

JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2025/26

Population

Summary points

- In mid-2025 Bristol local authority is projected to exceed half a million people for the first time. The population is projected to increase to 526,600 people by 2032 – a 10% increase between 2022-32 (England 6.4%) and the 2nd highest percentage increase of the Core Cities in England.
- Looking back over the last decade (2014-2024) Bristol had the 3rd largest percentage population increase of the Core Cities in England and Wales, after Manchester and Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Bristol's population grew by an estimated 50,600 people over the decade, a 11.4% increase (England and Wales grew by 7.6%).
- Following the Covid-19 pandemic, the population increased significantly. The main factor behind this growth was net international migration. For the third consecutive year, net international migration increased to the highest level seen in more than two decades.
- The majority of immigration is now non-EU nationals, both international students and workers, mainly from India, China, Nigeria, Pakistan and Ukraine. The latest estimates however indicate a slowing of these trends due to recent changes to government policies.
- The most recent National Insurance Statistics for 2024/25, show that the number of National Insurance Registrations by people from India and Nigeria fell sharply in the 12-month period up to March 2025.
- Bristol has a relatively young age profile with a median age of 33.4 years compared to 40.3 years nationally.

Population trend

The usually resident population of Bristol local authority is estimated to be 494,400¹, the 8th largest of the 12 UK 'Core Cities'.

Following a period of population decline in the post war years, the population of Bristol stabilised in the 1990s. This was followed by a period of unprecedented population growth until the EU Referendum in 2016. Between 2016 and 2020, the population of Bristol increased annually but at a slower rate than the previous decade. Following the Covid-19 pandemic,

¹ ONS Mid-2024 (provisional) Population Estimates, published 30 July 2025. A usual resident is anyone who 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. Students are counted at their term time address.

Bristol has seen a large increase in the population, at levels similar to the years before the EU Referendum (Figures 1 and 2).

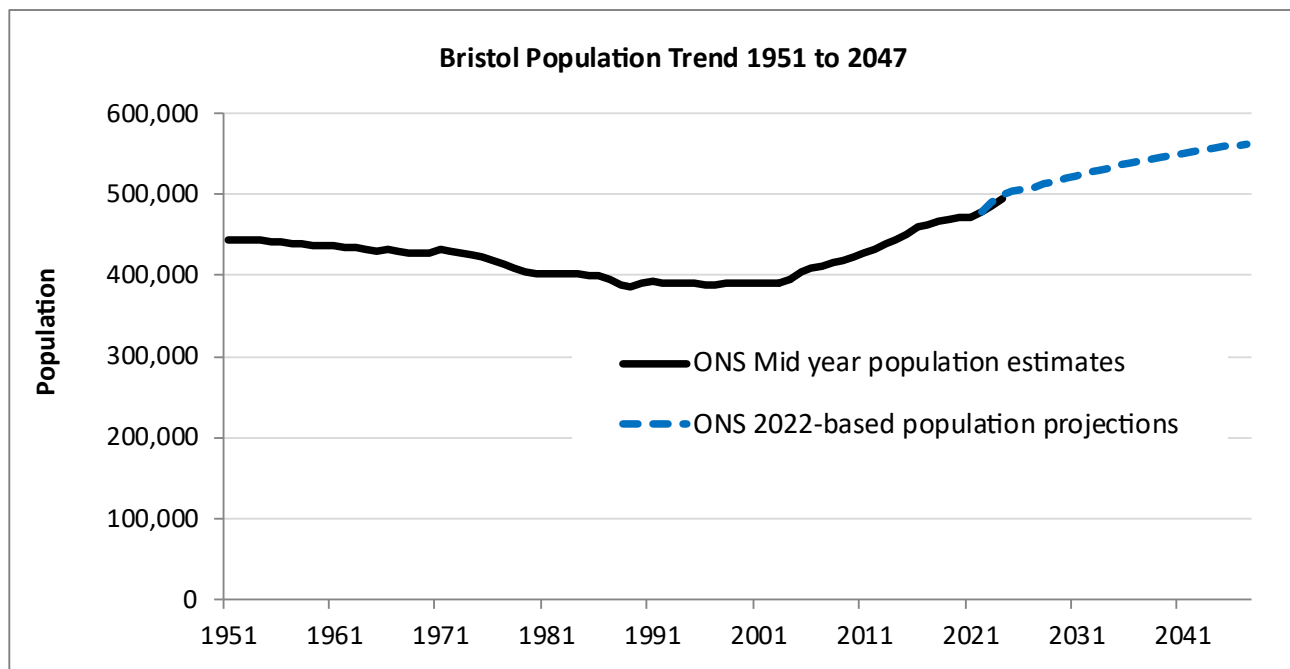


Figure 1 Bristol Population Trend 1951 to 2047

Source: ONS Population Estimates and 2022-based Population Projections. ONS licensed under the Open Government Licence.

