

Statistical bulletin

People in England and Wales with a different address in the UK a year before the census: Census 2021

Characteristics of people who moved a year prior to Census 2021 and 2011 Census, with detailed migration datasets. Regional and local authority inflows and outflows.



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Release date:
6 September 2023

Next release:
To be announced

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1 . Main points

- In 2021, 5.9 million people in England and Wales had a different address in the UK one year before Census Day (10.1% of usual residents aged one year and over), a decrease from 6.1 million (11.1%) in 2011.
- In 2021, 5.4% of people (3.2 million) had a different address in the same local authority a year before Census Day, a decrease from 6.5% (3.6 million) in 2011, while the proportion with an address in a different local authority was 4.7% (2.8 million), a slight increase from 4.6% (2.5 million) in 2011.
- In the year prior to Census 2021, London was the only region with a net outflow, where more people had moved away from London to elsewhere in England and Wales (3.8% of the population of London) than had moved from elsewhere in England and Wales into London (1.7% of the population of London).
- A fifth of people (21.5%) living in private rented homes had a different address in the UK a year before Census 2021, a smaller proportion than in 2011 (31.9%).
- Of people who lived in owner-occupied homes, 6.2% had a different address in the UK one year before Census 2021, a larger proportion than in 2011 (5.2%).
- A quarter (25.6%) of full-time students had changed address within the UK a year before Census 2021, almost unchanged since 2011 (25.4%).

2 . People with a different address in the UK a year before the census

In 2021, 5.7 million people in England (10.1% of usual residents aged one year and over) and 276,000 people (9.0%) in Wales had a different address in the UK one year before Census Day (21 March 2021). This is a lower proportion than in 2011 when 11.1% of people in England and 10.4% of people in Wales had a different address in the UK one year before Census Day.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is likely to have discouraged some people from changing address. Legislation did not prevent house moves, but people were advised to take extra precautions. However, some people may have moved because of the pandemic, for example young adults returning to the family home and people moving out of urban areas.

The proportion of people in England and Wales who had an address one year ago in another local authority in the UK increased to 4.7% in 2021 from 4.6% in 2011. A small proportion of people moved to England and Wales from Northern Ireland and Scotland (0.06% in 2021 and 0.09% in 2011).

The proportion of people who had a different address within their local authority decreased to 5.4% in 2021 compared with 6.5% in 2011.

Fewer than 1% of people (0.9%) moved from outside the UK in 2021, a decrease from 1.1% in 2011. For more information, see our [International migration, England and Wales: Census 2021 article](#).

Census 2021 does not record the moves of those aged under one year as they do not have an address one year ago. An estimate was made for these moves in 2011 but has been removed from analysis in this bulletin for comparability with 2021.

Tenure

A fifth of people (21.5%) living in private rented accommodation on Census Day had a different address in the UK one year before Census 2021. This is the highest proportion of any tenure type; however, it is a large decrease from 31.9% in 2011. In 2021, 11.7% of this group had a different address within the same local authority, a decrease from 19.1% in 2011.

The Coronavirus Act 2020 provided protection to social and private tenants. The provisions increased the notice periods landlords were required to provide to tenants when seeking possession of a residential property in the year before the census. This may have reduced the number of people changing addresses. For full information, read [Legislation.gov.uk's Coronavirus Act 2020](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/7).

People living in owner-occupied accommodation had the smallest proportion of people who moved within the UK a year before Census 2021 (6.2%). This is the only group to have a higher proportion of people who moved within the UK the year before Census 2021 than in 2011 (5.2%). This change is likely to be affected by the stamp duty holiday in place from July 2020 that temporarily reduced Stamp Duty Land Tax on residential properties purchased in the months prior to the census. For more information, see [GOV.UK's Stamp Duty Land Tax: temporary reduced rates guidance](https://gov.uk/guidance/stamp-duty-land-tax-temporary-reduced-rates-guidance).

Non-dependent children who moved back into family homes during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic may have contributed to the decrease in moves into private rented accommodation and the increase in moves into owner-occupied homes. Families with all non-dependent children have high rates of home ownership compared with "other household types", which includes unrelated adults and full-time students with high rates of private renting. For more information, see our [Household characteristics by tenure, England and Wales: Census 2021 article](#).

