarterly Migration and Population Statistics Newsletter. To sign up to this, please contact us at pop.info@ons.gov.uk.

Transformation of population statistics

It is our mission to provide the best insights on population and migration using a range of new and existing data sources to meet the needs of our users. Our ambition is to deliver a fully transformed system by 2023, making regular improvements to our statistics along the way as more administrative data become available. We will rigorously quality assure new methods and share the impact of any changes made. The [Transformation of the population and migration statistics system: overview](#) gives more information on this work. The resulting improvements will also be incorporated into future sets of household and population projections.

11 . Strengths and limitations

Household projections provide users with valuable insight into the changing patterns of household formation in England. They are produced using the same methods for all local authorities in England, so that data for one local authority are comparable with other local authorities, within a set of projections.

Since projections are produced in a consistent way, they can be used as a common framework for informing local-level policy and planning; local areas are advised to supplement them with any local information they have.

The assumptions used in the household projections are based on past trends. However, demographic behaviour is inherently uncertain, so projections become increasingly uncertain the further they are carried forward. This is particularly so for smaller geographical areas and detailed age, sex and household type breakdowns. Changes in factors such as fertility, housing affordability and availability, and family formation can change these assumptions.

Household projections are also limited by what data are available to inform detailed breakdowns of household population and households by the age and sex of the household reference person (HRP) at the local authority level. For example, the age distribution of the local authority prison population is modelled using assumptions based on the prison population of England and Wales as a whole.

Household projections are not forecasts. They do not attempt to predict the impact of future government or local policies, changing economic circumstances or other factors that may influence household growth, such as the number of houses built. Household projections are not a prediction or forecast of how many houses should be built in the future. Instead, they show how many additional households would form if the population of England keeps growing as it did between 2011 and 2018 and keeps forming households as it did between 2001 and 2011. Therefore, household projections should be used as a starting point for calculating the future housing needs of a local area.

In most cases, each set of projections is superseded when the next scheduled release is published. However, should there be cause to revise a specific set of projections – for example, because of an error in production – we would consider the best approach in line with the [revisions policy for population statistics](#).

National Statistics status information

- Date of most recent full assessment: [August 2011](#).
- Most recent compliance check which confirms National Statistics status: [December 2018](#).

For more on National Statistics, read the [Office for Statistics Regulation guidance \(PDF, 310KB\)](#).

12 . Related links

[2018-based subnational population projections](#) Bulletin | Released 24 March 2020 Indicate potential future population size of English local and health authorities.

[Household projections across the UK: user guide](#) Article | Released 29 June 2020 Guidance for users about the coherence and comparability of household projections for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

[Methodology used to produce household projections for England: 2018-based](#)

Methodology | Released 29 June 2020

User guidance about uses, methodology, assumptions and input data for household projections for England.

[Household projections for England, comparisons with other sources: 2001 to 2018](#)

Article | Released 20 September 2018

Assessing the accuracy of household projections through comparisons with household estimates and other data sources.