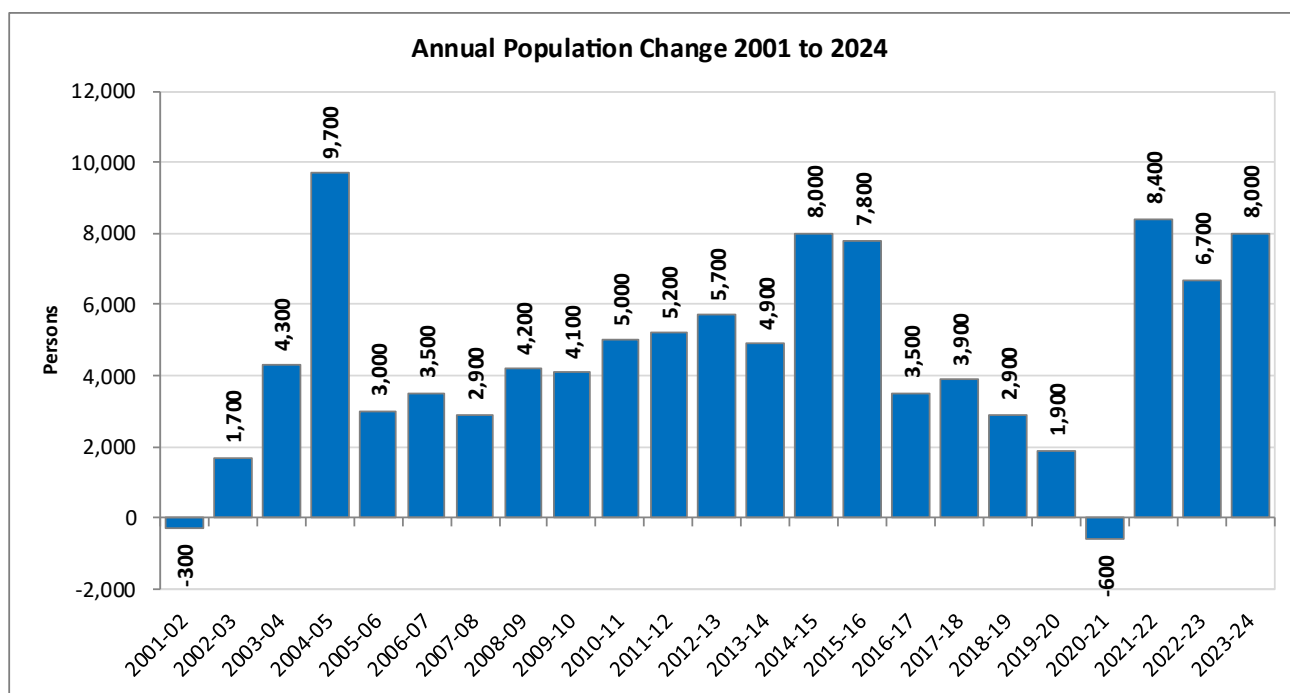


Figure 2 Bristol Population Estimates 2001 to 2024

Source: ONS Population Estimates. ONS licensed under the Open Government Licence.

In the 12 months to mid-2024, the population of Bristol grew by 8,000 (1.6%) up from 486,400 (mid-2023). The main factor behind this growth was the continuing increase in international migration including students and people coming from abroad to work.

Over the last decade (2014-2024) Bristol’s population grew by an estimated 50,600 people – a 11.4% increase. England and Wales grew by 7.6%.

Components of population change

Natural change

Annual population change is driven by births, deaths and migration. Collectively, these are referred to as ‘components of change’. The difference between the number of live births and the number of deaths is known as ‘natural change’.

Over the last decade (2014-2024), there were a total of 56,300 births and 34,500 deaths, resulting in a population increase of 21,800 due to natural change alone. Natural change accounted for just under half (43%) of the total population change in Bristol over the decade.

In the 12 months to mid-2024 however, natural change accounted for just a fifth (20%) of the population change in Bristol. The majority of the population change was due to net international migration into the Bristol local authority area from outside of the UK (figure 3).

