Office for
National Statistics

Statistical bulletin

Subnational population projections for England: 2016-based

Indication of the future size and age structure of the population in the regions, local authorities, clinical commissioning groups and NHS regions of England.

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To be announced

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1 . Main points

- The populations of all regions in England are projected to grow by mid-2026; regions in the north of England are projected to grow at a slower rate than those in the south.

- London is projected to be the fastest growing region; the North East is projected to have the slowest rate of growth.

- Nearly all local authorities are projected to grow by mid-2026; the populations of just 15 local authorities are projected to fall.

- Tower Hamlets is projected to be the fastest growing local authority in England; its population is projected to grow by 17.8% between mid-2016 and mid-2026.

- The number of people in older age groups is projected to grow faster than those in younger age groups in all but five local authorities; by mid-2026, a total of 97 local authorities are projected to have a population where at least one-quarter of the population is aged 65 and over.

- Over the 10 years to mid-2026, London is the region with the fastest increase in population of those aged 65 and over; however, it remains the region with the lowest old age dependency ratio.

2 . Statistician's comment

"While the overall populations of all regions in England are projected to increase over the next decade, reasons for these increases vary greatly depending on where you live. For instance, projected population change in London is mainly caused by natural change – the difference between the number of births and deaths – and not migration. This is because London's net inflow of international migrants is offset by a similar number of people moving to other parts of the UK. That contrasts with the North East, where growth is mostly down to migration. What's also clear is that the population is ageing in all regions, with the number of people aged 65 and over growing considerably faster than younger age groups."

Andrew Nash, Population Projections Unit, Office for National Statistics

3 . Things you need to know about this release

What are the projections?

The 2016-based subnational population projections provide statistics on the potential future size and age structure of the population in England at region, county, local authority, clinical commissioning group and NHS England region levels. They are used as a common framework for informing local-level policy and planning as they are produced in a consistent way. They will also be used in the production of the 2016-based household projections for local authorities, to be published in September 2018.

We publish subnational population projections every two years. These latest projections supersede the 2014-based projections.

Subnational population projections are not forecasts. They do not attempt to predict the impact of future government or local policies, changing economic circumstances or other factors that may influence demographic behaviour.

How are the projections created?

The projections take the [revised mid-2016 population estimates](#), published on 22 March 2018, as their starting point. The projected local authority populations for each year are calculated by ageing on the population from the previous year, applying local fertility and mortality rates to calculate the number of projected births and deaths, and then adjusting for migration into and out of each local authority.

We derive local authority fertility, mortality and migration assumptions using estimated values from the five years before the base projection year.

The total projected population for England is also constrained to the [2016-based national population projections](#) for England, by single year of age and sex, for each year in the projection.

Improvements we have made

In these projections we have updated the methods used to calculate local authority-level international migration outflows, asylum seeker flows, and migration flows between England and the three other countries of the UK. We have also improved the methodology used to project the population of foreign armed forces, home armed forces returning from Germany and their respective dependants.

As with the 2016-based national population projections and mid-2016 population estimates, we have made assumptions on the arrival of people from Syria through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS).

Further information is available in the [2016-based methodology report](#), including on the changes to source data.

Interpreting these statistics

Projections become increasingly uncertain the further they are carried forward. In the longer-term, demographic patterns are increasingly likely to differ from recent trends. This is particularly so for smaller geographical areas and detailed age and sex breakdowns. This bulletin mostly focuses on the first 10 years of the projections, up to mid-2026. The data files published with this release include projections going forward 25 years to mid-2041.

Please see the [Subnational population projections Quality and Methodology Information report](#) for information on the quality of these statistics.

4 . London is projected to be the fastest growing region in England

For England as a whole, the population is projected to grow by 5.9% over the next decade, from 55.3 million in mid-2016 to 58.5 million in mid-2026. More information on this is available in the [2016-based national population projections](#).

