

JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2025/26

Population Projections¹

Summary points

- In mid-2025 Bristol local authority exceeds half a million people for the first time.
- The population is projected to increase by 10% over the next decade (2022-32), which is the 2nd highest percentage increase of the England Core Cities and higher than England at 6.4%. The biggest factor in this population change is net international migration
- Between 2022 and 2032, Bristol's child population (aged 0-17) is likely to fall to a lower level than earlier projections showed, whilst the population of older people aged 75 and over is projected to increase by 14%.
- Subnational population projections are not forecasts and do not attempt to predict potential changes in international migration. There is uncertainty over future directions and levels of international migration.

Population Trends

Figure 1 shows how the population of Bristol is projected to change over the next decade 2022-32, together with the mid-year population estimates for 2018 to 2024 and the superseded 2018-based projection.

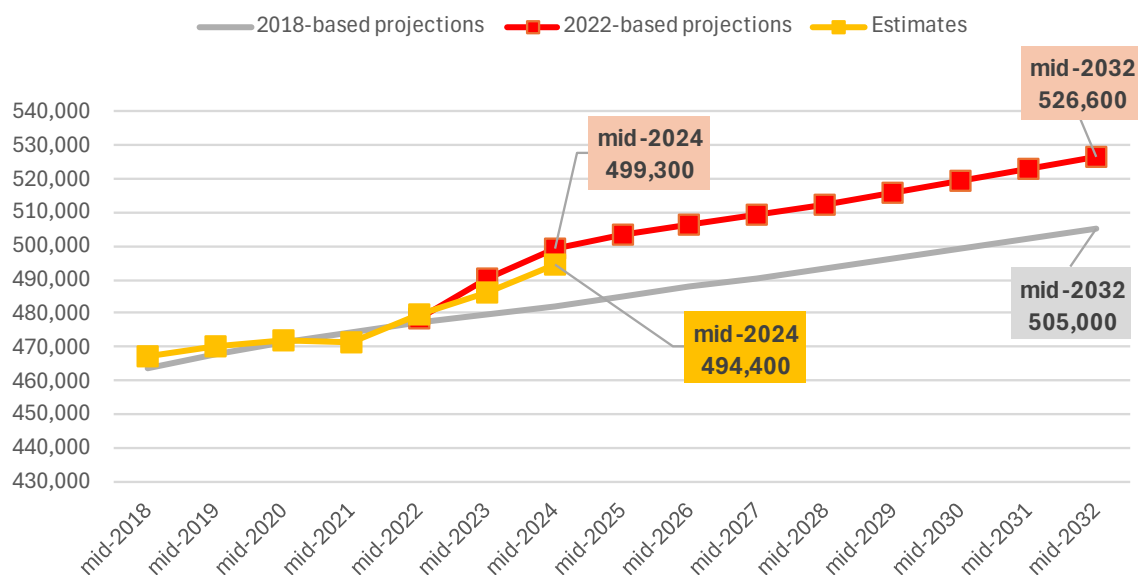


Fig 1. 2022-based population projections compared to 2018-based population projections
Source: ONS population estimates and ONS Sub-national Population Projection

¹ Persons included are all those people who usually live in an area, regardless of nationality. Arriving international migrants are included in the usually resident population if they remain in the UK for at least a year and emigrants are excluded if they remain outside the UK for at least a year. Students and school boarders are included at their term time address.

For mid-2024, there is a difference between the published provisional estimate of 494,400 and the 2024 projection which is higher at 499,300.

If recent trends continue, the population of Bristol is projected to increase by 48,000 (10%) to 526,600 over the next decade (2022-32) and potentially rise to 552,800 by 2042². This compares to a 6.4% projection for England over the decade. The biggest factor in this population change is net international migration – this is different to the majority of areas in England, where net internal migration (ie to/from other parts of the UK) is projected to be the biggest factor in population change.

Figure 2 shows levels of annual population change between 2001 to 2024 together with projected levels of annual population change up to 2032.