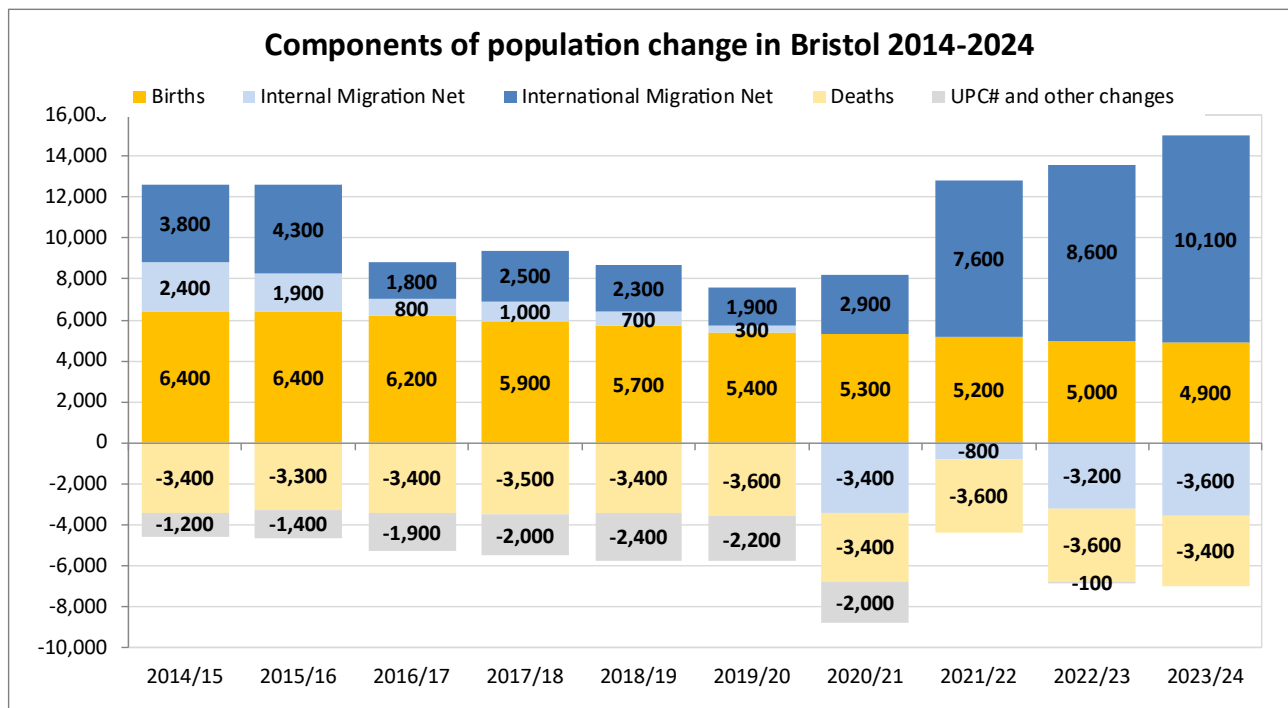


Figure 3 Components of population change in Bristol 2014-2024
 Source: ONS Population Estimates. ONS licensed under the Open Government Licence.

The number of births in Bristol gradually increased from the year 2000 onwards, reaching a peak of 6,781 births per annum in 2012 (calendar year). Since then births in Bristol and nationally have fallen gradually to the end of 2023. In 2024 (calendar year), however, the number of births increased for the first time since 2012. In 2024, there were 4,981 live births, a small increase of 210 since 2023, though still lower than any year since 2003.

The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) for England and Wales dropped to 1.41 children per woman in 2024, its lowest level since records began in 1938. The Total Fertility Rate in Bristol in 2024 was 1.15 children per woman, up from 1.13 in 2023.

International migration

Net international migration was the largest component of population change in Bristol in the 12 months to mid-2024. For the third consecutive year since the Covid-19 pandemic, net international migration increased and is now more than 6 times higher than natural change (births minus deaths) and the highest levels of net international migration seen in more than two decades (figure 3).

In the 12 months to mid-2024, there were 15,400 international in-migrants and 5,400 international out-migrants, a net gain of 10,100 people. The majority of the change can be seen in people aged 18-39 years, with this age group accounting for 70% of the overall net gain due to international migration.

