

Statistical bulletin

Population estimates for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: mid-2015

National and subnational mid-year population estimates for the UK and its constituent countries by administrative area, age, sex and components of population change.



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1 . Main points

The population of the United Kingdom at 30 June 2015 is estimated to be 65,110,000 derived from the international migration statistics published in November 2015, and birth and death registrations reported within published provisional data on births and deaths.

Over the year to mid-2015 the number of people resident in the UK increased by 513,300 (up 0.8%), similar to the average annual increase seen over the last decade.

The older population continues to grow, with over 11.6 million (17.8% of the population) aged 65 and over and 1.5 million (2.3% of the population) aged 85 and over in mid-2015.

Since mid-2005, the UK population aged 65 and over has increased by 21%, and the population aged 85 and over has increased by 31%. The number of males aged 85 and over has increased by 54% since mid-2005, compared to a 21% increase for females.

The population increase of the UK in the year to mid-2015 included natural growth (more births than deaths) of 171,800 people, net international migration of 335,600 and an increase of 5,800 people in the armed forces population.

Natural growth was smaller than in previous years (down 54,400) caused largely by an increase in the number of deaths (up 52,400), combined with the continuing decrease in the number of births (down 1,900).

An increase in immigration (up 53,700) and a smaller decrease in emigration (down 22,300) have both contributed to the increase in net international migration compared to that seen in the year to mid-2014.

2 . Things you need to know

These are the official population estimates for the UK as at 30 June 2015. They are based on the census and are updated annually to account for population change during the period from 1 July to 30 June. The two main contributors to population change are natural change (births minus deaths) and net migration (the difference between long-term moves into and out of the UK or local areas).

Information about the quality, including strengths and limitations, of the estimates published in this release can be found in the [Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#). Some of the administrative data used in estimating international migration at Local Authority (LA) level was not available at the time of production of the mid-2015 population estimates. The size of the impact on the mid-2015 population estimates is not yet clear. Further details are provided in the [QMI](#).

This release includes national and subnational population estimates for England and Wales, and for Scotland, and national estimates for Northern Ireland. Population estimates for areas within Northern Ireland are provisionally scheduled for publication in August 2016.

3 . UK population reached 65.1 million in mid-2015

The population of the UK reached 65.1 million (65,110,000) in mid-2015, with a 95% confidence interval of plus or minus 0.2%. In the year to mid-2015 the population of the UK increased by 513,300 (up 0.8%).

The increase was driven by net international migration of 335,600 and natural change (births minus deaths) of 171,800. Other changes of 5,800 made up the remaining increase.

Comparing the latest population estimates for mid-2015 with the mid-2014 estimates shows that:

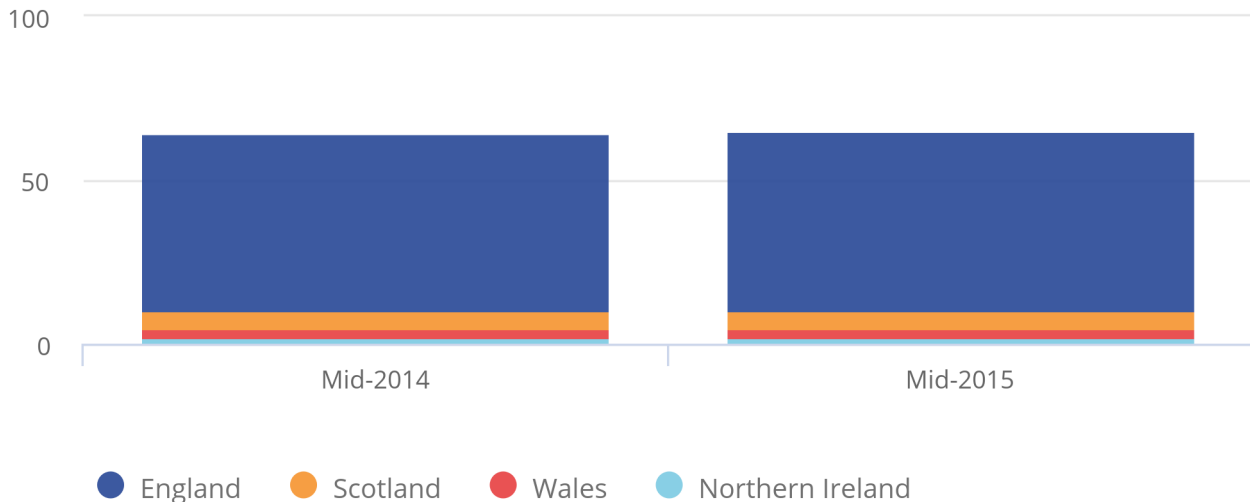
- England's population grew most quickly of the four UK countries over the year, while Wales had the slowest growth
- the population of England increased by 469,700 (up 0.86%) to 54,786,300 and accounts for 84% of the UK's population
- the population of Scotland increased by 25,400 (up 0.47%) to 5,373,000 and accounts for 8% of the UK's population
- the population of Wales increased by 7,100 (up 0.23%) to 3,099,100 and accounts for 5% of the UK's population
- the population of Northern Ireland increased by 11,100 (up 0.60%) to 1,851,600 and accounts for 3% of the UK's population

