

JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2026/27

Population Projections¹

Uncertainty of Population Projections

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.

Because of more up-to-date migration data, ONS have used the 'migration category variant' in place of the usual 'principal' projections as this is a better reflection of short-term population change.

Demographic behaviour used to develop assumptions for projections is inherently uncertain and so projections become increasingly uncertain the further they are carried forward. This is particularly so for smaller geographical areas, such as local authorities, and detailed age and sex breakdowns.

The data used for the subnational projections may not necessarily capture the entire local context in which population change occurs. At the local level, population change is influenced by many factors not considered in the projections, such as economic development and housing policies.

Summary points

- 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 projected to be 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%.

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.

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to change over the next decade 2022-32, together with the mid-year population estimates for 2018 to 2025 and the superseded 2018-based projection.

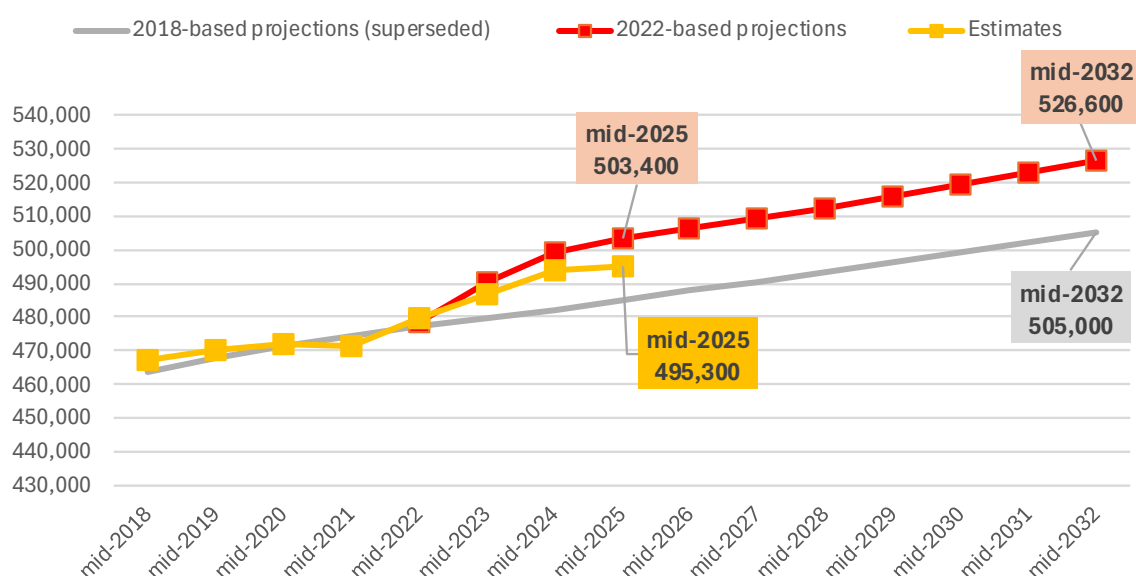


Fig 1. 2022-based population projections compared to population estimates and 2018-based population projections

Source: ONS population estimates and ONS Sub-national Population Projection

For mid-2025, there is a difference between the published provisional estimate of 495,300 and the 2025 projection which is higher at 503,400.

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 (i.e. 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 2025 together with projected levels of annual population change up to 2032.

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.