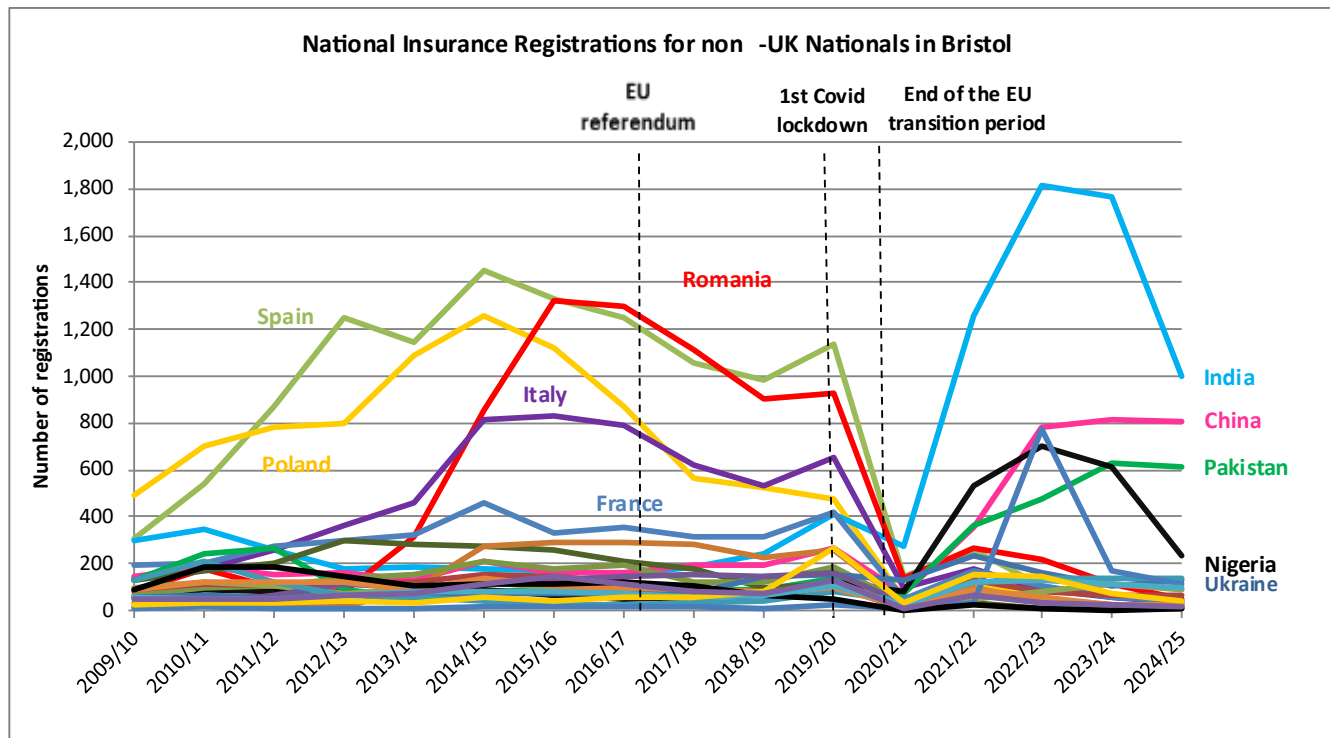


Figure 4 National Insurance Registrations for non-UK Nationals in Bristol
 Countries with a total of 1,000 or more NI registrations since 2009/10
 Source: Stat-Xplore, Department for Work and Pensions <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>.

As seen nationally, there has been a marked change in immigration in Bristol since 2021. Until 2019 EU nationals were the larger component of total immigration, whereas since 2021 the majority of immigration is now non-EU nationals. Non-EU migration include both international students and workers.

Notably, Bristol has seen a significant rise in the number of in-migrants particularly from India but also China, Nigeria, Pakistan and Ukraine. The most recent National Insurance Statistics for 2024/25 however, show that the number of National Insurance Registrations by people from India and Nigeria fell sharply in the 12-month period up to March 2025 (figure 4).

Internal migration

Since 2011, both the number of people moving out of Bristol to surrounding areas and other parts of the UK and the number of people moving into Bristol from surrounding areas and other parts of the UK have gradually increased resulting in an increasingly transient population.

For the last four years, the long-term trend of little net change annually due to internal migration has changed, with more people now moving out of Bristol than moving into Bristol from surrounding areas and other parts of the UK. The 12 months to mid-2024 saw a net loss of 3,600 people.

All age groups saw a net loss of people except 18-20 year olds, where there was a net gain, with 8,500 in-migrants aged 18-20 years from other parts of the UK and 3,100 out-migrants aged 18-20 years resulting in a net gain of 5,400 people in this age group alone. The largest losses due to net internal migration were in the 30-44 year age group and young children, suggesting that people with young families are moving out of the Bristol local authority area.

Population age profile

Bristol has a relatively young age profile. The median age of people living in Bristol in 2024 was 33.4 years old, this compares to the England and Wales median of 40.3 years. Figure 5 and Figure 6 show the age profile of the population.

Children

Bristol's 82,300 children make up 16.7% of the total population, however this proportion continues to fall due to lower numbers of births. Over the decade (2014-24), the overall number of children living in Bristol fell by 120 (-0.1%), whilst England and Wales saw an increase of 4.7%. Within this, the number of children aged under 5 years old in Bristol fell by 6,067 (-20%) and the number of children aged 5-9 years fell by -0.3%. Over the same period, the number of 10-15 years increased by +23%.

Working age

Bristol has a higher proportion of working age (16-64 years) people than nationally – 70.7% of the total population in Bristol is of working age compared to 62.8% in England and Wales. The highest proportions are amongst the 20-34 year olds which make up almost a third (31%) of

Bristol’s total population compared to just 20% nationally. Many of the people in this age group are students living in Bristol during term time.

The working age population in Bristol has increased by 47,100 people (+15.6%) since 2014 compared to an increase of just 6.3% in England and Wales as a whole. The greatest increase was in the number of 18-27 year olds, with this age group growing by 23,200 (+29%) over the decade; nationally this age group grew by just 1%. The population increase in this age band alone accounted for almost a third (31%) of the total population increase in Bristol between 2014 and 2024.