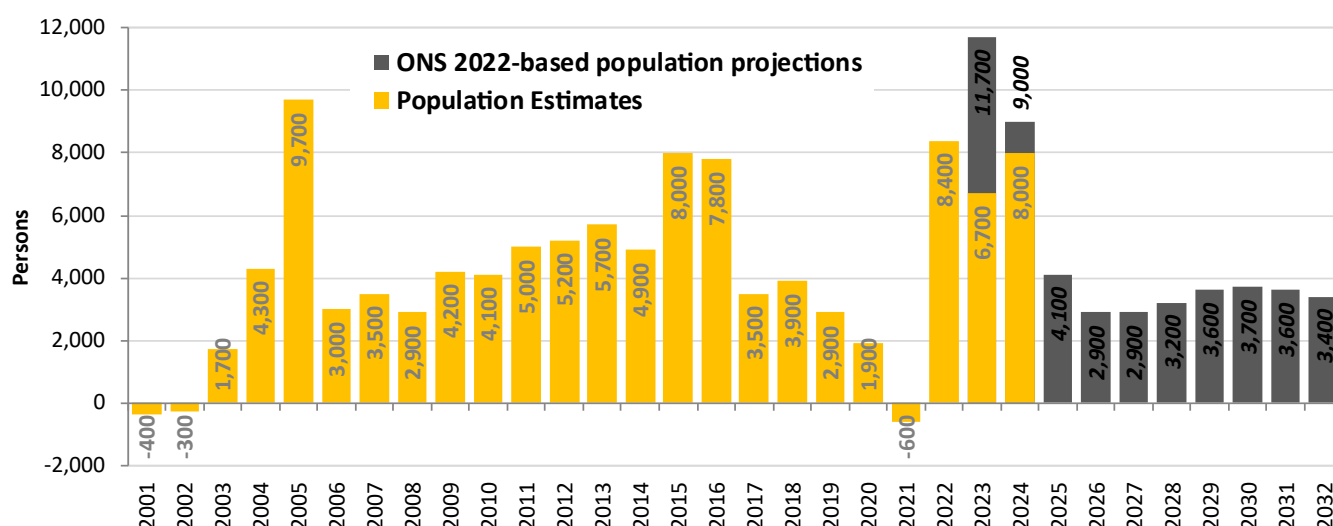


Fig 2. Annual population change 2001-2032

Source: ONS population estimates and ONS 2022-based Sub-national Population Projections

Components of population change

Population change is projected by looking at births and deaths (natural change) and people moving in and out of areas. Figure 3 shows the projected components of population change in Bristol between 2022 and 2032.

Between 2022 and 2032 in Bristol, there is projected to be 55,887 births and 34,423 deaths. This means natural change would increase the population in Bristol by 4.5%, compared with an increase of 0.2% in England. The number of births in Bristol is much lower than what was

² ONS 2022-based Sub-national Population Projections, published July 2025. Assumptions for future levels of births, deaths and migration are based on the 2018 to 2022 trend. They show what the population will be if trends continue. The projections do not attempt to predict the impact that future government or local policies, changing economic circumstances, local development policy, the capacity of an area to accommodate population or other factors might have on demographic behaviour.

previously projected in the 2018-based projections, reflecting the continued fall in births and birth rates nationally.

Net internal migration (people moving to and from other local authorities in the UK) is projected to reduce the population by 23,258, with 433,157 people moving to the area and 456,415 people moving from the area between 2022 and 2032. This would decrease the population in Bristol by 4.8%.