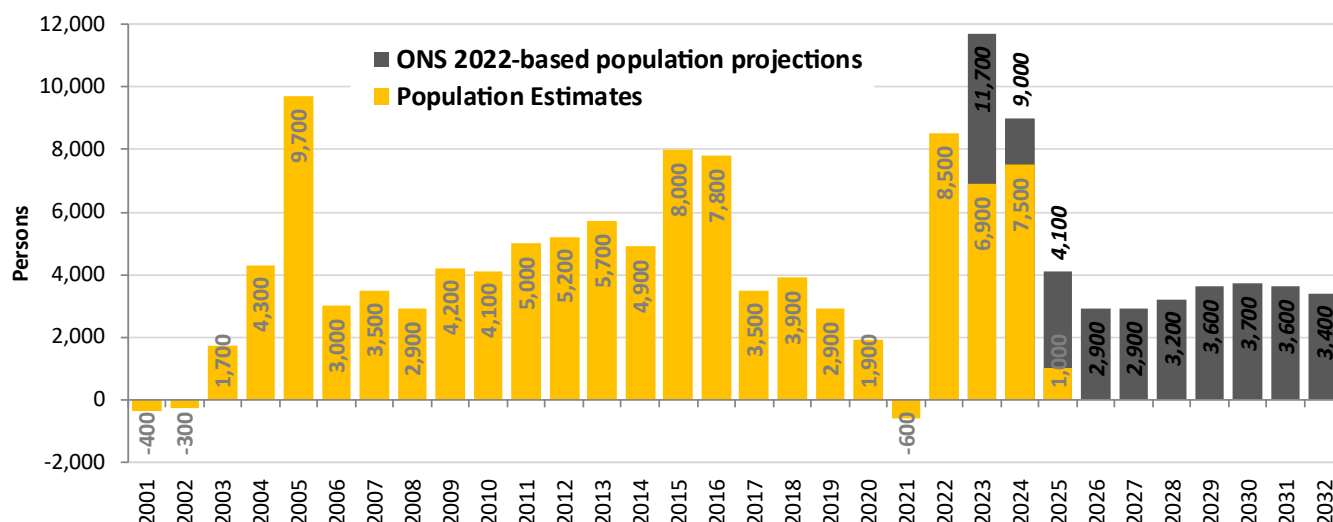


Fig 2. Annual population change 2001-2032

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.

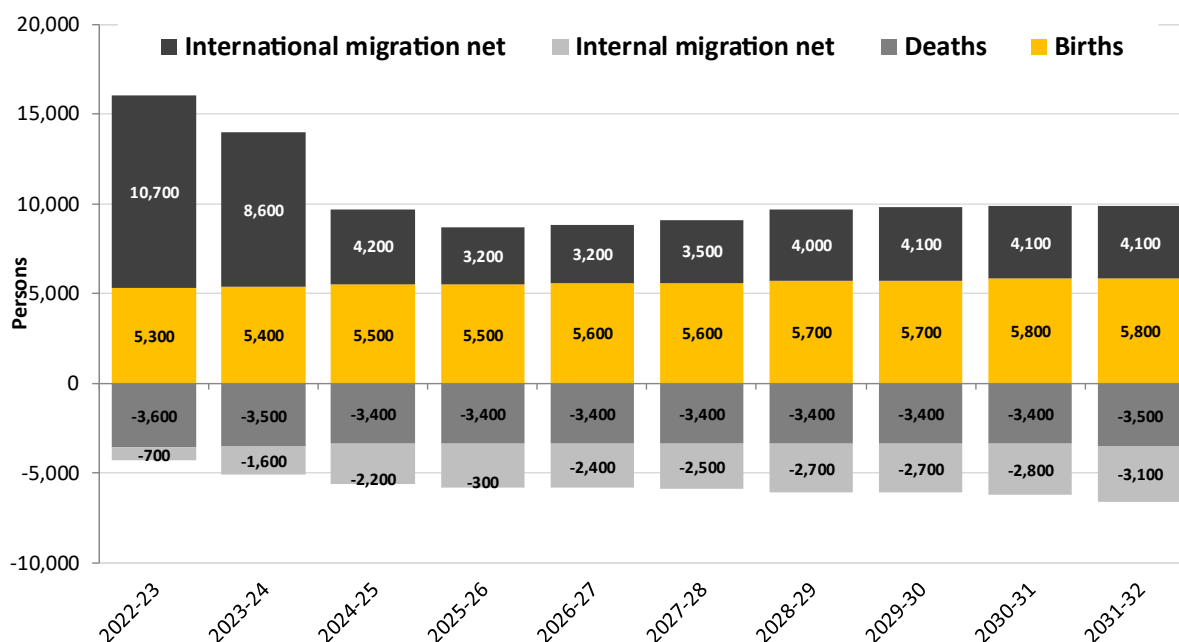


Fig 3. Components of population change in Bristol between 2022 and 2032

Source: ONS 2022-based Sub-national Population Projections

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 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%.