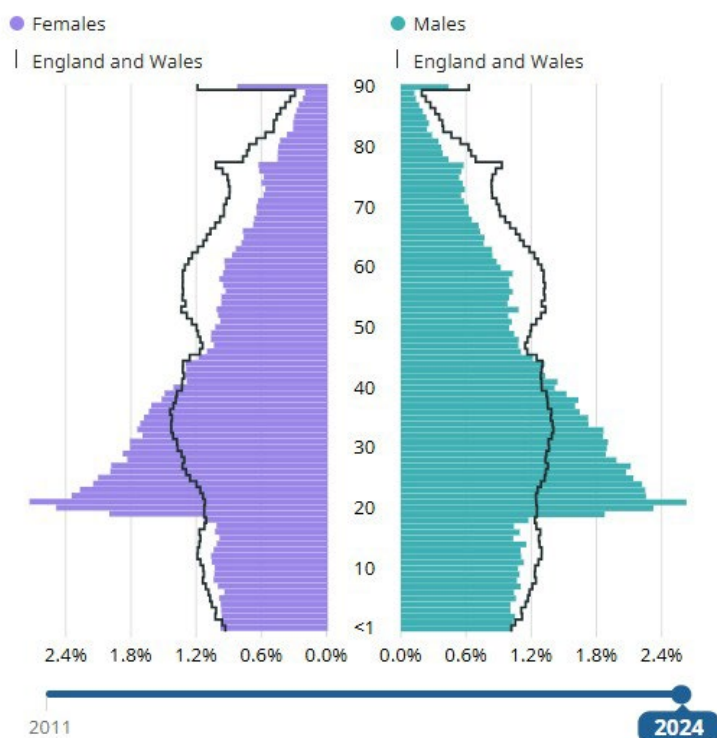


Figure 5 Mid-2024 Population Pyramid by age and sex - Bristol and England and Wales
Source: ONS Population Estimates. ONS licensed under the Open Government Licence.

Age band	Males	%	Females	%	Persons	%	E&W%
0-15	41,998	17.1	40,337	16.2	82,335	16.7	18.3
16-24	41,407	16.9	42,945	17.3	84,352	17.1	10.8
25-49	98,021	39.9	96,549	38.8	194,570	39.4	32.9
50-64	35,270	14.4	35,586	14.3	70,856	14.3	19.1
65 and over	28,800	11.7	33,486	13.5	62,286	12.6	18.9
All ages	245,496	100.0	248,903	100.0	494,399	100.0	100.0

Figure 6 Mid-2024 Population Estimates by Age and Sex for Bristol
Source: ONS Population Estimates. ONS licensed under the Open Government Licence.

Older people

Bristol’s 62,300 older people aged 65 years and over make up 12.6% of the total population. The proportion of older people is much lower than in England and Wales as a whole where 18.9% of the population are aged 65 and over. There are 8,520 people living in Bristol aged 85 years and older.

Although the number of older people has increased year-on-year, Bristol does not have an ageing population according to the official definition as the median age of the population and the proportion of older people in Bristol has been falling.

Overall, over the decade 2014-24 the number of older people aged 65 and over in Bristol increased by just 6.1%, a much lower increase than in England and Wales where there was a 15.4% increase. Within this large age group, the number of older people aged 70-79 years in Bristol grew by 4,171 (+17.6%), whilst the number aged 80 years and over fell by 395 (-2.3%). Nationally, the number of people aged 70-79 increased by 26.1% and those aged 80 and over by 17.4%.

Population within Bristol

The total usually resident population based on Mid-2024 estimates in each ICS locality and sub-locality is shown in figure 7. Bristol North and West has the largest resident population with a total population of 190,813 (39% of Bristol total), South Bristol has a population of 158,899 (32% of Bristol total) and Inner City and East has a total population of 144,687 (29% of Bristol total).