Figure 1: Mid-year population estimates for the UK mid-2014 and mid-2015

Population (millions)

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Population (millions)



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

Notes:

1. Figures may not add exactly due to rounding.

4 . Natural change lowest since mid-2006

Compared to the previous 10 years, the population change for the UK for the year to mid-2015 has some notable features. Population change due to natural change, the difference between births and deaths, is at its lowest since the year to mid-2006. The number of births has decreased on last year's figure and is below the average for the period, while there was an increase in the number of deaths since last year, partly attributed to flu outbreaks in early 2015. [Reasons behind the increase in deaths for England and Wales are further explained here](#).

Net international migration in the year to mid-2015 was at a similar level to that seen in mid-2005. This is caused by a combination of more people arriving to stay in the UK and fewer people leaving the UK on a long-term basis. International migration inflow is at its highest since the year to mid-2007, while outflow is at its lowest since comparable records began in 2002. More information on international migration, including the latest international migration figures can be found in the [Migration Statistics Quarterly Report](#).

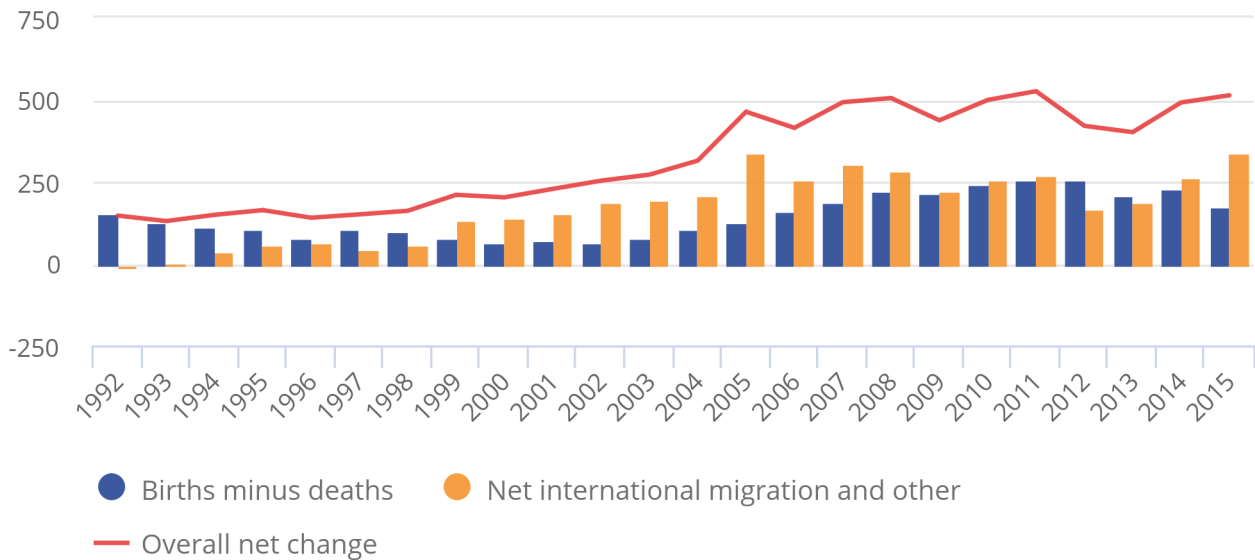
Other changes, comprising changes to the size of the armed forces stationed in the UK, tend to be small. In the year to mid-2015 the UK population increased by 5,800 due to other changes, compared to an increase of 5,200 in the year to mid-2014.