Figure 1: A fifth of people living in private rented homes had a different address in the UK a year before Census 2021, a smaller proportion than in 2011

Usual residents in England and Wales aged one year and over with a different address in the UK a year before census by tenure, 2011 and 2021

Notes:

1. For comparability, 2021 lower tier local authority boundaries are used for Census 2021 and 2011 Census.
2. Tenure refers to the tenure of the household that usual residents lived in on Census Day; the tenure of the household they lived in a year before the census is unknown.

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Age and sex

People across most age and sex groups were less likely to have a different address in the UK one year prior to Census 2021 compared with 2011 Census. In 2021, 24.6% of females aged 16 to 24 years had a different address within the UK a year before the census, the highest of any age-sex group.

The age-sex distribution in 2021 was similar to that in 2011 for those who moved within the same local authority. The proportion decreased across all age groups for both males and females.

The proportion of females aged 16 to 24 years who changed address between local authorities increased from 12.2% in 2011 to 13.9% in 2021. This may be explained by students moving between local authorities. The increase in people aged 25 to 34 years changing address may also have been affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This is because high proportions of this group are non-dependent children that may have returned to a family home because of home-working or furlough.

Figure 2: People aged 16 to 34 years were the most likely to have changed address, although less likely in 2021 than in 2011

All usual residents in England and Wales aged one year and over with a different address in the UK a year before census by broad age group and sex, 2011 and 2021

Notes:

1. For comparability, 2021 lower tier local authority boundaries are used for Census 2021 and 2011 Census.

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Socio-economic status (including students)

The [National Statistics Socio-economic Classification \(NS-SEC\)](#) provides an indication of socio-economic position based on responses to economic activity status, occupation, and employment history questions in Census 2021. It is an Office for National Statistics standard classification.

Full-time students were most likely to have a different address in the UK one year prior to Census Day. A quarter of full-time students (25.6%) had a different address in the UK a year before the census, almost unchanged from 25.4% in 2011. A student's usual residence is their term-time address regardless of where they were on Census Day. There was some evidence of changes to the term-time population because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. For more information on how we ensured an accurate estimate of students at their term-time address, see our [Methodology for accurately enumerating students in Census 2021](#).

People who have never worked and are long-term unemployed were the second most likely to have moved within the UK the year prior to 2011 Census (12.9%). A much smaller proportion (6.8%) of this group moved within the UK the year prior to Census 2021. The proportion who moved within the same local authority fell from 8.6% in 2011 to 4.0% in 2021.

Figure 3: Full-time students were the most likely to have changed address in the UK the year before Census 2021 (25.6% of full-time students), almost unchanged from 25.4% in 2011

Usual residents in England and Wales aged 16 years and over with a different address in the UK prior to census by NS-SEC, 2021 and 2011

Notes:

1. For comparability, 2021 lower tier local authority boundaries are used for Census 2021 and 2011 Census.
2. NS-SEC refers to the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification.

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Disability

A smaller proportion of people who were not disabled under the Equality Act had a different address in the UK a year before Census 2021 (10.5% of usual residents aged one year and over who were not disabled). The census question to identify disability in 2021 differed to the 2011 question. For more information, read our [Disability, England and Wales: Census 2021 bulletin](#).

The proportion of disabled people who were limited a lot in their day-to-day activities who moved within the UK also decreased to 6.5% in 2021, from 6.8% in 2011.

In 2021, 9.0% of disabled people who were limited a little in their day-to-day activities had a different address in the UK a year prior to the census, an increase from 6.5% in 2011. In 2021, the proportion of this group who had moved between local authorities was 4.2%, an increase from 2.4%. This increase may be linked to the age distribution of disabled people who were limited a little, as a higher proportion were in younger age groups in 2021 than in 2011. The proportion of 16 to 24 year olds who were disabled with their activities limited a little increased from 3.3% in 2011 to 8.6% in 2021.

Figure 4: A larger proportion of disabled people who were limited a little in their day-to-day activities moved within the UK the year before Census 2021 than 2011 Census

Usual residents in England and Wales aged one year and over with a different address in the UK prior to census by disability, 2021 and 2011

Notes:

1. For comparability, 2021 lower tier local authority boundaries are used for Census 2021 and 2011 Census.

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Family Status

People living in communal establishments were most likely to move within the UK in the year prior to Census 2021 (42.6% of usual residents aged one year and over living in communal establishments).