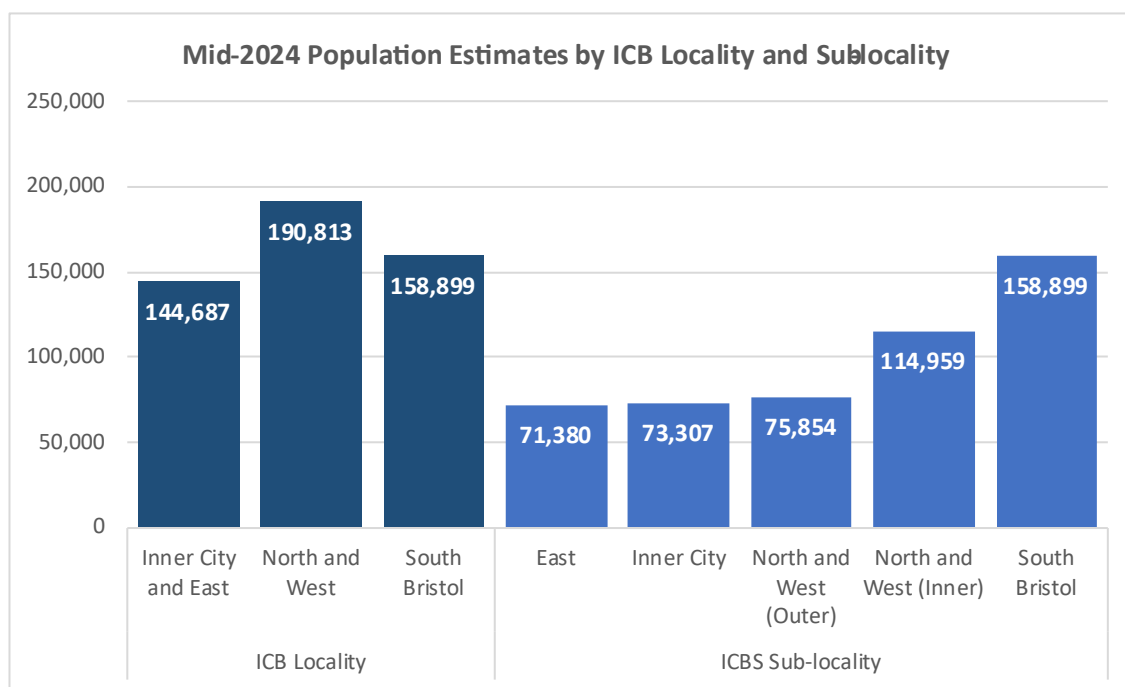


Figure 7 Mid-2024 Total Population by ICB Locality and Sub-locality
Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates from NOMIS

The number of people by broad age band in each ICS locality is shown in figure 8.

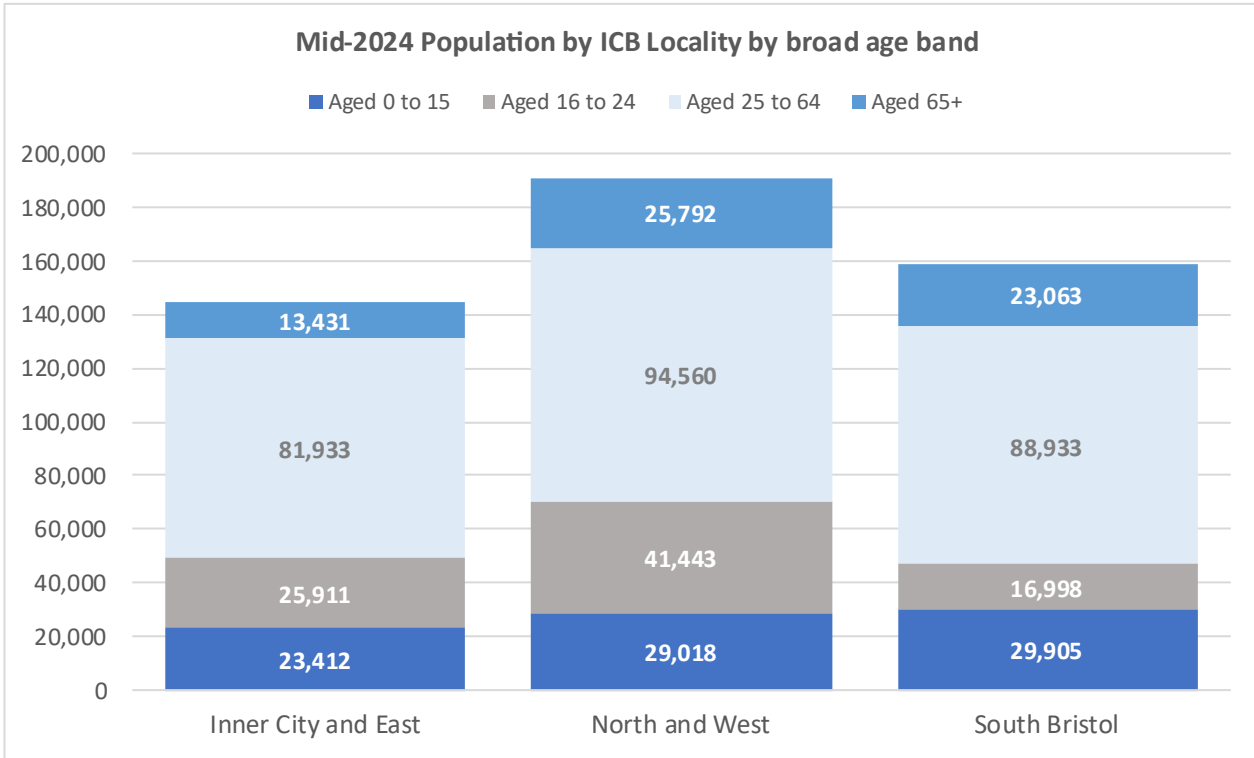


Figure 8 Mid-2024 Population Age Profiles by ICB Locality
Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates from NOMIS