Figure 2: Population change for UK mid-1992 onwards

Annual population change (thousands)

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Annual population change (thousands)



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

Notes:

1. Figures may not add exactly due to rounding.
2. Other Changes comprises changes to the size of armed forces stationed in the UK and other special population adjustments.

In addition to the direct impact of migration on the size of the population, current and past international migration also has indirect effects on the size of the population as it changes the numbers of births and deaths in the UK. A fuller assessment of the indirect effect of migration on the size of the population would consider:

- births to, and deaths of, people who had migrated to the UK
- births to, and deaths of, people who emigrated from the UK (and who would have given birth, or died, in the UK had they not emigrated)
- how to account for births to, and deaths of, UK-born people who had emigrated and subsequently returned to the UK
- how to account for births to, and deaths of, UK-born people who had parents (or grandparents etc) who were themselves immigrants

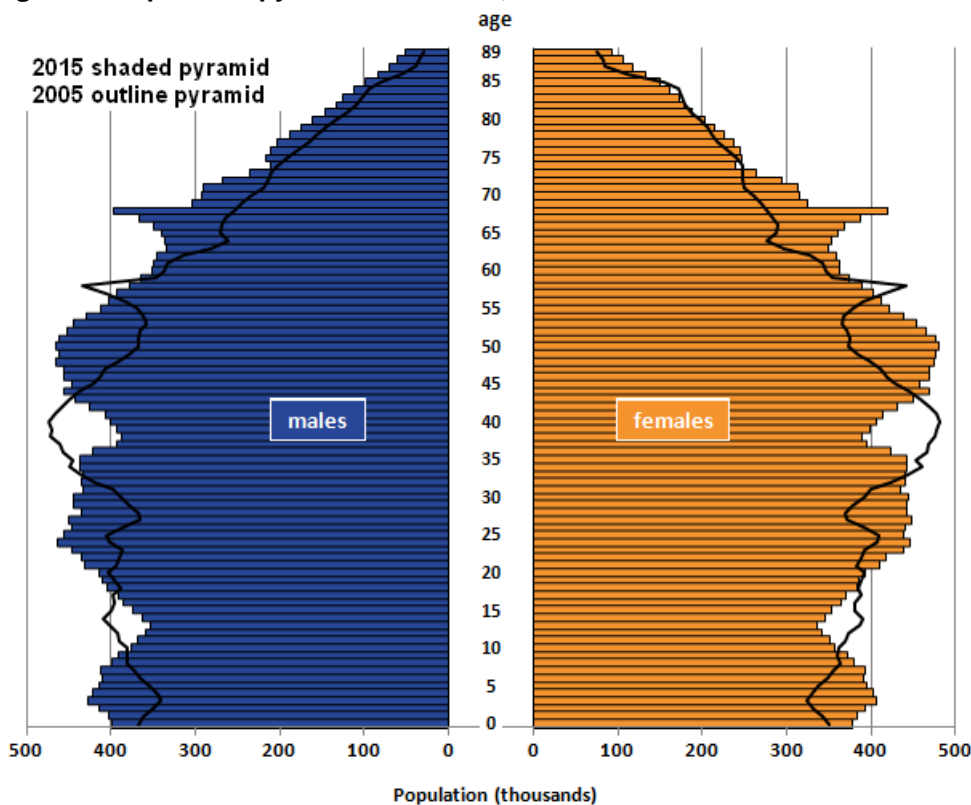
Additional background information on the UK population, its size, characteristics and the causes of population change is available in the [Overview of the UK Population](#).

5 . UK population continues to age

The size and composition of the population shown in the pyramid below is determined by the pattern of births, deaths and migration which have taken place in previous years. The pyramid shows some important trends in the demographics of the UK.