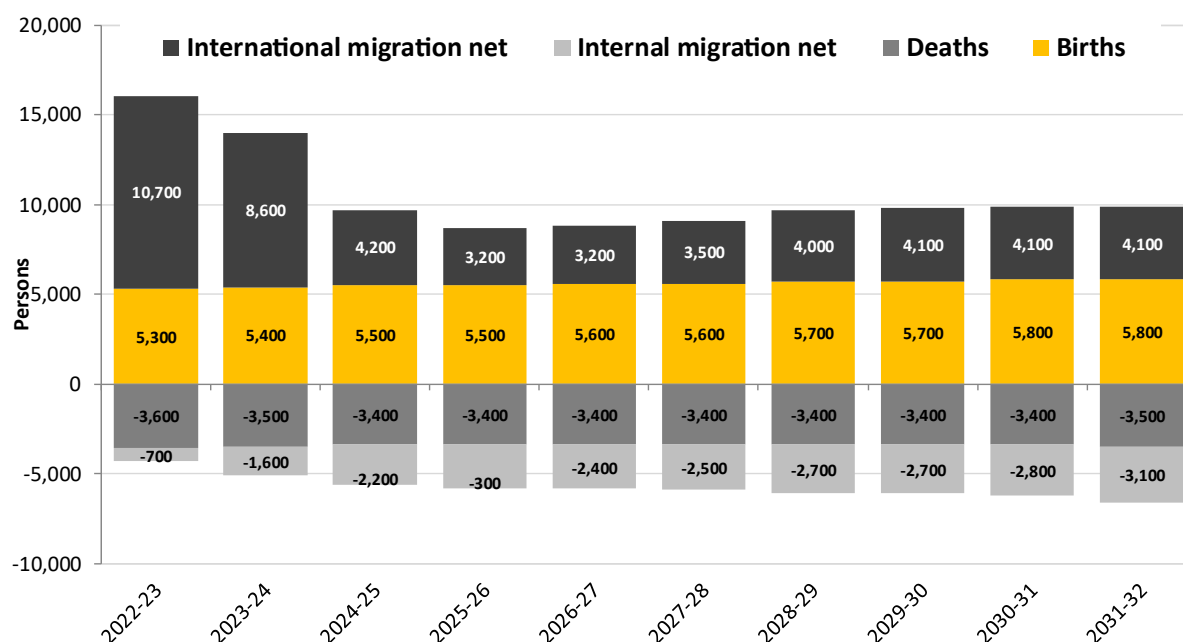


Fig 3. Components of population change in Bristol between 2022 and 2032

Source: ONS 2022-based Sub-national Population Projections

Net international migration is the biggest factor in the projected population change in Bristol. This is different to the majority of areas in England, where net internal migration (ie to/from other parts of the UK) is projected to be the biggest factor in population change.

Net international migration is projected to increase the population by 49,757, with 98,766 people moving to the area and 49,009 people moving from the area between 2022 and 2032. This would increase the population in Bristol by 10.4%, compared with an increase of 6.5% in England.

Age Profile in 2032

The median age in Bristol is projected to remain at 33 years between 2022 and 2032. In England, the median age is projected to be 41 years by 2032. Figure 4 shows the population profile by age in 2032 and compares it to 2022. The 20 to 29 age group is set to see the largest change.