Population change within Bristol

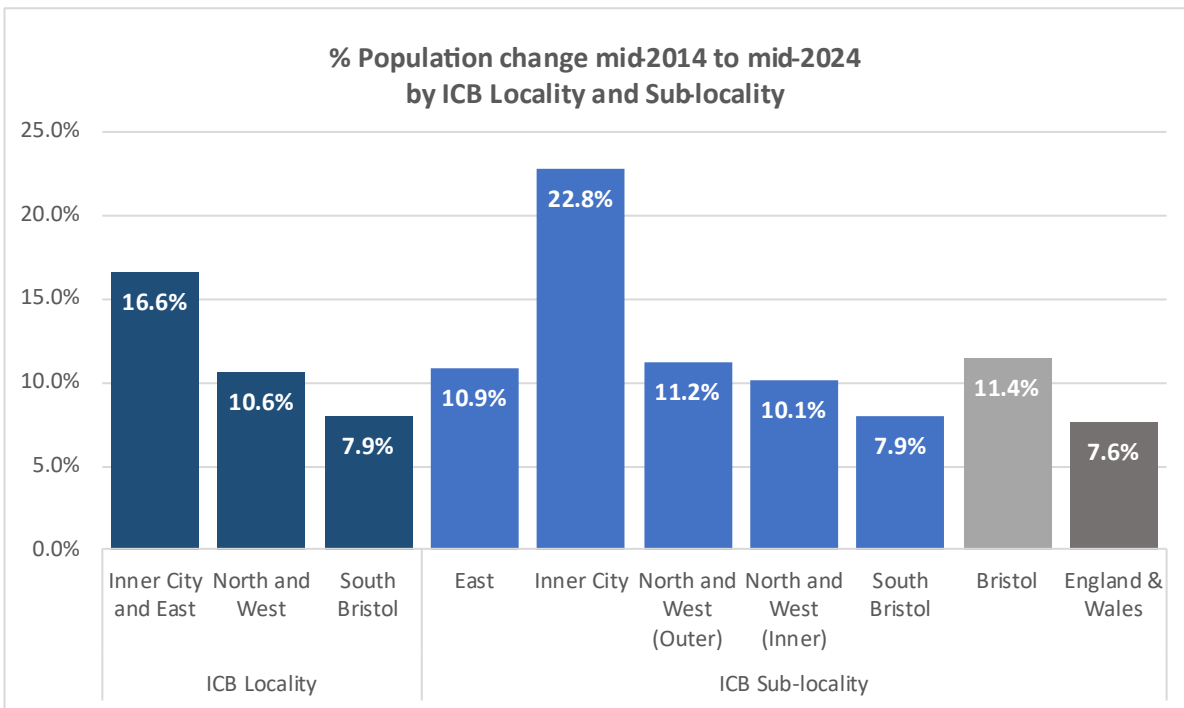


Figure 9 Population Change mid-2014 to mid-2024 by ICB Locality and Sub-locality
Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates from NOMIS

Looking at population change between mid-2014 and mid-2024 by ICB locality and sub-locality (figure 9), the highest levels of growth were in Inner City sub-locality which increased by 22.8%. Lowest levels of growth were in South Bristol at 7.9%.

Within localities rates of change vary considerably with implications for how services can manage demand and where services should most appropriately be located.

The components of population change vary from area to area across Bristol. Whilst there have been significant levels of births in some areas, the growth in the population of central areas of Bristol, appears to be due to large increases in net-migration, including students.

Population diversity

Ethnic group (Census 2021)

Bristol has seen a significant rise in net international migration since the Census in 2021, in particular from India, China, Ukraine, Nigeria, Pakistan and Hong Kong.

The population of Bristol is increasingly diverse - figure 10 shows the increase in the population belonging to an ethnic minority group (all groups except White British) since 2001.

Figure 11 shows the population in 2021 by 18 ethnic groups (White British not shown). Across the 19 ethnic groups in Bristol, the largest percentage point increase over the last decade was seen in the number of people identifying as ‘Other White’ – 8.3% in 2021 (E&W 6.2%), up from 5.1% (E&W 4.4%) in 2011.