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 (i.e. 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.

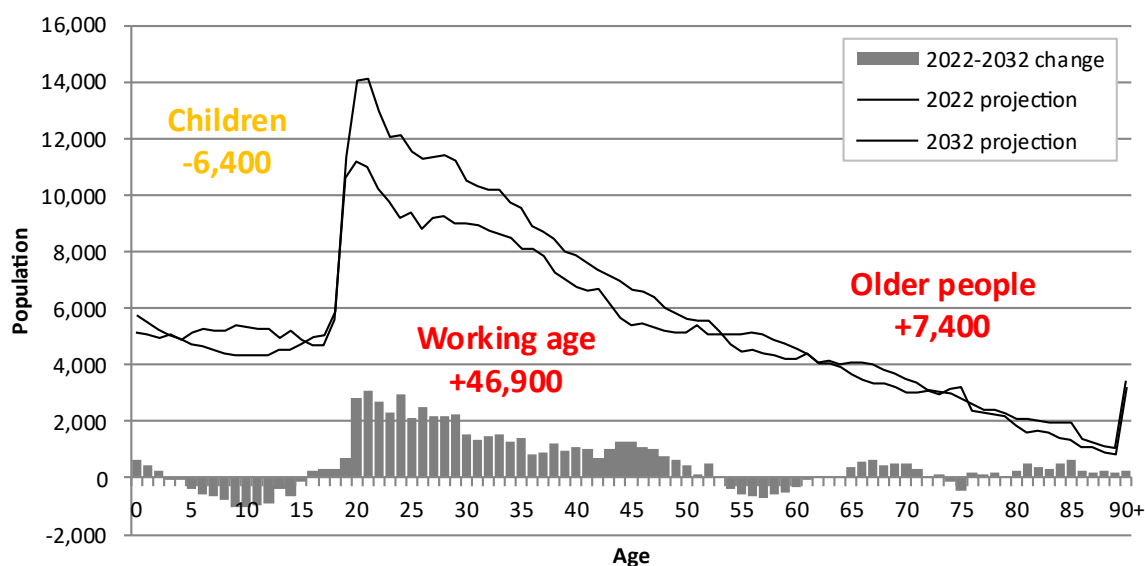


Fig 4. Population age profile of Bristol in 2032 compared to 2022
Source: ONS 2022-based Sub-National Population Projections

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 2025 and the superseded 2018-based projection.

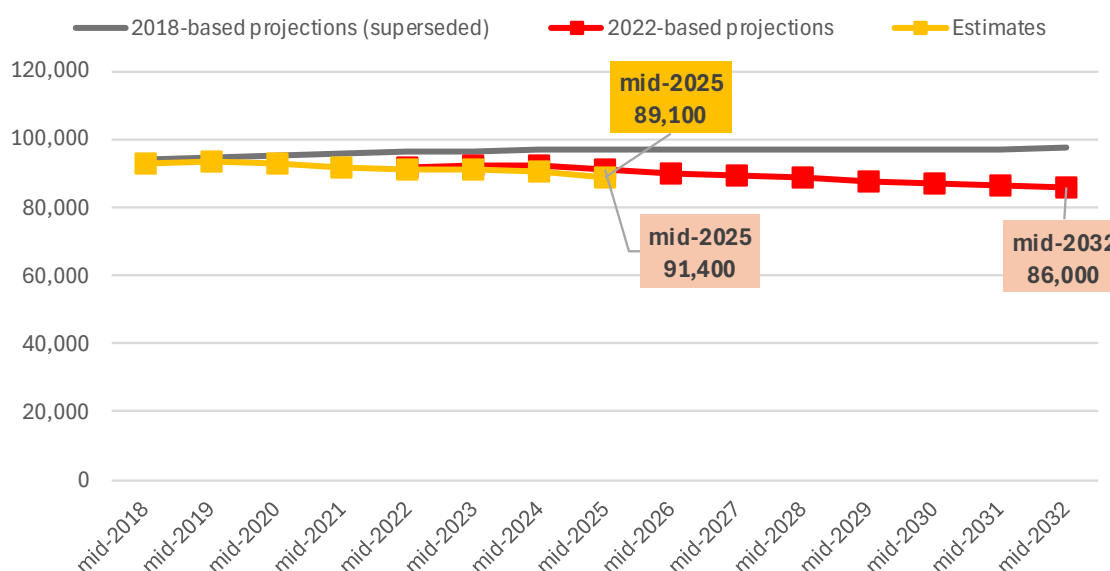


Fig 6. Projection of children (aged 0-17) in Bristol in 2032 compared to population estimates and 2018-based projections