The population of every region in England is also projected to increase by mid-2026. The population of London is projected to grow fastest (Table 1), increasing by 774,000 to 9.5 million in mid-2026, a percentage change of 8.8%.

Table 1: Projected population change for English regions, mid-2016 to mid-2026

Region	Mid-2016 population	Mid-2026 population	Population change over 10 years	Percentage change
London	8,770,000	9,543,000	774,000	8.8
East	6,129,000	6,573,000	444,000	7.3
South West	5,517,000	5,881,000	364,000	6.6
South East	9,030,000	9,605,000	574,000	6.4
East Midlands	4,725,000	5,008,000	283,000	6.0
West Midlands	5,811,000	6,125,000	314,000	5.4
Yorkshire and The Humber	5,425,000	5,616,000	190,000	3.5
North West	7,224,000	7,467,000	243,000	3.4
North East	2,637,000	2,687,000	50,000	1.9
England	55,268,000	58,506,000	3,238,000	5.9

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Because of rounding, figures may not sum.

As Figure 1 shows, regions in the north of England are projected to grow at slower rates than the rest of the country. The slowest growing region is the North East with a projected population increase of 1.9% (50,000 people) by mid-2026.

Figure 1: Projected percentage population change for regions in England, mid-2016 to mid-2026

Download the data

What causes population change?

Population change is the result of:

- natural change – the difference between births and deaths

- net migration – the difference between the number of people moving into and out of an area

Migration is further divided into:

- within UK migration – the movement of people between the four countries of the UK and between areas in England

- international migration – the movement of people into and out of the country

Regions in England have differing patterns of population change, as shown in Table 2. For example, London is the region with the highest projected level of net international migration over the 10 years to mid-2026. However, it also has a high net within UK migration outflow. These more or less offset each other, meaning that the overall impact of migration on the population is very small and most of London's projected growth results from natural change. This contrasts with the North East, where natural change is small and most growth results from migration.

The age structure of an area also has an impact on its projected population change. For example, the number of births in an area will be influenced by the number of women of childbearing age present in the population, which can in turn be affected by the age structure of people moving into and out of the area. Likewise, areas with younger populations tend to have fewer deaths.

In addition, past fertility and mortality rates can influence the underlying age structure of the starting population of the projections. For example, high fertility rates in the past may have resulted in larger cohorts in specific age groups within an area.

Use the interactive population pyramid (Section 6) to visualise the age structure of regions in England and how they are projected to change over time.

Table 2: Projected population change for English regions by component of change, mid-2016 to mid-2026

Region	Population change	Natural change	All migration net	Net within UK migration	Net international migration	Other
London	774,000	771,000	-3,000	-757,000	754,000	700
South East	574,000	175,000	398,000	207,000	191,000	1,700
East	444,000	135,000	310,000	181,000	129,000	900
South West	364,000	15,000	340,000	267,000	74,000	8,800
West Midlands	314,000	164,000	149,000	-23,000	173,000	1,500
East Midlands	283,000	77,000	206,000	73,000	133,000	900
North West	243,000	132,000	110,000	-10,000	120,000	1,000
Yorkshire and The Humber	190,000	106,000	83,000	-23,000	106,000	2,700
North East	50,000	1,000	48,000	4,000	44,000	1,400

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Because of rounding and constraining methods, figures may not sum.

2. Within UK migration includes figures for cross-border migration (moves to and from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) and internal migration (moves between areas in England).

3. Natural change is defined as the difference between births and deaths.

4. "Other" is the combination of people arriving from Syria under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, and also armed forces returning from Germany and their dependants.

5 . Nearly all local authorities are projected to grow by mid-2026

The populations of all but 15 local authorities in England are projected to grow by mid-2026. Table 3 shows the local authorities projected to have the highest percentage population change in the 10 years to mid-2026. Five of the fastest growing local authorities are in London, with the fastest growth of all being in Tower Hamlets.

