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Coverage

United Kingdom

Theme

Population and Migration

New United Kingdom population projections

The United Kingdom population is projected to increase gradually from an estimated 59.8 million in 2000 to reach nearly 65 million by 2025, according to new figures released today.

The projections for the UK and its constituent countries by the Government Actuary are based on the estimated population at the middle of 2000 and replace the previous 1998-based projections.

The new figures show that:

- The projected increase to 2025 is equivalent to an average annual rate of growth of 0.3 per cent. Longer-term projections suggest the population will peak around 2040 at nearly 66 million and then gradually start to fall.
- Around two thirds of the projected 5.1 million increase between 2000 and 2025 is attributable to the assumed level of net inward migration. The remainder is due to projected natural increase (more births than deaths).
- The population will gradually become older with the average (mean) age expected to rise from 38.8 years in 2000 to 42.6 years in 2025.
- In 2000, there were nearly 1.3 million more children aged under 16, than people of state pensionable age. However, from 2007, the population of state pensionable age is projected to exceed the number of children and by 2025 is projected to exceed it by nearly 2 million.
- The number of children aged under 16 is projected to fall by 8.5 per cent from 12.1 million in 2000 to 11.0 million in 2011 and then to remain at around this level over the following 15 years.

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- The number of people of working age (currently defined as between ages 16 to 64 for men and 16 to 59 for women) is projected to rise by 6 per cent from 36.9 million in 2000 to 39.0 million in 2011. Allowing for the planned change in women's state pension age from 60 to 65 between 2010 and 2020, the working age population will increase further to 40.8 million by 2021.
- The number of people of state pensionable age is projected to increase by 11 per cent from 10.8 million in 2000 to 11.9 million in 2011. Allowing for the change in women's state pension age, the population of pensionable age will rise only slightly further (to 12.3 million) by 2021. However, a faster increase will then resume with longer-term projections suggesting the number over pensionable age peaking at just over 16 million in 2040.
- Due to differences in demographic patterns, projected trends differ for the four countries of the United Kingdom. A small decline in the population of Scotland is projected to continue from 2000, while the populations of Wales and Northern Ireland are projected to peak in around 30 years' time and then start to fall. The population of England is still projected to be rising at 2040, but at a low rate of growth.
- The projected total population of the United Kingdom in 2025 is about 600,000 (0.9 per cent) higher than in the previous (1998-based) projections. This is a result of an increased assumption of future net inward migration, partly offset by a lower assumption of future fertility.

The assumptions underlying the projections are based on an analysis of recent demographic trends. For the United Kingdom as a whole, the key assumptions for the future are:

- Average completed family size, which has been falling from a peak of nearly 2.5 children for women born in the mid 1930s, to level off at 1.74 children for women born in or after 1985 (compared with a long-term assumption of 1.80 in the previous projections).

- Life expectancy at birth, based on the mortality rates for that year, to rise from 75.5 years in 2000 to 78.9 years in 2025 for men, and from 80.3 years in 2000 to 83.2 years in 2025 for women (compared with assumptions for 2025 of 78.9 years and 83.1 years for men and women respectively in the previous projections).
- Net inward migration to the United Kingdom of 135,000 people per year from 2002-03 onwards (compared with a long-term net inward assumption of 95,000 per year in the previous projections).

Table A. Projected components of population change, United Kingdom, 2000-2025, (annual averages)

	<i>thousands</i>					
	2000 -2001	2001 -2006	2006 -2011	2011 -2016	2016 -2021	2021 -2025
Population at start	59,756	59,987	60,946	61,956	63,038	64,105
Births	674	676	679	694	707	702
Deaths	602	622	612	613	628	654
Natural change	72	54	67	81	78	48
Net migration	160	138	135	135	135	135
Total change	232	192	202	216	213	183
Population at end	59,987	60,946	61,956	63,038	64,105	64,836

Table B. Projected population by age, United Kingdom, 2000-2025

	<i>thousands</i>						
Ages	2000	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021	2025
0-14	11,322	11,240	10,707	10,312	10,252	10,410	10,512
15-29	11,400	11,341	11,696	12,106	11,996	11,467	11,117
30-44	13,751	13,912	13,701	12,714	12,161	12,511	12,910
45-59	11,083	11,262	12,009	12,763	13,668	13,461	12,672
60-74	7,801	7,780	8,243	9,313	9,927	10,653	11,234
75 & over	4,399	4,452	4,590	4,749	5,034	5,602	6,392
All ages	59,756	59,987	60,946	61,956	63,038	64,105	64,836
Mean age (years)	38.8	39.0	39.7	40.5	41.3	42.0	42.6
Under 16	12,076	12,003	11,515	11,045	10,933	11,093	11,201
Working age*	36,890	37,154	38,192	38,963	40,026	40,760	40,517
Pensionable age*	10,789	10,830	11,239	11,948	12,079	12,251	13,118

* Working age and pensionable age populations based on state pension age for given year. Between 2010 and 2020, state pension age will change from 65 years for men and 60 years for women, to 65 years for both sexes.

Table C. Projected population of United Kingdom and constituent countries, 2000-2051

	<i>thousands</i>						
	2000	2001	2011	2021	<i>Longer-term projections</i>		
					2031	2041	2051
United Kingdom	59,756	59,987	61,956	64,105	65,568	65,822	65,354
England	49,997	50,225	52,151	54,262	55,842	--	--
Wales	2,946	2,949	3,000	3,067	3,094	--	--
Scotland	5,115	5,109	5,047	4,973	4,821	--	--
Northern Ireland	1,698	1,705	1,759	1,803	1,812	--	--

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) produces national population projections for the United Kingdom and constituent countries at the request of the Registrars General of England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. The assumptions are agreed in consultation with the statistical offices of the four constituent countries. A new set of projections, based on a full-scale review of the trends affecting the underlying assumptions, is made every second year. This set of projections, based on the estimated population at the middle of 2000, replace the previous 1998-based projections. The main focus of the projections is on the first 25 years, that is up to 2025. Longer-term projections to the year 2040 for individual countries, and to 2070 for the United Kingdom and Great Britain only, are also available. However, the further ahead the projections go, the greater is the degree of uncertainty.
2. Full details of the 2000-based national population projections for the United Kingdom and constituent countries are available on the GAD website (www.gad.gov.uk). An article on these projections will be published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in *Population Trends 107*, in March 2002. A reference volume (ONS series PP2 no.23), containing full commentary and results, as well as details of variant projections based on alternative assumptions of future fertility, mortality and migration, will also be published in 2002.
3. News releases on the projections for Scotland and Northern Ireland are being issued today by the General Register Office for Scotland (www.gro-scotland.gov.uk) and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (www.nisra.gov.uk) respectively.
4. All figures presented here have been rounded independently, so component figures may not add exactly to totals.
5. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the ONS press office.
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