

Estimates of the very old, including centenarians, UK: 2002 to 2025

Annual mid-year population estimates of people aged 90 years and over by sex and single year of age to 105 years and over, and comparisons between UK countries.

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1 . Main points

- There were an estimated 645,000 people aged 90 years and over in the UK in 2025; this is an increase of 55.2% since 2005, and an increase of 3.1% since mid-2024.
- The proportion of people at the oldest ages has increased in the past two decades; 77.6% of those aged 90 years and over were aged under 95 years in 2025, a decrease from 79.7% in 2005.
- There were 16,400 centenarians (people aged 100 years and over) in the UK in 2025, a 20.2% increase from 13,700 in 2015.
- The number of men at older ages is increasing faster than the number of women; between 2005 and 2025, the number of men aged 90 years and over has more than doubled, while the number of women has increased by just over one-third.
- Men made up over one-third (34.1%) of people aged 90 years and over in 2025, and nearly one-fifth (18.8%) of centenarians.
- The highest rate of centenarians in the UK was in Wales (26.1 per 100,000 people); the rate of centenarians has increased in all four UK countries since mid-2024.

2 . Population growth of those aged 90 years and over in the UK

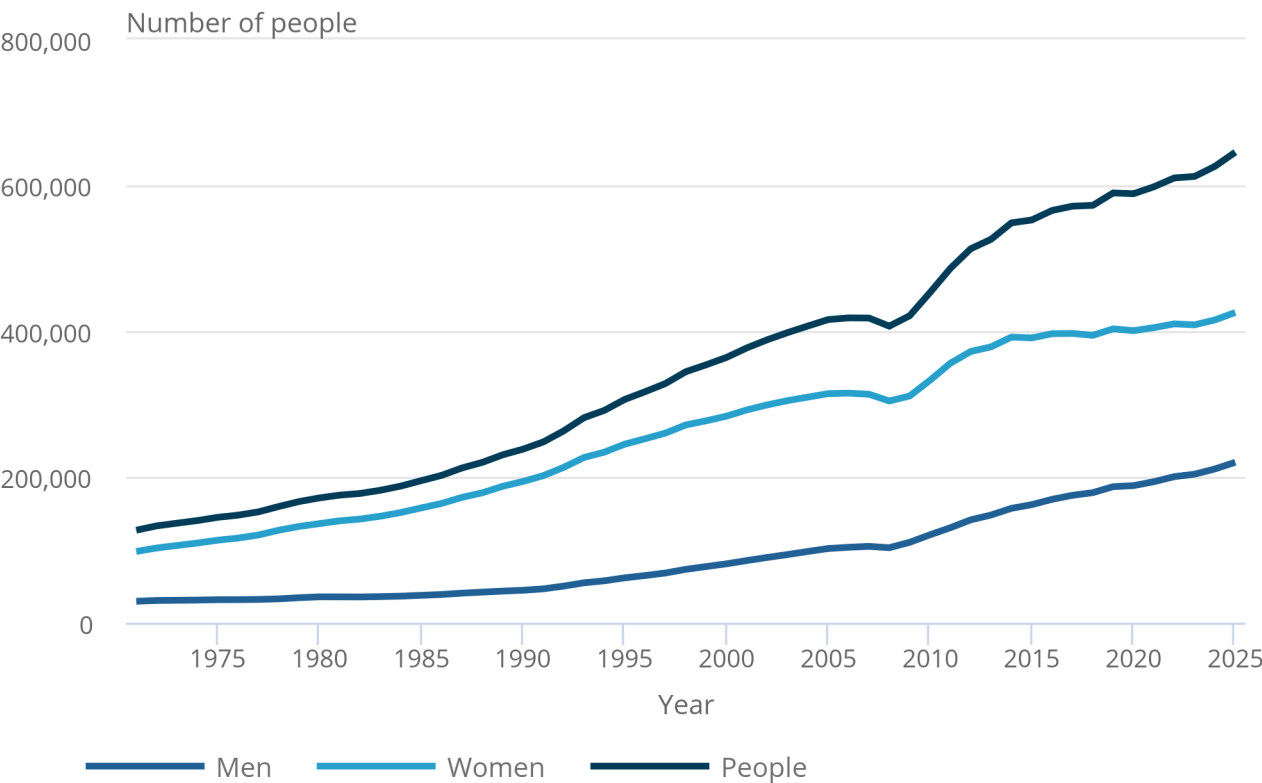
The population aged 90 years and over has grown substantially over recent decades. Between 2005 and 2025, it increased by 55.2% from just under 416,000 to just over 645,000 people. From mid-2024 to mid-2025, the population aged 90 years and over increased by 3.1% (from 626,000).