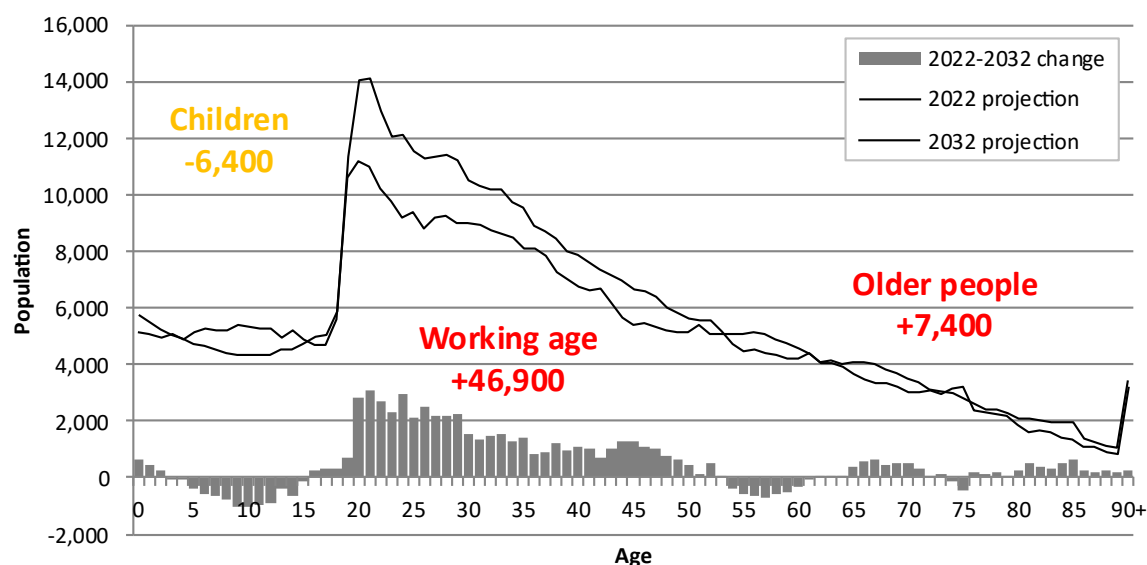


Fig 4. Population age profile of Bristol in 2032 compared to 2022

Source: ONS 2022-based Sub-National Population Projections

Age	change 2022-32				
	mid-2022	mid-2032	number	%	England %
Age 0-15	82,400	76,100	-6,300	-8%	-7%
Age 16-24	77,000	92,500	15,500	20%	12%
Age 25-49	186,200	219,900	33,700	18%	10%
Age 50-64	71,800	69,400	-2,400	-3%	-3%
Age 65-74	32,300	35,800	3,500	11%	20%
Age 75+	29,000	32,900	3,900	14%	21%
All ages	478,600	526,600	48,000	10%	6%

Fig 5: Population Projections 2022-2032 by age band

Source: ONS 2022-based Sub-national Population Projections

Child projections

Figure 6 shows how the number of children (aged 0-17) living in Bristol is projected to change over the next decade 2022-32, together with the mid-year population estimates for 2018 to 2023 and the superseded 2018-based projection.

The new 2022-based projections show that the number of children (aged 0-17) living in Bristol is likely to fall to a lower level than earlier projections showed, with 5,700 fewer children in

2032. Overall children (aged 0-17) will make up 16% of the total population in Bristol in 2032 compared to 19% in 2022.

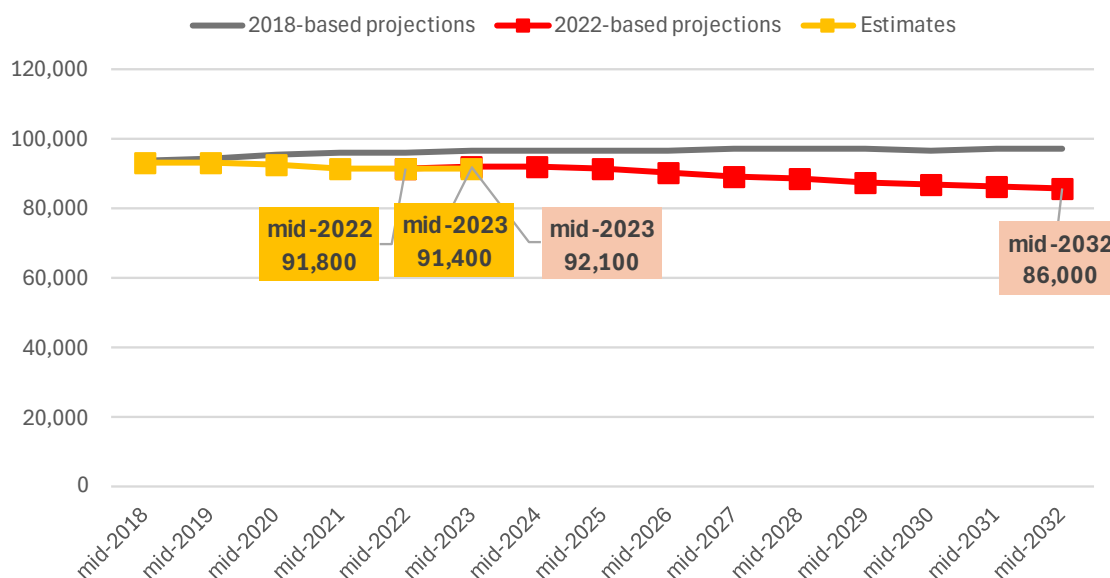


Fig 6. Projection of children (aged 0-17) in Bristol in 2032 compared to 2018-based projections
Source: ONS Sub-National Population Projections

Figure 7 shows a more detailed age breakdown. Children aged 0 to 4 years are projected to see a small increase, suggesting that the recent trend of falling births may be turning around. Children aged 5 to 15 years are projected to fall.

