

# **2008-based Subnational Population Projections for England:**

## **Summary of responses to consultation on migration assumptions**

### **Executive summary**

This report provides a summary of the feedback received in response to the consultation on the initial migration assumptions for the 2008-based Subnational Population Projections for England. It describes how an expert panel was used to assess the responses from local authorities and other organisations and details the decisions made by this panel and where changes will be made to the projections.

As a result of the consultation, the internal migration assumptions for the Oadby and Wigston district within Leicestershire will be adjusted. No other adjustments will be made to the migration assumptions, although the assumptions for all areas will be recalculated following the implementation of further methodological improvements and the subsequent revision to the mid-year population estimates for mid-2002 to mid-2008. The 2008-based Subnational Population Projections for England are due to be released on 27 May 2010.

### **Introduction**

As part of the usual biennial programme for subnational population projections (SNPPs), ONS ran a consultation on the migration assumptions in the first year of the projections used to calculate SNPPs for England. The consultation ran from 30 November 2009 to 18 January 2010 and related to 2008-based projections. This report provides a summary of the responses to the consultation and the changes that will be implemented for the 2008-based Subnational Population Projections for England scheduled for release on 27 May 2010.

The consultation was aimed at local authorities, regional government organisations, and primary care organisations (PCOs). Local authorities were encouraged to discuss the assumptions with PCOs and other organisations before making a joint submission via the local authority. Where applicable, county councils were encouraged to make a joint submission on behalf of district level authorities and PCOs. ONS would like to thank all the organisations that took the time to respond to the consultation.

The SNPP consultation was run in parallel with a separate user engagement exercise on improvements to migration and population statistics. Many of the responses to the SNPP consultation commented on the improvements to the

methodology used to produce the mid-year population estimates which form the basis for the projections. These comments were fed into the user engagement exercise on the improvements to migration and population statistics, and a summary of the responses to this exercise is available at: [www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/methodology-and-quality/imps/mig-stats-improve-prog/comm-stakeholders/improvements-2008-pop-est/index.html](http://www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/methodology-and-quality/imps/mig-stats-improve-prog/comm-stakeholders/improvements-2008-pop-est/index.html)

It should be noted that the first year migration assumptions, that formed the basis of this SNPP consultation, were calculated from the indicative impacts upon mid-year population estimates of the methodology improvements developed up to November 2009. Further refinements to the methodology used to produce population estimates have been made since the calculation of these indicative impacts, and these will be implemented when calculating the revised mid-year population estimates for mid-2002 to mid-2008 that will be published by ONS in May 2010. The migration assumptions for the 2008-based Subnational Population Projections will be recalculated based on the final revised estimates, and therefore will differ from the assumptions used for the consultation.

## Summary of responses

There were 69 organisations that responded to the consultation. As the organisations included some regional organisations and county councils, this means a larger number than this, in terms of district level authorities, were represented within the consultation. The organisations that responded to the consultation are summarised in the table below:

	<b>Responses agreeing with assumptions</b>	<b>Responses disagreeing with assumptions</b>
District level authorities	Aylesbury Vale Barnsley Bexley Chiltern East Staffordshire Harrow Kirklees Leeds Manchester Redbridge Salford Sefton Sheffield Tameside Trafford Wyre	Birmingham Brent Calderdale Cambridge Camden East Lindsey Forest Heath Hackney Hammersmith and Fulham Haringey Liverpool Newcastle upon Tyne Newham Northampton Oldham Richmondshire South Tyneside Southwark Sunderland Wandsworth Westminster Wirral

2008-based Subnational Population Projections for England:  
Summary of responses to consultation on migration assumptions

Unitary authorities	Blackburn with Darwen Bristol Cheshire West and Chester Derby Herefordshire Nottingham Swindon Thurrock	Slough Southampton Torbay
County Councils	Buckinghamshire Cambridgeshire Gloucestershire Hampshire Herefordshire Norfolk Nottinghamshire Oxfordshire Somerset Surrey	Kent Leicestershire Lincolnshire Northamptonshire Suffolk
PCOs, Regional & Other	Greater London Authority NHS South Gloucestershire Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit	Cambridgeshire Police University of Leeds

## Process for reviewing consultation responses

As for the 2006-based SNPP consultation, responses received to the 2008-based SNPP consultation were reviewed by the Subnational Population Projections Consultation Response Review Panel in order to increase the robustness of the decision making process. The panel was convened from population projection and estimation experts within ONS.

