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**Coverage**

United Kingdom

**Theme**

Population and Migration

# National population projections: 2000-based

By 2025, the number of people aged 80 and over in the United Kingdom is projected to increase by almost half, from 2.4 million in 2000 to 3.5 million. Longer-term projections suggest that the 80 and over population will then grow more rapidly, to 4.9 million by 2040, more than double the number in 2000.

Population projections\* for the UK and its constituent countries are prepared by the Government Actuary and are based on the estimated population at the middle of 2000.

They show that:

- The number of older people will increase relative to the number of young people with the average age of the population expected to rise from 38.8 years in 2000 to 42.6 years in 2025.
- 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
- 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 5.6 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.

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- The number of people over state pension age is projected to increase by 10.7 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.
- 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 dependency ratio, the ratio of children aged under 16 and people of pensionable age (allowing for the change in the state retirement age of women) to people of working age, is expected to fall gradually from 620 dependents per 1,000 working people in 2000 to about 570 in 2020. It will then increase rapidly, with longer-term projections suggesting a levelling off at just under 700 from the mid-2030s.

Other key projections show:

- The United Kingdom population is projected to increase gradually from an estimated 59.8 million in 2000 to reach 64.8 million by 2025. 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).
- 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.

## 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 & 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. Summary data on the 2000-based national population projections were previously published in a First Release on 15 November 2001 and in an article in *Population Trends 107*, the Spring 2002 issue of the ONS quarterly journal. 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](http://www.gad.gov.uk)). *National Population Projections: 2000-based* gives detailed results and a full account of the underlying assumptions.
3. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the ONS press office.
4. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. © Crown copyright 2002.