Figure 1: The number of people aged 90 years and over continues to grow, with the number of men growing faster than the number of women in this age group

Number of men, women and people aged 90 years and over, UK, mid-1971 to mid-2025

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Number of men, women and people aged 90 years and over, UK, mid-1971 to mid-2025



Source: Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

The line chart in Figure 1 shows that the number of men aged 90 years and over has increased at a faster rate than the number of women. The number of men aged 90 years and over has more than doubled in the last two decades, from a little under 102,000 in 2005 to almost 220,000 in 2025. The number of women aged 90 years and over increased by 35.4% over the same period, from 314,000 in 2005 to just over 425,000 in 2025.

Over a third (34.1%) of people aged 90 years and over were men in 2025, compared with fewer than one in four (24.4%) people in 2005.

The changes in the older population are largely explained by improvements in life expectancy and historical birth patterns.

While women have a higher life expectancy than men, improvements in male life expectancy have generally been greater than those for women over the past two decades. This narrowing of the gap has led to comparatively faster growth in the number of older men.

Improvements in survival mean that increasing numbers of people are reaching the oldest ages. Because men were historically less likely than women to survive to these ages, improvements in survival have resulted in proportionally larger increases in the number of men reaching ages 90 years and over. Read about changes to life expectancy in our [National life tables bulletin](#).

The slight decrease in the number of people aged 90 years and over in 2007 and 2008 reflects the low number of births 90 years earlier, during World War One. It is followed by a rapid increase in people aged 90 years and over because of an increase in births immediately following the war.

3 . Age structure of those aged 90 years and over

Of people aged 90 years and over, the majority are in their early 90s, although this is changing with increasing proportions at older ages.

Figure 2: Most people aged 90 years and over were in their early 90s, but a higher proportion were at older ages in 2025 than 2005

Percentage of people aged 90 years and over by single year of age up to age 105 years and over, UK, 2005 and 2025

Notes:

1. Percentages were calculated using unrounded data.

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The bar chart in Figure 2 shows how the age distribution of people aged 90 years and over is changing, as more people were at the very oldest ages in 2025 than they were in 2005.

Of all people aged 90 years and over in 2025, 77.6% were under 95 years. This is a slight decrease from 79.7% in 2005.

Of all people aged 90 years and over, the proportion of people aged 100 years and over showed a small increase, from 2.1% in 2005 to 2.5% in 2025.

Improvements in life expectancy have led to changes in the age structure as more people reach very old ages.

4 . Age and sex structure of those aged 90 years and over

While most people aged 90 years and over are women in their early 90s, population growth in the last two decades has been fastest among men at older ages.

Figure 3: The gap between the number of women and men aged 90 years and over has narrowed over the past two decades

Number of people aged 90 years and over by sex and single year of age up to age 105 years and over, UK and constituent countries, 2005 and 2025

Notes:

1. Data for Scotland rounded to the nearest 10. A value of 0 may indicate that the data are unavailable.

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The population pyramid in Figure 3 shows large increases in the population of men and women aged 90 years and over between 2005 and 2025. The population grew at every age, although the fastest proportional growth was seen at the oldest ages.

While women continued to outnumber men at every age, the gap narrowed because the male population grew more rapidly. The number of men at least doubled between 2005 and 2025 for every age in the UK, apart from 91 years. Faster growth in the population of men at older ages has led to changes in the sex ratio over time.

Figure 4: There was a higher proportion of men at every age over 90 years in 2025 than 2005

Percentage of people aged 90 years and over by single year of age up to age 100 years and over who are men, UK, 2005 and 2025

Notes:

1. Percentages were calculated using unrounded data.

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The bar chart in Figure 4 shows that the proportion of people aged 90 years and over who were men increased by around 10 percentage points for most ages between 2005 and 2025.

For people aged 100 years and over, the percentage who were men has increased from 12.2% in 2005 to 18.8% in 2025.

5 . Centenarians

There were an estimated 16,400 centenarians (people aged 100 years and over) in the UK in 2025, a 20.2% increase since 2015 (from just under 13,700), and an 89.8% increase since 2005 (from nearly 8,700).

The number of male centenarians has increased faster than the number of female centenarians. The male centenarian population increased by 46.9% between 2015 and 2025 (from 2,100 to almost 3,100), whereas the female centenarian population grew by 15.4% over the same period (from nearly 11,600 to just over 13,300).