Although every region in England is projected to grow by mid-2026, there are considerable differences at the local authority level; slow growing regions can contain fast growing local authorities and vice versa.

Table 3: Local authorities in England with the highest projected percentage population growth between mid-2016 and mid-2026

Local authority	Region	Mid-2016 population	Mid-2026 population	Population change over 10 years	Percentage change
Tower Hamlets	London	300,900	354,500	53,600	17.8
Corby	East Midlands	68,300	79,000	10,700	15.6
Barking and Dagenham	London	208,200	240,300	32,100	15.4
Coventry	West Midlands	353,200	405,700	52,500	14.9
Aylesbury Vale	South East	192,700	220,100	27,400	14.2
Hackney	London	273,200	309,500	36,200	13.3
Dartford	South East	105,100	118,600	13,500	12.8
Central Bedfordshire	East	276,700	312,200	35,500	12.8
Greenwich	London	279,100	314,700	35,600	12.7
Havering	London	253,400	284,900	31,500	12.4

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Because of rounding, figures may not sum.

Table 4 shows the local authorities projected to have the lowest percentage population change in the 10 years to mid-2026. The majority of these are in the north of England: four are in the North West and two are in Yorkshire and The Humber.

The City of London is projected to have the greatest decline in population, with a change of negative 13% by mid-2026. This is followed by the Isles of Scilly, with a change of negative 5%.

It is important to note the actual change in the number of people when reviewing the projections for smaller local authorities, as large percentage changes can come from comparatively small changes in the population. The changes seen for the City of London and Isles of Scilly result from declines of 900 and 100 people respectively.

Table 4: Local authorities in England with the lowest projected percentage population change between mid-2016 and mid-2026

Local authority	Region	Mid-2016 population	Mid-2026 population	Population change over 10 years	Percentage change
City of London	London	7,200	6,300	-900	-13.1
Isles of Scilly	South West	2,300	2,200	-100	-5.0
Barrow-in-Furness	North West	67,500	64,400	-3,100	-4.6
Copeland	North West	69,300	66,400	-2,900	-4.2
Richmondshire	Yorkshire and The Humber	53,900	52,300	-1,600	-3.0
Blackpool	North West	140,000	137,300	-2,700	-1.9
Hyndburn	North West	80,400	79,200	-1,200	-1.5
Kensington and Chelsea	London	156,800	155,100	-1,700	-1.1
North East Lincolnshire	Yorkshire and The Humber	159,800	158,700	-1,100	-0.7
Tamworth	West Midlands	77,000	76,500	-500	-0.6

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Because of rounding, figures may not sum.

Figure 2 is an interactive tool that illustrates how the populations of each local authority in England are projected to change. By choosing a local authority, you will see total population change, natural change, net international migration and net within UK migration over the 10 years to mid-2026.

**Figure 2: Population change for local authorities in England between mid-2016 and mid-2026**

Download the data

6 . The number of older people is projected to increase in all areas

The number of people aged 65 and over in England is projected to grow by 19% between mid-2016 and mid-2026. The proportion is also expected to grow in all regions (Figure 3). London's population aged 65 and over is projected to grow fastest with an increase of almost 24.8% over the 10-year period, from 1.02 million to 1.27 million by mid-2026.

Figure 3: Percentage population change in English regions by age groups, mid-2016 to mid-2026