An interactive population pyramid showing the age structure of the population of the UK by country, English region and county or UK local area is available as part of the [Population Estimates Analysis Tool](#).

Figure 3: Population pyramid for the UK, mid-2015



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

The population of the UK is ageing. Ageing of the population refers to both the increase in the average (median) age of the population and the increase in the number and proportion of older people in the population. The median age of the UK population (that is the age at which half the population is younger and half the population is older) at mid-2015 was 40.0, this increase is higher than the median age of 38.7 in mid-2005.

In mid-2015, the population of the UK consisted of 32.1 million males (49.3%) and 33.0 million females (50.7%). The ratio of females to males has decreased slightly over the ten year period from mid-2005, as the male population has grown faster than the female population. There are now 103 women for every 100 men compared to 105 women per 100 men in mid-2005.

The number of males aged 85 and over in the UK has increased by 54% since mid-2005, compared to a 21% increase for females. The faster improvement in male mortality is largely driven by changes seen in tobacco smoking and advances in health treatments for circulatory illnesses. Male occupations over the same period have also become less physical and safer. Detailed explanation of this theme is available in the [National Life Tables](#) release and [visual.ons article](#) from September 2015.

The effects of international immigration to the UK since mid-2005 are visible in the pyramid. For most ages, the peaks and troughs present in the pyramid in mid-2005 are visible in the mid-2015 data, shifted by 10 years. However, the profile of the mid-2015 pyramid is wider and flatter, especially for those aged 20 to 36 in mid-2015 (who were 10 to 26 in mid-2005). Such a change can only be generated by new population being added through immigration.

The smaller numbers of those aged under 3, at the base of the pyramid, reflect the decline in the number of births year-on-year since mid-2012. Nevertheless, the number of 0- to 4-year-olds in mid-2015 is higher than this age group in mid-2005 by 585,200 (up 17.0%). The number of children aged 5 to 16 is 40,100 fewer (down 0.4%) than in mid-2005 – a result of the lower births around the turn of the century.

6 . How has the population changed across the regions in England and Wales?

Population growth in the year to mid-2015 was greatest in southern and eastern England. London had the highest population growth, increasing by 1.58%.

The lowest regional population increases in the year were seen in North East of England and Wales, both growing by 0.23%. No region of England or Wales experienced a population decrease.

Table 1: Detail of population change

England and Wales and regions, year to mid-2015					Thousands	
	Population change	Births minus deaths	Net international migration	Net within UK migration	Other changes	
England	469.7	165.1	307.3	-8.4	5.7	
North East	5.9	-0.1	6.4	-0.2	-0.2	
North West	40.8	14.2	22.2	3.6	0.7	
Yorkshire and The Humber	30.5	11.9	20.9	-2.3	0.0	
East Midlands	39.6	8.7	21.9	9.4	-0.4	
West Midlands	37.7	15.0	24.3	-2.0	0.5	
East	58.1	14.8	27.2	14.6	1.4	
London	135.0	78.4	133.9	-77.5	0.3	
South East	74.1	20.9	35.5	16.3	1.5	
South West	47.9	1.4	15.1	29.6	1.9	
Wales	7.1	0.0	5.9	0.8	0.3	

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Figures may not add exactly due to rounding.
2. Net within UK migration is the balance of in and out moves between each region and other regions in the rest of the UK.
3. Other Changes comprises changes to the size of armed forces stationed in the UK and other special population adjustments.

London had the largest natural change of all regions with 78,400 more births than deaths, and the North East of England the smallest, with 100 more deaths than births. A similar number of births and deaths resulted in no natural change to the population of Wales. All regions experienced an increase in the number of deaths in the year to mid-2015, and for the first time since mid-2005 the number of deaths exceeded the number of births in one of the regions of England (North East).

London was the destination of 38% of international migrants arriving in England and Wales, contributing to it having the highest net international migration of all regions at 133,900 – up by 26,500 from last year. Wales had the lowest net international migration with 5,900 more people arriving to stay from abroad than emigrating.