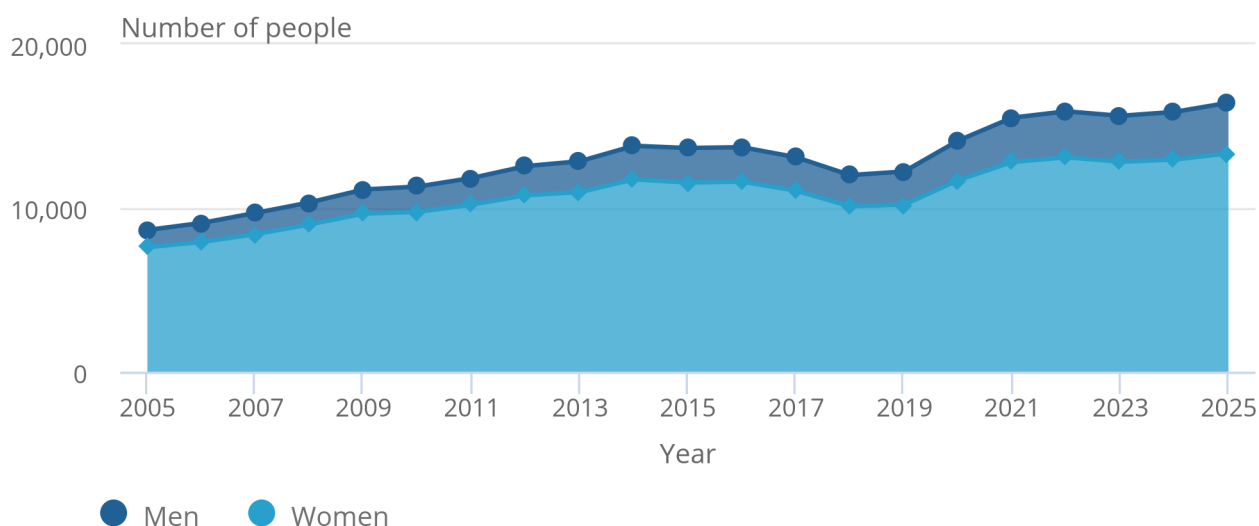
There were 23.7 centenarians per 100,000 people in 2025, an increase from 22.9 per 100,000 in 2024 and 14.3 per 100,000 in 2005. This means that around one in every 4,200 people in the UK were centenarians in 2025.

Figure 5: The number of centenarians has increased, with the number of men growing faster than the number of women

Number of men and women aged 100 years and over, UK, 2005 to 2025

Figure 5: The number of centenarians has increased, with the number of men growing faster than the number of women

Number of men and women aged 100 years and over, UK, 2005 to 2025



Source: Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

The area chart in Figure 5 shows that the population of centenarians rapidly increased in 2020 and 2021, following a decrease in the population in the years immediately before. This is in part explained by a decrease in births in England and Wales 100 years earlier, during World War One, followed by a rapid increase in births after the war.

The post-World War One “baby boom” generation, born 1919 to 1920, reached age 105 years in mid-2025. This caused the population aged 105 years and over in the UK to increase by nearly a third (32.5%) between mid-2024 and mid-2025, from 570 to 760.

6 . Country comparison

The proportion of the population who were centenarians increased across all four UK constituent countries over the past two decades.

Figure 6: Wales and England had higher rates of people aged 100 years and over than Scotland or Northern Ireland

Number of people aged 100 years and over per 100,000 population by constituent country, UK, 2005 and 2025

Notes:

1. Numbers per 100,000 were calculated using unrounded data.

Download

The bar chart in Figure 6 shows that Wales had the highest rate of centenarians in 2025 (26.1 per 100,000), an increase from 25.0 per 100,000 in 2024 and 15.0 per 100,000 in 2005.

England had the second-highest rate, at 24.4 per 100,000 in 2025, up from 23.6 in 2024 and 14.8 in 2005. Scotland had 17.1 centenarians per 100,000 in 2025, an increase from 16.8 in 2024 and 11.1 in 2005.

Northern Ireland had the lowest rate of centenarians in 2025 (16.2 per 100,000), an increase from 15.8 in 2024 and 8.2 in 2005.

The lower rate of centenarians in Northern Ireland is largely explained by higher fertility rates meaning a younger population, rather than differences in life expectancy. More information about our fertility rates is available in our [National population projections, fertility assumptions: 2022-based methodology](#). More information about life expectancy is available in our [National life tables – life expectancy in the UK: 2022 to 2024 bulletin](#).