Source: ONS Sub-National Population Projections

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.

Figure 7 shows a more detailed age breakdown. Children aged 0 to 4 years are projected to see a small increase. Children aged 5 to 15 years are projected to decrease.

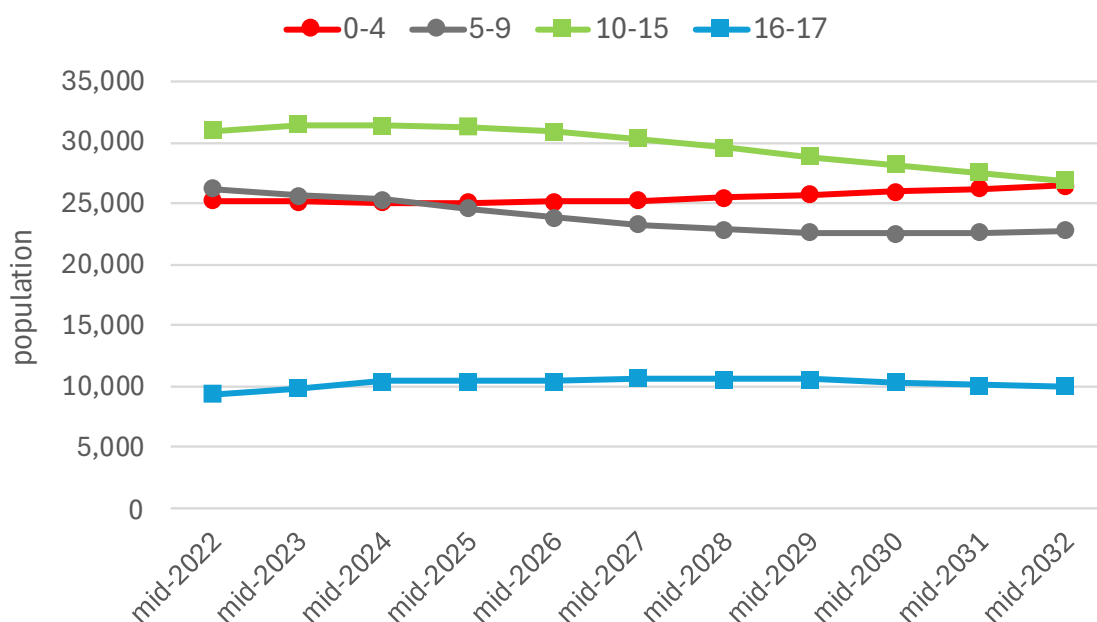


Fig 7: Child Population Projections 2022 to 2032

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.

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.