There has been an increase in movements between local authorities for those living in couple families and for non-dependent children of lone parents. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic may have also been a factor in non-dependent children returning to a parental home.

People moving within the same local authority decreased across all family types. The largest decreases were for those living in lone parent families.

Figure 5: People who lived in a communal establishment on Census Day were most likely to have a different address a year before

Usual residents in England and Wales aged one year and over with a different address in the UK prior to census by family status, 2021 and 2011

Notes:

1. For comparability, 2021 lower tier local authority boundaries are used for Census 2021 and 2011 Census.

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3 . Inflows – region and local authority

The regions with the highest inflows are the South East (2.6%) and South West (2.5%). Inflows refer to usual residents living in the area on Census Day with an address one year ago in another area in England and Wales, presented as a proportion of usual residents aged one year and over in the area. There was a similar pattern in 2011. Across regions, the proportion of inflows has increased, except for in London where regional inflows have decreased to 1.7% in 2021 from 2.2% in 2011.

Figure 6: London is the only region to have a decrease in the inflows between 2011 (2.2%) and 2021 (1.7%)

Inflows of usual residents aged one year and over with a different address in a different region in England and Wales prior to census, 2021 and 2011

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Figure 7: Interactive map showing local authority inflows

Inflows of usual residents aged one year and over with an address in a different local authority in England and Wales a year prior to census as a proportion of usual residents aged one year and over, 2021 and 2011

Notes:

1. For comparability, 2021 lower tier local authority boundaries are used for Census 2021 and 2011 Census.

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The local authorities in 2021 with the highest inflows from elsewhere in England and Wales were London local authorities and student areas. There was a similar pattern in 2011.

Of the 10 highest proportional inflows in 2021, 8 were in London, and the other 2 were Cambridge and Oxford. The highest was City of London (18.2%) and then Islington (11.6%). The local authority in Wales with the highest inflows was Ceredigion (6.4%).

The local authorities with the lowest inflows in 2021 were Barrow-in-Furness in England (1.8%) and Caerphilly in Wales (2.0%).

There was relatively little change in the local authority inflows between 2011 and 2021.

The largest increase in England was City of London, from 15.7% in 2011 to 18.2% in 2021, followed by West Lancashire, with 3.9% in 2011 to 6.2% in 2021. The largest increase in inflows in Wales was in Neath Port Talbot, increasing from 2.3% in 2011 to 3.3% in 2021.

The largest decrease in England was Haringey, falling to 7.2% in 2021 from 8.8% in 2011. The largest decrease in Wales was Ceredigion, falling to 6.4% in 2021 from 7.5% in 2011.

4 . Outflows – region and local authority

Outflows refer to usual residents living in another area in England and Wales, with an address one year ago in the area, presented as a proportion of usual residents aged one year and over in the area.

In 2021, London had the highest outflows. This is explained by a number of factors, including past high international inflows resulting in high internal outflows as these migrants move out of London. For further details, see our [International migration, England and Wales: Census 2021 bulletin](#). It is also partly explained by people moving to London prior to having children, having children in London and then moving away from London as a family with children.

London's outflow increased to 3.8% in 2021 from 2.7% in 2011, while most regional outflows decreased across the other regions. Increasing outflows were observed between 2012 and 2020 prior to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic; we provide further details about the movement of people into and out of London in our [Population estimates for the UK, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: mid-2020 bulletin](#). The coronavirus pandemic could also be a contributing factor, as increased remote working reduced the need for people to live near their workplace.

Figure 8: London has increased outflows from 2.7% in 2011 to 3.8% in 2021

Outflows of usual residents aged one year and over with a different address in a different region in England and Wales prior to census, 2021 and 2011

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The 16 local authorities with the highest outflows were all London local authorities. City of London (16.3%) and Hammersmith and Fulham (14.3%) have the highest outflows. This was a similar pattern to 2011. In Wales, the local authority with the highest outflows was Cardiff (4.5%).