This is supported by comparing the number of centenarians with the population aged 65 years and over, which helps account for differences in population age structure. England had the highest rate in 2025, with 127.7 centenarians per 100,000 people aged 65 years and over. Scotland had the lowest rate, at 81.5 centenarians per 100,000 people aged 65 years and over.

Wales and Northern Ireland had 117.4 and 87.5 centenarians per 100,000 people aged 65 years and over, respectively.

7 . Data on population estimates

[Mid-year population estimates of the very old, including centenarians: UK](#)

Dataset | Released 23 October 2026

Annual mid-year population estimates of those aged 90 years and over by sex, broken down by single year of age (90 to 104 years) and the 105 years and over age group.

[Mid-year population estimates of the very old, including centenarians: England](#)

Dataset | Released 29 July 2026

Annual mid-year population estimates of those aged 90 years and over by sex, broken down by single year of age (90 to 104 years) and the 105 years and over age group.

[Mid-year population estimates of the very old, including centenarians: Wales](#)

Dataset | Released 29 July 2026

Annual mid-year population estimates of those aged 90 years and over by sex, broken down by single year of age (90 to 104 years) and the 105 years and over age group.

[Mid-year population estimates of the very old, including centenarians: England and Wales](#)

Dataset | Released 29 July 2026

Annual mid-year population estimates of those aged 90 years and over by sex, broken down by single year of age (90 to 104 years) and the 105 years and over age group.

8 . Glossary

Centenarian

A person aged 100 years or over.

Life expectancy

Life expectancy is a population-based statistical measure of the average number of years a person has before death. Life expectancies can be calculated for any age and give the further number of years a person can, on average, expect to live given the age they have attained.

9 . Data sources and quality

Data sources

We calculate estimates of the very old from death registration data using the Kannisto-Thatcher (KT) method. The estimates are constrained to the age 90 years and over totals in our [Population estimates of the UK, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: mid-2025 bulletin](#).

We produce the estimates of the very old for England, Wales, and the UK. Comparable statistics are produced by [National Records of Scotland \(NRS\)](#) for Scotland and by [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(NISRA\)](#) for Northern Ireland, and are used in our UK estimates.

More quality and methodology information (QMI) on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Estimates of the very old, including centenarians quality and methodology information](#).

Quality

There is more volatility in the deaths data used to estimate centenarians in the smaller UK constituent countries because of their relatively small population sizes.

Mid-year estimates (MYEs) are based on the latest census. They are adjusted for births, deaths, and migration each year following the census. The 2002 to 2025 estimates published in this bulletin take account of the reconciliation and rebasing of the mid-year estimates from 2012 onwards, following the 2021 round of UK censuses.

We have conducted an extra validation data cleaning step on the deaths data used to calculate the estimates since 2022. The data are very accurate in terms of the number of deaths that occur. However, the age of death at very high ages may not always be accurate. This is because the date of birth given by the person registering the death is not checked against birth certificates.

A very small number of records were removed from the input data because evidence was found that those recorded as aged 110 years and over were highly unlikely to be of that age. Estimates of the very old are constrained to the age 90 years and over totals in the MYE, so removing these records did not affect the total number of people estimated, and only very slightly shifted percentage distributions by single year of age.

Accredited official statistics

These [accredited official statistics](#) were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in March 2017. Accredited official statistics were previously known as National Statistics. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality, and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and should be labelled "accredited official statistics".

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The underlying pledge of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals is to leave no one behind and by definition, this includes the very old. Availability of data is essential to delivery of the goals. The data accompanying this release provide an estimate of the very old population in the UK, England and Wales, disaggregated by sex and single year of age from 90 to 104 years and for those aged 105 years and over.

10 . Related links

[National life tables – life expectancy in the UK: 2022 to 2024](#)

Bulletin | Released 10 December 2025

Trends in period life expectancy, a measure of the average number of years people will live beyond their current age, analysed by age and sex for the UK and its constituent countries.

[Life expectancy for local areas of Great Britain: between 2001 to 2003 and 2022 to 2024](#)

Bulletin | Released 10 December 2025

Subnational trends in period life expectancy, a measure of the average number of years people will live beyond their current age.

[The impact of the First World War on the 90 and over population of the UK: 2015](#)

Article | Released 29 September 2016

The impact of birth patterns around the time of the First World War and the influence of the Spanish "flu" pandemic that followed on the size and make up of today's population aged 90 and over.

11 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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