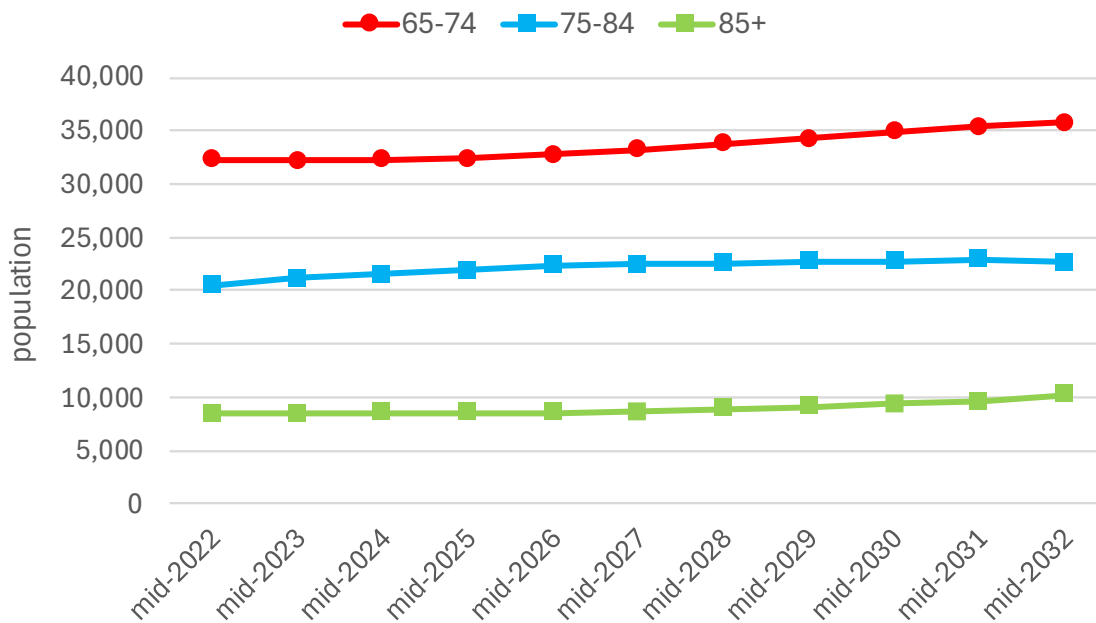


Fig 8: Older People Population Projections 2022 to 2032

Source: ONS 2022-based Sub-national Population Projections

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).

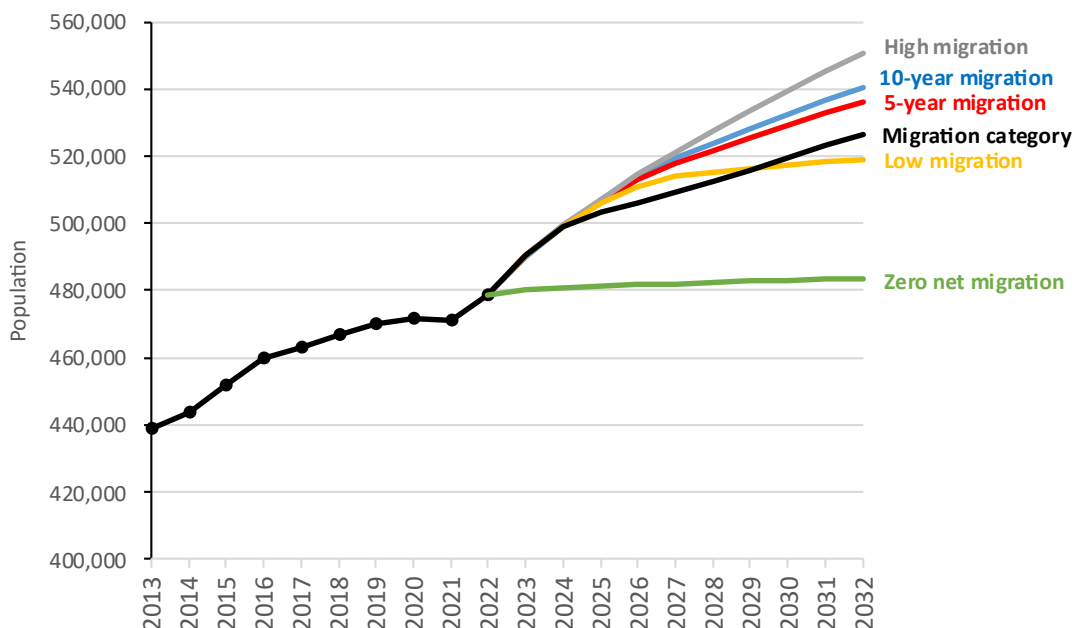


Fig 9. Variant population projections showing a range of future demographic scenarios

Source: ONS Sub-National Population Projections

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.

Further links:

The Population of Bristol report <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/population>

Population-related JSNA Profiles include:

1. JSNA - Population Profile
2. JSNA - Births
3. JSNA - Migration

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](#)

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