

Statistical bulletin

Population estimates for the UK, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: mid-2023

National mid-year population estimates for the UK and its constituent countries, by age and sex.

Contact:
Demography team
pop.info@ons.gov.uk
+44 1329 444661

Release date:
8 October 2024

Next release:
To be announced

Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [The population of the UK](#)
3. [Upcoming population estimates](#)
4. [Data on population estimates](#)
5. [Glossary](#)
6. [Data sources and quality](#)
7. [Related links](#)
8. [Cite this statistical bulletin](#)

1 . Main points

- The UK population at mid-year 2023 was estimated to be 68.3 million, an increase of 1.0% since mid-2022.
- The population grew faster in England and in Wales (both 1.0%) than in Scotland (0.8%) or Northern Ireland (0.5%).
- Net international migration was the main contributor to population increase for all four countries of the UK in the year to mid-2023.
- There were 16,300 more deaths than births across the UK in the year to mid-2023; in England and Northern Ireland there were more births than deaths while Scotland and Wales had more deaths than births.
- The estimates in this publication are subject to further revisions because of continuing development of international migration methods and data sources.

2 . The population of the UK

We estimate the UK population at mid-2023 as 68.3 million (68,265,209). This estimate will be revised within the next year as new data become available and improvements to our estimates of international migration continue to be made.

All four countries of the UK saw population increases in the period between mid-2022 and mid-2023. Table 1 shows the populations and components of population change for each country of the UK. The population grew faster in England and in Wales (both 1.0%) than in Scotland (0.8%) or Northern Ireland (0.5%). Commentary on population estimates for each country of the UK can be found in the statistical bulletins listed in [Section 7: Related links](#).

Estimates of long-term international migration for England and Wales in year-ending June 2023 are derived from UK-level migration estimates published on 23 November 2023. Please note therefore that adding migration estimates for England and Wales to migration estimates for Scotland and Northern Ireland, estimates will not sum to the latest total UK-level international migration estimates which were published on 23 May 2024. The difference in these population estimates compared with those based on the latest international migration estimates is relatively small. It does not change the overall picture of the population level.

For international migration estimates in England and Wales, use the [mid-2023 population estimates for England and Wales](#). For international migration estimates in Northern Ireland, use the [2023 Mid-Year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland](#). For international migration estimates in Scotland, use the [Mid-Year Population Estimates for Scotland](#). For UK-level international migration estimates, use the latest [UK long-term international migration estimates](#).

The population estimates for mid-2023 will be revised in 2025 when the mid-2024 population estimates are published. These will take account of the latest international migration estimates available at that point.

Table 1: Population and components of population change of the UK and its constituent countries, mid-2023

	United Kingdom	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Population 2022	67,602,800	57,112,500	3,132,700	5,447,000	1,910,500
Births	664,400	570,700	27,600	46,000	20,100
Deaths	680,700	560,900	37,100	65,100	17,600
Natural Change (births minus deaths)	-16,300	9,900	-9,500	-19,100	2,500
Net internal UK migration	<100	-31,400	17,600	13,900	<-100
International Immigration	1,185,600	1,047,700	36,300	82,800	18,800
International Emigration	508,300	449,200	12,700	35,100	11,200
Net international migration	677,300	598,400	23,600	47,700	7,600
Other	1,400	800	100	600	-200
Population 2023	68,265,200	57,690,300	3,164,400	5,490,100	1,920,400
Change	662,400	577,800	31,700	43,100	9,800
% Change	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	0.8%	0.5%

Source: Population estimates from the Office for National Statistics, the National Records of Scotland, and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

Notes

1. These estimates are rounded to the nearest hundred and the total may not sum because of rounding.
2. Net internal UK migration is the movement of people between countries of the UK.
3. International migration estimates in Table 1 are inconsistent with the latest Long-term international migration estimates published in May 2024. If the latest LTIM estimates were incorporated into the UK population estimates, the population would be 68.3 million (68,328,000), 63,000 (0.1%) higher than the estimate in Table 1.
4. "Other" includes changes in the size of the armed forces and other population adjustments.

3 . Upcoming population estimates

We will publish population estimates by local authority for the whole of the UK covering mid-2011 to mid-2023 once mid-2023 estimates for Local Government Areas in Northern Ireland and an amended backseries of estimates for Scotland are available. Following this, the next release of population estimates will be mid-2024 estimates in summer 2025.

We expect to revise the mid-year population estimates for mid-2023 in summer 2025. As we continue to improve our estimates of international migration, further revisions to population estimates will occur.