On balance, the South West of England received more people from other parts of the UK than any other region, leading to a 29,600 population increase; and London continued its pattern of having the greatest outflow of people to other parts of the UK of any region, with a net loss of 77,500 people. More people of every age left London for other parts of the UK than arrived, except for people aged 21-28, more of whom arrived in London from other parts of the UK than left.

[Population estimates at local level are available in the datasets](#) accompanying this release.

7 . How does the UK population compare with other countries in Europe?

[UK Perspectives 2016: The UK in a European context](#) presents interactive charts illustrating how the UK population compares with the other 27 member states of the European Union (EU).

8 . What has changed within this publication?

Improvements have been made to this bulletin and its contents, to provide a more concise summary of the main statistics.

We welcome your comments on the usefulness and presentation of the population estimates in this release.

Please contact the population estimates team using the email address pop.info@ons.gsi.gov.uk

9 . Links to related ONS statistics

An [Overview of Population Statistics](#) is available on the ONS website.

ONS also produces [population estimates for other geographies](#) such as parliamentary constituencies, national parks, wards, and health areas for England and Wales. Mid-2015 estimates for these geographies will be released later in 2016. The National Records of Scotland and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency also publish population estimates for various areas within Scotland and Northern Ireland. Publication dates will be confirmed on the [ONS release calendar](#).

Detailed data on population change is available as part of the [Population Estimates Analysis Tool](#) accompanying this release. The latest information on internal migration is available in the 2015 [Internal Migration by Local Authorities in England and Wales](#) release.

Detailed population estimates for the older population by single year of age are available in the [Estimates of the Very Old \(including Centenarians\) for the United Kingdom](#).

[Birth](#) and [death](#) figures for the 2015 calendar year in England and Wales will be published by ONS on 13 July 2016. The equivalent data for Northern Ireland will be published on 31 August 2016 by [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#), and for Scotland will be published by the [National Records of Scotland](#) on 10 August 2016.

The ONS Census Transformation Programme will be publishing the next set of [Administrative Data Research Outputs](#) in autumn 2016. These will include population estimates for 2015, derived from administrative data, by age and sex for each local authority in England and Wales. Users should be aware that the mid-year population estimates will continue to remain the official population estimates for England and Wales, carrying the [National Statistics accreditation](#). Benefits delivered from ongoing administrative data research will be used to better understand the current population estimates process and drive potential improvements wherever possible.

A [list of those people that have pre-release access](#) can be found on the ONS website.

10 . Links to related statistics (external)

The UK mid-year estimates series brings together annual population estimates for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Population estimates for England and Wales are produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), [National Records of Scotland](#) produce estimates for Scotland and the [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#) produce estimates for Northern Ireland. Population estimates are comparable between countries in the UK; more information can be found in [Consistency of methods used for population statistics across UK countries](#).

11 . Quality and Methodology

1. The [Annual Mid-Year Estimates Quality and Methodology](#) document contains important information on:
 - the strengths and limitations of the data
 - the quality of the output: including the accuracy of the data, how it compares with related data
 - uses and users
 - how the output was created
2. Mid-year population estimates relate to the usually resident population. They account for long-term international migrants but not for short-term. This approach is consistent with the standard UN definition for population estimates which is based upon the concept of usual residence and includes people who reside, or intend to reside, in the country for at least twelve months, whatever their nationality.
3. Mid-year population estimates are compiled to provide information about the size of the population, and how it changes over time. This information is used for planning services, managing the economy and in the calculation of rates where a population denominator is required, such as social and economic indicators. You can find out more about uses and users in the [Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#).
4. Net international migration estimates quoted in this report include net flows of asylum seekers where applicable. Other changes include moves of armed forces personnel at home and overseas.
5. Methods guides which detail the data sources and methodology used to produce the mid-year population estimates are available for the UK countries:
 - England and Wales [Methods Guide for mid-2015 Population Estimates](#)
 - Northern Ireland [Methodology Report](#)
 - Scotland [Mid-Year Population Estimates for Scotland: Methodology Guide 2015](#)
6. [Revisions policies for population statistics](#) includes the mid-year estimates. It explains how revisions to statistics are categorised and implemented by ONS, including revisions following a census.