0 to 15   16 to 64   65 and over
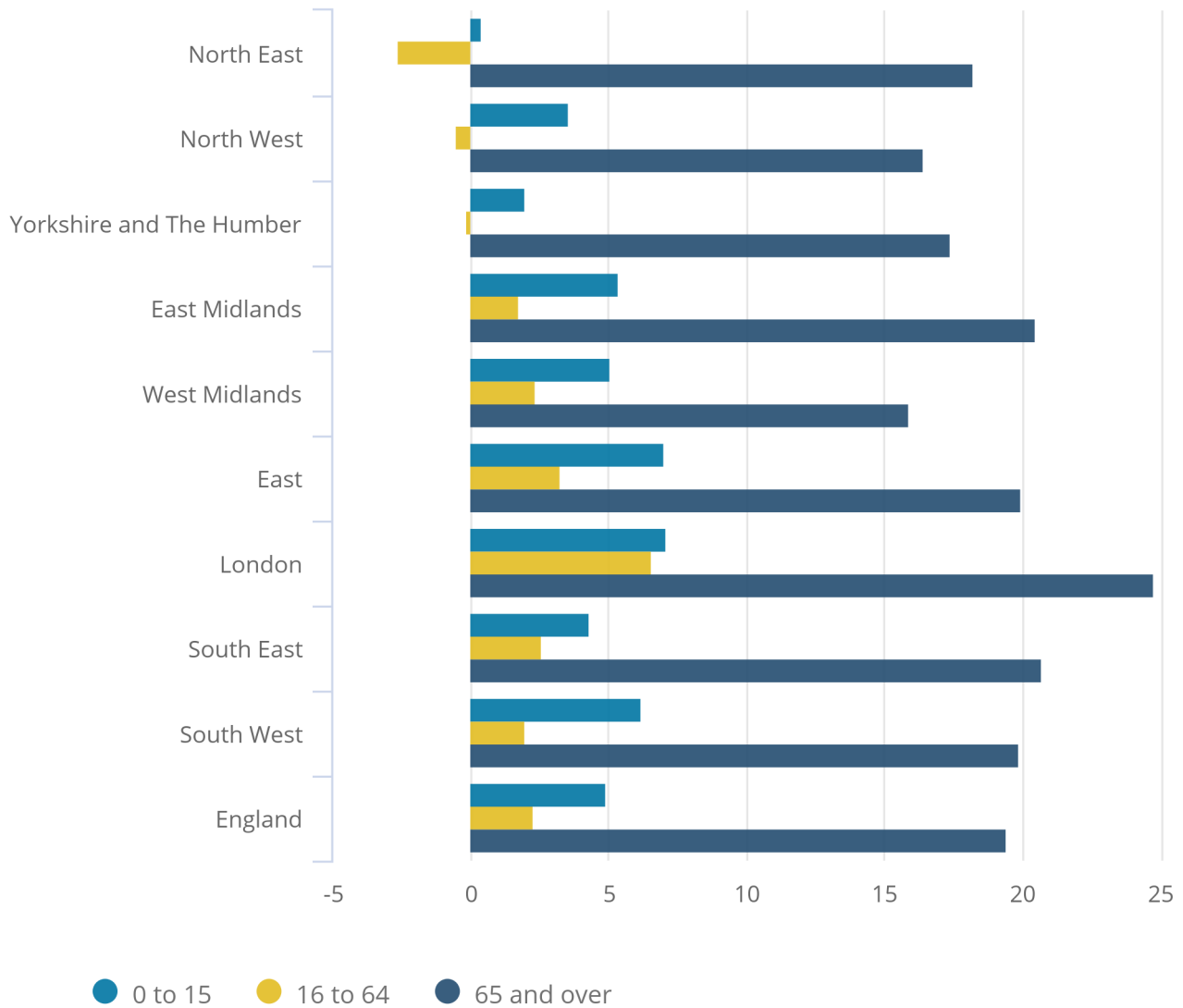
Source: Office for National Statistics

The number of people aged 65 and over is also projected to increase for every local authority in England in the 10 years to mid-2026. Over the same period, the proportion of people in this age group is projected to increase in all but five local authorities – Bexley, Brentwood, City of Bristol, Coventry, and Havering. In those areas, the population growth rate is projected to be faster for those aged under 65 years.