Figure 9: Interactive map showing local authority outflows

Outflows of usual residents aged one year and over with a different address in a different local authority in England and Wales prior to census as a proportion of usual residents aged one year and over, 2021 and 2011

Notes:

1. For comparability, 2021 lower tier local authority boundaries are used for Census 2021 and 2011 Census.

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The local authority in England with the smallest outflow was Barrow-in-Furness (1.9%). The local authorities with the smallest outflows in Wales were Merthyr Tydfil and Blaenau Gwent (2.2%).

All 10 local authorities with the highest percentage point increases in outflows were in London, with the highest being Lambeth which increased from 10.1% in 2011 to 13.5% in 2021. The largest percentage point increase in Wales was Neath Port Talbot, increasing from 2.5% to 3.2%.

5 . Net flows – region and local authority

Because of increased inflows and decreased outflows, most regions saw an increase in net flows, meaning more people moved into the area than out of the area (from the rest of England and Wales). The largest net inflow as a proportion was in the South West (0.7% of usual residents aged one year and over in the area).

London was the only region in 2021 with a net outflow, which increased from 0.5% net outflow in 2011 to 2.1% in 2021.

Figure 10: London was the only region to have a net outflow in 2021

Net flows of usual residents aged one year and over with a different address in a different region in England and Wales prior to census as a proportion of usual residents aged one year and over, 2021 and 2011

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Figure 11: Interactive map showing local authority net flows

Net flows of usual residents aged one year and over with a different address in a different local authority in England and Wales prior to census as a proportion of usual residents aged one year and over, 2021 and 2011

Notes:

1. For comparability, 2021 lower tier local authority boundaries are used for Census 2021 and 2011 Census.

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The highest net inflows in 2021 (as a proportion of usual residents aged one year and over) were in student areas, which was similar to 2011. The local authorities with the highest net inflows were Nottingham in England (3.1%) and Ceredigion in Wales (2.0%).

The areas with the highest net outflows were in London. The largest net outflow in England was Haringey (3.4%), and in Wales was Wrexham (0.3%).

The areas in England and Wales with the highest net outflows in 2011 were also in London, partly because of the higher international inflow. The scale of net outflows was larger in 2021 than in 2011. All of the top 10 local authorities with the largest increase in net outflows were in London. The largest percentage point change in net outflows was Haringey, with a 3.4% outflow in 2021 and a 0.6% outflow in 2011.

The areas with percentage point increases in net inflows were more rural areas and student areas in small cities and towns.

6 . People with a different address one year before the census in the same area

The proportion of people moving within their region decreased across all regions. The largest percentage point difference from 2011 to 2021 was for Wales, which decreased to 7.1% from 8.7%. Wales had a lower proportion of moves (7.1%) than any region of England. The highest proportion of moves within the region was for London (9.7%).

Figure 12: The proportions of moves within each region decreased across all regions in England and Wales

Usual residents aged one year and over with a different address within their region in England and Wales prior to census as a proportion of usual residents aged one year and over, 2021 and 2011

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Figure 13: Interactive map showing moves within local authorities

Proportion of usual residents aged one year and over with a different address in the same local authority in England and Wales prior to census as a proportion of usual residents aged one year and over, 2021 and 2011

Notes:

1. For comparability, 2021 lower tier local authority boundaries are used for Census 2021 and 2011 Census.

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In 2021, the local authorities with the highest proportions of people with a different address one year before the census in the same local authority were student areas. Oxford had the highest proportion in England in 2021 (11.0%), and the highest in Wales was Cardiff (9.2%).

Most local authorities (288 of 321) had fewer moves within the local authority in 2021 than in 2011. The local authority with the largest percentage point decrease was Hastings (from 8.8% in 2011 to 5.2% in 2021). All local authorities in Wales also saw a decrease of within local authority moves, with the largest percentage point decrease being in Newport with 6.4% in 2011 and 4.4% in 2021.

7 . Detailed migration data

[Detailed migration data](#)

Dataset | Released 6 September 2023

Detailed migration statistics provide the characteristics of people or households who have moved within England and Wales, or from another country into England and Wales, during the year before Census 2021.