The consultation responses were summarised for the panel with a provisional recommendation and a range of supporting evidence. The panel then discussed the issues raised in each case before reaching a decision. This document reports the considerations of the panel, the conclusions reached, and describes any changes that will be made to the first year migration assumptions.

## Responses where changes will be made

### Internal migration propensities: Oadby and Wigston

**Leicestershire** County Council presented evidence that the internal migration projected for 2008/09 for Oadby and Wigston was not in line with the trend for the previous 5 years. Oadby and Wigston district contains a large number of student halls of residence, and previous projection rounds have encountered problems with projecting internal out-migration from this area.

For the 2006-based Subnational Population Projections for England, maximum out-migration propensities were capped at 80 per cent for females and 60 per cent for males. This had a direct impact upon projected internal migration for a small number

of authorities, most notably Oadby and Wigston. These caps were again used in producing the 2008-based migration assumptions for the consultation exercise, but nonetheless, large projected outflows from Oadby and Wigston resulted in the projected net internal migration for this district being out of line with the trend data.

For the final projections, the caps to the out-migration propensities will be retained, but in addition, the out-migration probabilities for Oadby and Wigston will be replaced with those for a similar local authority, Broxtowe. This district is one of the most similar local authorities to Oadby and Wigston according to the ONS 2001 Area Classification (see

[www.statistics.gov.uk/about/methodology\\_by\\_theme/area\\_classification/default.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/methodology_by_theme/area_classification/default.asp)).

The method of replacing out-migration profiles with those for similar local authorities according to the same classification is already established for the Isles of Scilly and Rutland and the panel therefore concluded that it was appropriate to extend this method to Oadby and Wigston. As a result of this change, the revised internal migration assumption for Oadby and Wigston is far more in line with the trend data.

## Responses that will not result in changes

### Base population and comparison to administrative data

A number of authorities questioned the baseline migration data used in the calculation of the annual mid-year population estimates. These organisations are listed below, and all of their comments have been fed into the user consultation exercise on improvements to migration and population statistics.

Responses questioning baseline migration data
Brent
Calderdale
Camden
Forest Heath
Hackney
Hammersmith and Fulham
Haringey
Newcastle upon Tyne
Newham
Northampton
Oldham
South Tyneside
Southwark
Sunderland
Wandsworth
Westminster
Slough
Southampton
Torbay
Kent
Lincolnshire
Northamptonshire
Cambridgeshire Police
University of Leeds

Some of these responses cited administrative data (such as GP registrations and national insurance registrations) as evidence to question the baseline migration data. The panel noted that in no cases were the administrative data used to provide sufficient evidence of a change in trend since the mid-2008 data. As the subnational projections policy is that migration component data from the annual mid-year population estimates should be used as the definitive figures, the panel concluded that no change to the migration assumptions was required for any area as a result of these responses. Work on reconciling population and migration estimates and administrative data is being included in the next phase of the Migration Statistics Improvement Programme.

### **Projected populations for specific age-groups**

**Birmingham** City Council queried the difference seen in the 16 to 24 and 25 to 44 age groups between the 2006-based and 2008-based projections, and whether these differences were related to international migration or internal migration (and in particular the new student adjustment methodology being introduced as part of the package of improvements to migration and population statistics). Research has confirmed that the differences observed for these younger adult age groups are due to increases to estimated (and hence projected) internal net migration to Birmingham of young adults of student age, who are then aged on through the projection period. The panel therefore concluded that no change was required to the migration assumptions for Birmingham.

**Liverpool** City Council expressed concern that the 16 to 24 age group had not been accurately projected, and in particular questioned why, despite the assumption of net in-migration for this age group, the population was projected to fall slightly in the first year of the projection. Research has shown that the migration assumptions had indeed been accurately applied for Liverpool, but for this age group the effects of cohort ageing (24-year-olds leaving the age group and 15-year-olds joining) in the first year (and subsequent years) led to a reduction in population that was larger than the assumed net in-migration. The panel therefore concluded that the downward trend in the population aged 16 to 24 is in line with cohort ageing effects and no change was required to the migration assumptions for Liverpool.