In mid-2016, 36 local authorities in England had a population where at least one-quarter of people were estimated to be aged 65 and over. This figure is projected to increase nearly threefold to 97 local authorities by mid-2026. This is a slight decrease from the 2014-based projection when 103 local authorities were projected to have at least one-quarter of the population aged 65 and over in mid-2026. The change is partly because of lower assumed rates of mortality improvement in the 2016-based national population projections, to which the 2016-based subnational projections are constrained.
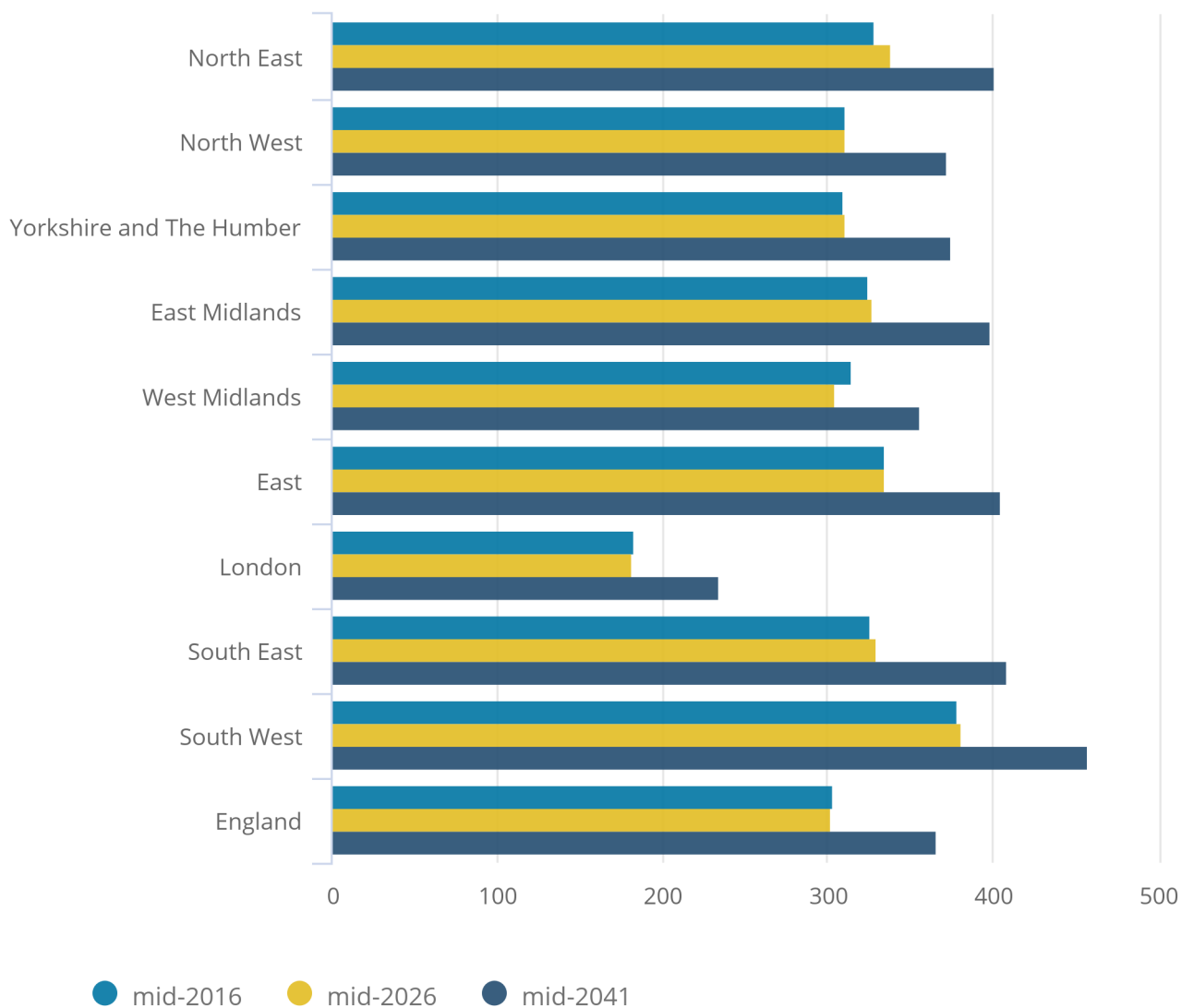
The old age dependency ratio (OADR) of an area can change as a consequence of an ageing population. OADR is defined as the proportion of people of State Pension age (SPA) relative to the working age population, expressed as the proportion of dependants per 1,000 working age population. For example, an OADR of 303 indicates there are 303 people of SPA per 1,000 working aged people. Under current legislation, SPA will gradually rise to age 67 years for all sexes by 2028. Note that being over SPA does not necessarily mean someone is retired, nor are all working age people in employment.