8 . Glossary

Address one year ago

The place where a person was living one year before Census Day (21 March 2021), that is, in March 2020. People could choose from:

- same as the current address
- student term-time or boarding school address in the UK
- another address in the UK
- outside of the UK

Communal establishment

A managed communal establishment is a place that provides managed full-time or part-time supervision of residential accommodation. Examples include:

- university halls of residence and boarding schools
- care homes, hospitals, hospices and maternity units
- hotels, guest houses, hostels, and bed and breakfasts, all with residential accommodation for seven or more guests
- prisons and other secure facilities
- Single Living Accommodation (SLA) in military bases
- staff accommodation
- religious establishments

It does not include sheltered accommodation, serviced apartments, nurses' accommodation, and houses rented to students by private landlords. These are households.

Disability

In Census 2021, people who assessed their day-to-day activities as limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses were considered disabled.

This definition of a disabled person meets the [Government Statistical Service harmonised standard for measuring disability](#) and is in line with the [Equality Act \(2010\)](#). This requires that a person has a physical or mental impairment, and that the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

Therefore, those reporting conditions that limited their day-to-day activities a little or a lot were classified as disabled. People who had no long-term physical or mental health conditions, or who had conditions that did not limit their day-to-day activities, were classified as non-disabled. For details on changes to questions between 2011 and 2021, see Section 10 of our [Unpaid care and protected characteristics, England and Wales: Census 2021 article](#).

Family

A family is a married, civil partnered, or cohabiting couple with or without children, or a lone parent with at least one child who lives in the same household. Children can be dependent or non-dependent. A family can have a mixture of dependent and non-dependent children. All families have a Family Reference Person (FRP).

Net flow

The outflows from an area (people usually resident in a different area with an address in the area one year prior to the census) subtracted from the inflows to an area (people usually resident in an area with an address outside of the area one year prior to the census). In this bulletin inflows, outflows and net flows are limited to flows between areas within England and Wales and are presented as a proportion of the usually resident population aged one year and over on Census Day.

Non-dependent child

Sometimes called "adult children", a non-dependent child is a person living with their parent or parents and who is either aged 19 years or over and has no spouse, partner or child living in the household, or aged 16 to 18 years and not in full-time education and has no spouse, partner or child living in the household.

Tenure type

Whether a household owns or rents the accommodation that it occupies.

Owner-occupied accommodation can be:

- owned outright, which is where the household owns all of the accommodation
- owned with a mortgage or loan
- part owned on a shared ownership scheme

Rented accommodation can be:

- private rented; for example, rented through a private landlord or letting agent
- social rented through a local council or housing association

This information is not available for household spaces with no usual residents.

Usual resident

A usual resident is anyone who on Census Day, 21 March 2021, was in the UK and had stayed or intended to stay in the UK for a period of 12 months or more, or had a permanent UK address and was outside the UK and intended to be outside the UK for less than 12 months.

9 . Measuring the data

Reference date

The census provides estimates of the characteristics of all people and households in England and Wales on Census Day, 21 March 2021. It is carried out every 10 years and gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales.

We are responsible for carrying out the census in England and Wales but will also release outputs for the UK in partnership with the Welsh Government, the National Records of Scotland (NRS), and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). The census in Northern Ireland was also conducted on 21 March 2021, whereas Scotland's census was moved to 20 March 2022. All UK census offices are working closely together to understand how this difference in reference dates will affect the UK-wide population and housing statistics, in terms of both timing and scope.

Response rate

The person response rate is the number of usual residents for whom individual details were provided on a returned questionnaire, divided by the estimated usual resident population.

The person response rate for Census 2021 was 97% of the usual resident population of England and Wales, and over 88% in all local authorities. Most returns (89%) were received online. The response rate exceeded our target of 94% overall and 80% in all local authorities.

10 . Strengths and limitations

Quality considerations, along with the strengths and limitations of Census 2021 more generally, are provided in our [Quality and methodology information \(QMI\) for Census 2021](#). For further information on data quality assurance, see our [Measures showing the quality of Census 2021 estimates methodology](#). Read more about the specific quality considerations for demography and migration in our [Demography and migration quality information for Census 2021 methodology](#).

Further information on our quality assurance processes is provided in our [Maximising the quality of Census 2021 population estimates methodology](#).

11 . Cite this bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 6 September 2023, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [People with a different address in March 2020 to Census Day 2021, England and Wales: Census 2021](#)