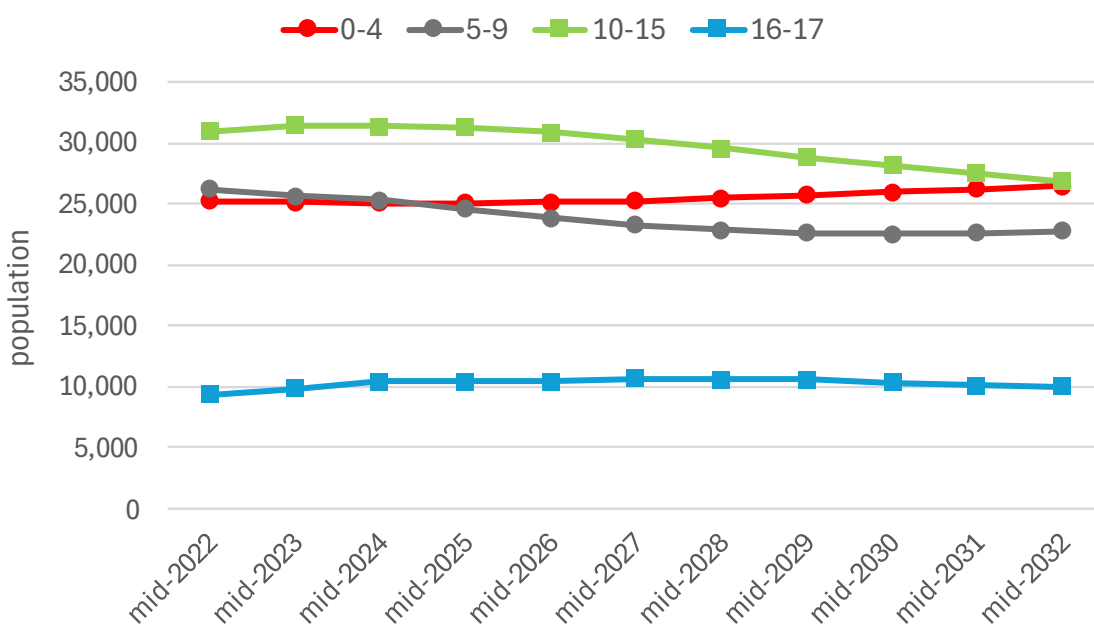


Fig 7: Child Population Projections 2022 to 2032
Source: ONS 2022-based Sub-national Population Projections

Older People projections

The new 2022-based projections show that the number of older people (aged 65 years and over) living in Bristol is likely to increase over the decade from 61,300 in 2022 to 68,700 in 2032. Figure 8 shows a more detailed age breakdown. All age bands are projected to increase over the decade.