The projected OADRs in mid-2026 are similar to those from mid-2016 for all regions in England (Figure 4). The South West is the region with the highest OADR in both mid-2016 and mid-2026, at 379 and 383 respectively. The lowest OADR is seen in London, with 183 in mid-2016 and 182 by mid-2026. The similarity in OADRs between mid-2016 and mid-2026 can be explained by the planned increases to SPA under current legislation.

In the longer-term, OADRs are projected to increase in every English region by mid-2041 as the 1960s baby boomers reach SPA from the late 2020s, and life expectancy continues to improve.

Figure 4: Old age dependency ratio by region in England, mid-2016, mid-2026 and mid-2041

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Old age dependency ratio (OADR) is defined as the proportion of people of State Pension age (SPA) relative to the working age population, expressed as the proportion of dependents per 1,000 working age population.

Use the interactive map (Figure 5) to see how local authority-level OADRs and population age structures are projected to change by broad age groups between mid-2016 to mid-2026.

Figure 5: Population age composition by broad age groups and old age dependency ratio for local authorities in England, mid-2016 and mid-2026

Download the data (old age dependency)
Download the data (population age composition)

Our interactive population pyramids (Figure 6) allow you to explore the results of the 2016-based population projections for local authorities, regions and England as a whole. By choosing the name of an area you can see how the size and age structure of its population is projected to change. You can create age groups by highlighting your desired ages, and can also compare two areas at once.

Figure 6: Population age structure by single year of age and sex for local authorities, counties, regions and England as a whole, mid-2016 to mid-2041

7 . Links to related statistics

In conjunction with today's release (24 May 2018), we also publish a range of related statistics:

- a range of datasets containing all the projections data; this includes summaries and detailed data, as well as projected population by components

- the subnational projections are also on the Nomis website, where you can use the "Query data" option to do customised extracts for your chosen year, country, sex and age combination

In addition, we have some frequently asked questions about the statistics.

8 . Projections for other countries in the UK

Scotland

National Records of Scotland (NRS) publishes subnational population projections every two years. The population projections for Scottish Areas (2016-based) were published on 28 March 2018. These projections are constrained to the 2016-based national population projection for Scotland.

Wales

Local area population projections are produced by the Welsh Government.

The latest local authority population projections were published on 6 October 2016 and cover the 25 years from 2014 to 2039. These projections do not constrain to ONS's national population projections.

The latest projections use mid-2014 as their starting point. The 2017-based local area population projections for Wales will be published in 2019.

Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) publishes subnational population projections every two years. The 2016-based population projections for areas within Northern Ireland were published on 26 April 2018. These projections are constrained to the 2016-based national population projection for Northern Ireland.

Subnational population projections across the UK

Subnational population projections across the UK provides a comparison with the data sources and methods used to create the subnational population projections in the other UK countries.

9 . Quality and methodology

The subnational population projections Quality and Methodology Information report contains important information on:

- the strengths and limitations of the data and how it compares with related data

- uses and users of the data

- how the output was created

- the quality of the output including the accuracy of data

We have also published a methodology report to provide information on how the projections were produced. The report also summarises the improvements we have made to our methods and changes to source data.