Admin-based population estimates for England and Wales

We are aiming for our [admin-based population estimates](#) (ABPEs) to become the official mid-year population estimates for England and Wales in 2025. We will continue our programme of engagement with users of population statistics to understand the effect these changes will have before decisions are taken. This includes setting criteria for moving to ABPEs as the official estimates for England and Wales based on conversations with our partners in devolved governments and central government departments.

We will also undertake engagement in autumn 2024 to gather feedback on the new approach including with local authorities so we can draw on local insight as we improve the estimates. We [requested an assessment of our admin-based population estimates](#) and are working to address the points in the assessment to meet the standards expected of [accredited official statistics](#) in 2025.

Feedback from anyone who uses these statistics is welcomed at any time. You can email us about the approach we are taking at pop.info@ons.gov.uk.

Population estimates by output areas, electoral, health and other geographies for England and Wales

We will publish a revised backseries of estimates for 2011 to 2020 consistent with the 2021 Census and based on 2021 Census geographies in October or November 2024. As part of these releases, we will update our mid-2022 population estimates by output areas, electoral, health and other geographies to be consistent with revisions to mid-2022 local authority estimates. Estimates for mid-2023 for England and Wales will follow in winter 2024 to 2025.

We are exploring possible approaches for producing ABPEs for geographical breakdowns below local authority level for England and Wales. Possible approaches are explored in our methodology article [Geospatial methods for Small Area Population Estimates: proof of concept](#).

4 . Data on population estimates

[Estimates of the population for the UK, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland](#)

Dataset | Released 8 October 2024

National mid-year population estimates for the UK and its constituent countries, by age and sex.

5 . Glossary

Rolled forward

Rolling forward refers to the practice of using the population estimate from the previous reference date as the starting point for estimating the population at the current reference date. The previous population estimate is made one year older, and data on births, deaths and migration are used to reflect population change during the reference period.

Usually resident population

These data estimate the usually resident population. The standard United Nations definition is used, including 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 . Data sources and quality

The mid-year estimates for England and Wales are produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), for Scotland by [National Records of Scotland \(NRS\)](#) and for Northern Ireland by the [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(NISRA\)](#).

Estimates are produced by updating a census base using a standard demographic method, known as the cohort component method, and cover the usually resident population.

The previous year's resident population, by single year of age, is aged by one year, and then flows are applied to cover births, deaths, immigration, emigration and people entering and leaving "special populations", such as people in prisons or the armed forces.

Detailed information on the methods and data sources used can be found in the following methodology guides:

- our [Population estimates for the UK, mid-2021: methods guide](#)
- our [Population estimates for England and Wales, mid-2023: methods guide](#)
- NISRA's [Mid-2023 Methodology Report \(PDF, 232KB\)](#)
- the NRS's [Population estimates for Scotland, mid-2023: methods guide](#)
- our [Consistency of methods used for population statistics across UK countries article](#).

Strengths of mid-year estimates

- The estimates form the official population estimates of the UK, providing timely data between censuses.
- Information from administrative registers, such as the numbers of births and deaths, is considered to be very reliable.
- These estimates form the basis of coherent small-area population estimates.
- Mid-year population estimates will form the basis of our official [population projections](#) to be released in 2024.

Limitations of mid-year estimates

- The data are not counts, rather they are estimates created by combining many different data sources.
- The data sources used are the best available on a nationally consistent basis down to local authority level, but the estimates are subject to the coverage and error associated with these sources.
- Errors can accumulate over time, therefore population estimates for the years immediately following a census year tend to be more accurate than for those immediately prior to a census year.
- International migration methods and data sources are still being developed and will lead to revisions to population estimates.

For further information on how the estimates were created, quality assurance, their appropriate usage, and strengths and limitations, see our [Mid-year population estimates Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\) for the UK](#)

Accredited official statistics status for population estimates

Population estimates for the UK are [accredited official statistics](#) (previously National Statistics). The last assessment was 24 November 2020, as shown on the Office for Statistics Regulation's [Population estimates and projections web page](#).

7 . Related links

[Mid-year population estimates for England and Wales: mid-2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 15 July 2024

National and subnational mid-year population estimates for England and Wales by administrative area, age and sex, produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

[Mid-year estimates of the population: mid-2023](#)

Report | Released 15 July 2024

National and subnational mid-year population estimates for Wales by administrative area, age and sex, produced by the Welsh Government.

[Mid-year population estimates for Scotland: mid-2023](#)

Report | Released 8 October 2024

The latest annual mid-year population estimates for Scotland and its constituent NHS Board and council areas, produced by National Records of Scotland (NRS).

[Mid-year population estimates for Northern Ireland: mid-2023](#)

Report | Released 19 September 2024

The latest annual mid-year population estimates for Northern Ireland, produced by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

8 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 8 October 2024, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Population estimates for the UK, England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland: mid-2023](#)