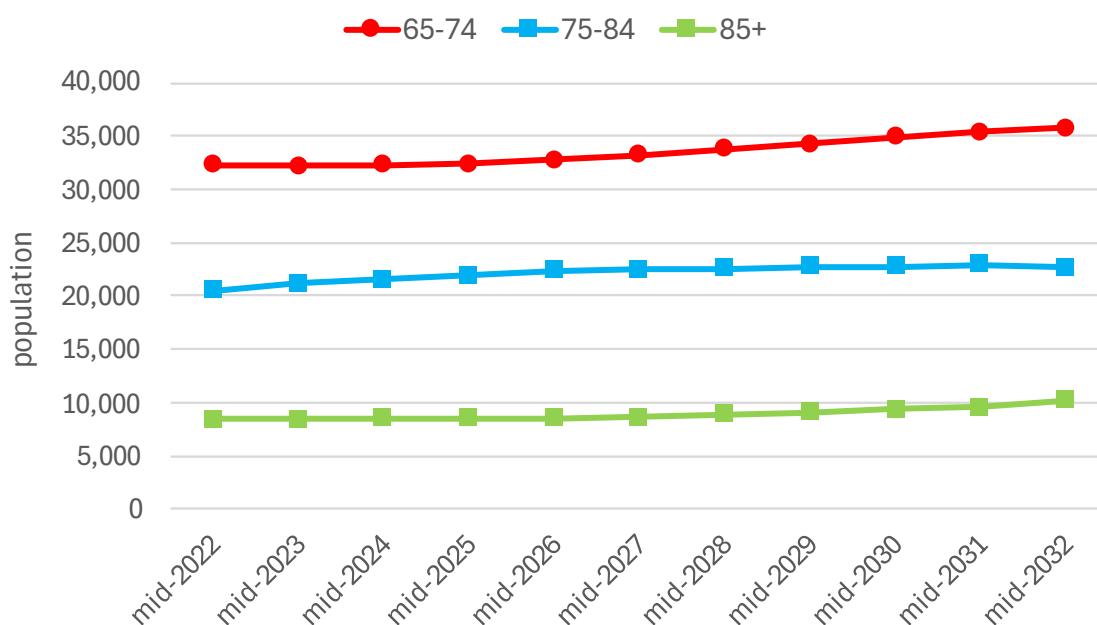


Fig 8: Older People Population Projections 2022 to 2032

Source: ONS 2022-based Sub-national Population Projections

Overall older people as a proportion of the total population in Bristol will remain around 13%. In England, older people make up 19% of the total population and this is projected to increase to 22% of the total population by 2032.

Variant projections

Figure 9 shows the different population projections possible for Bristol in 2032 based on different scenarios tested by ONS. The variants range from 483,200 (Zero net migration) to 550,900 (High migration).

The “Migration category” variant is recommended by ONS as the best projection to use currently, as it takes into account the most recent long-term migration estimates available when the projections were published in June 2025.

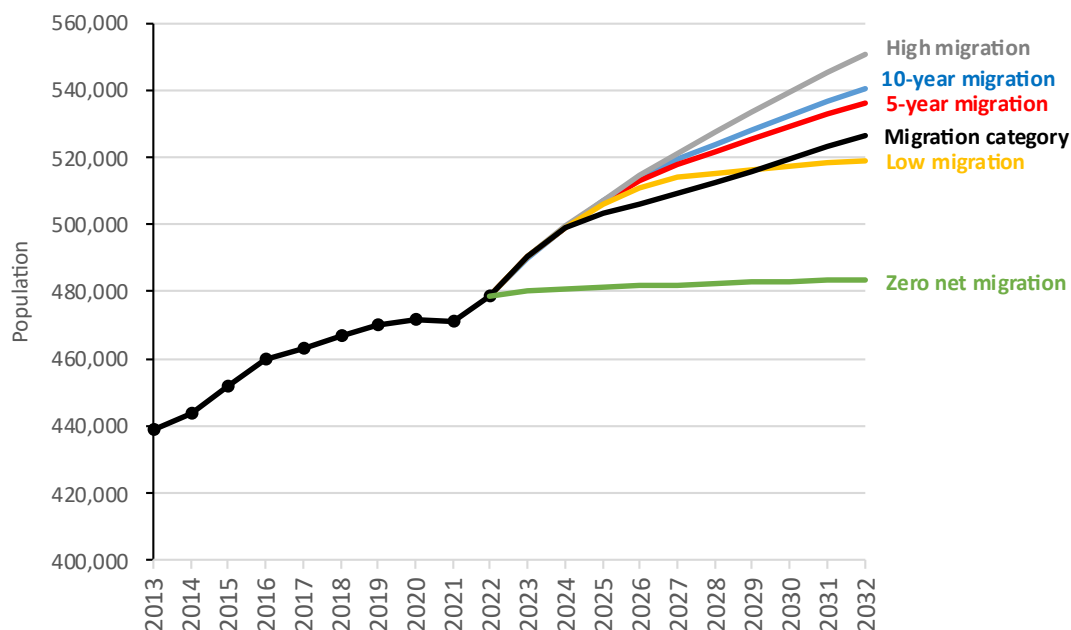


Fig 9. Variant population projections showing a range of future demographic scenarios
 Source: ONS Sub-National Population Projections

Further links: For further information about how the population is projected to change in Bristol and other areas see the new [ONS Population Projection Explorer](#) and [ONS 2022-based Sub-national Population Projections](#)

Date updated: July 2025