### **Comparison with past population projections**

**Newcastle** City Council questioned the degree of divergence between the 2006-based and 2008-based projections of population growth for their district, and in particular questioned whether the international migration assumptions should be based upon longer-term trends. ONS has previously investigated the use of longer time-series for calculating international migration assumptions, and this work concluded that the averaging of more than five years' data resulted in little additional reduction in variation. The panel therefore concluded that no change was required to the migration assumptions for Newcastle upon Tyne.

**Wirral** Metropolitan Borough Council and **Northamptonshire** County Council also questioned why the migration assumptions and the resulting projected population change for their areas differed considerably from the previous, 2006-based, projections. In both cases, following further research work, the panel concluded that no adjustment was required to the migration assumptions for these areas.

### **Projected net migration out of line with trend data**

Some organisations queried why the first year projection of net internal and/or international migration for their area was out of line with the average of the migration component of the mid-year population estimates for the past five years. These organisations are listed below.

Areas questioning why migration assumptions not in line with trend data
Cambridge Wirral Suffolk

There are several reasons why the migration assumptions for an area might differ from the trend data. For example:

- internal migration assumptions are reached by using migration and population estimates to calculate an average propensity to migrate and then applying this to the base population, rather than calculating an average of the numbers migrating
- international migration assumptions are reached through distributing proportions through geography levels using weighted averages, and then constraining to the assumptions on international in- and out-migration from the national projections

In all cases, the panel concluded that it was not appropriate to adjust the migration assumptions to fit the migration components in the population estimates.

### **Planned housing development**

Several responses stated that housing development plans should be taken account of in the projections. These authorities are listed below:

Areas referring to housing development plans
Hackney Newham Wirral Northamptonshire

It is subnational population projection policy that planned housing development is not taken into account in the migration assumptions underlying the projections. The panel therefore agreed that no change should be made to the migration assumptions for these areas on the basis of planned housing development.

The projections are trend-based and produced on a consistent basis. They represent how the population in an area would change given the continuation of existing demographic trends. They do not take any account of the capacity of an area to accommodate projected changes in population, planned changes to dwelling stock or policies on the provision of housing. If plans or constraints have already affected migration patterns, they will be reflected within the projections. Any impact such plans or constraints have upon migration patterns in the future will be reflected in future projections.

## Economic development policy

Some responses similarly stated that local economic development plans should be taken account of in the projections. These authorities are listed below:

Areas referring to planned economic development
Southampton
Northamptonshire
Cambridgeshire Police

It is subnational population projection policy that planned economic development is not taken into account in the migration assumptions underlying the projections. The panel therefore agreed that no change should be made to the migration assumptions for these areas on the basis of economic development plans.

The projections are trend-based and produced on a consistent basis. They are designed to show the effect of long-term demographic trends and are not economic forecasts. They therefore take no account of economic development policies or plans. If such policies have already affected migration patterns, they will be reflected within the projections. Any impact such policies or plans have upon migration patterns in the future will be reflected in future projections.

## Other issues

A number of organisations cited other reasons for disagreement with the migration assumptions for their area. For example: **Oldham** Council queried whether the internal migration assumptions sufficiently reflected the impact of a new University Campus that opened in 2005; **Forest Heath** District Council questioned whether the migration of US foreign armed forces dependents and civilians was adequately measured by the IPS; **Richmondshire** District Council queried whether the return of Home Armed Forces and their dependents from abroad had been adequately accounted for in their area; and **East Lindsey** District Council stated that the usually resident population basis of the projections excluded many 'semi-permanent' residents living in holiday homes and caravans within their district. In all cases, the panel concluded that there were insufficient grounds for an adjustment to be made to the migration assumptions for these areas.

ONS will be sending individual responses to each of the authorities who raised queries or concerns about the migration assumptions for their areas prior to the publication of the 2008-based Subnational Population Projections for England on 27 May 2010.