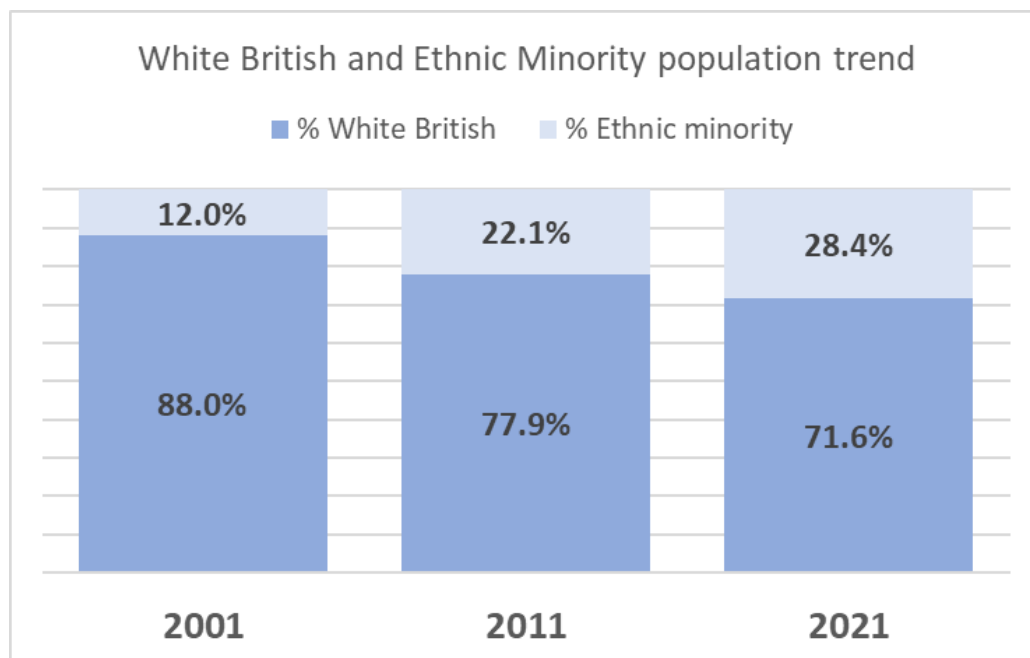


Figure 10 White British and Ethnic Minority Population Trend
Source: ONS Census 2001, 2011 and 2021 from NOMIS

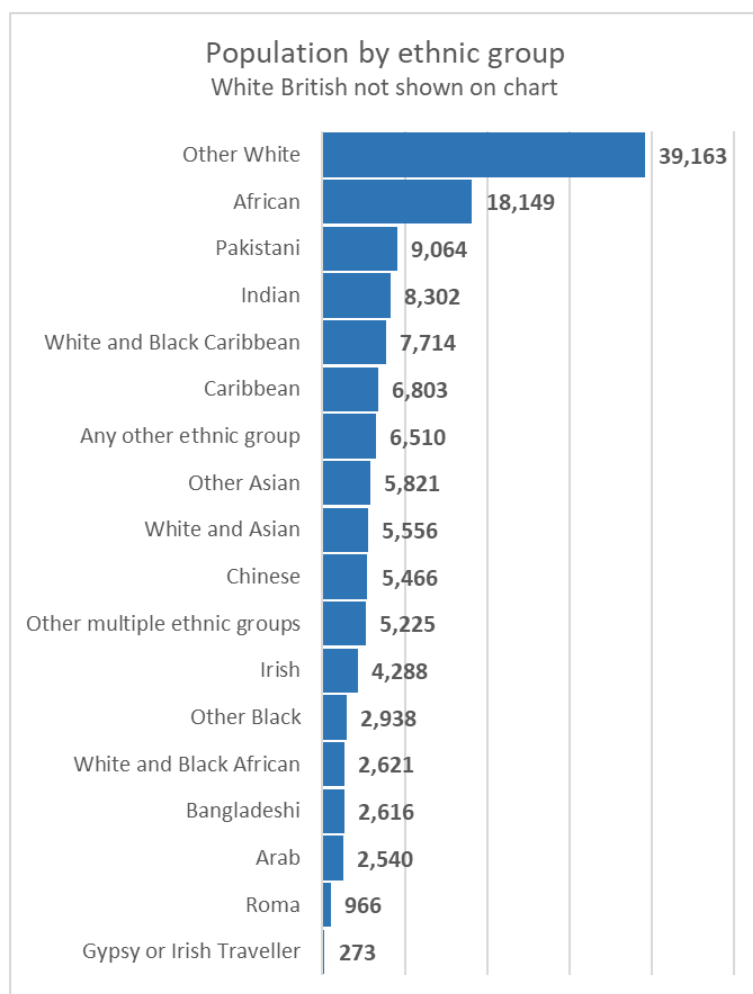


Figure 11 Population by ethnic group (White British not shown)
 Source: ONS Census 2001, 2011 and 2021 from NOMIS

The write-in functionality has enabled ONS to produce a detailed ethnic group classification providing insight into 287 individual ethnic groups. In Bristol the largest ethnic minority groups in 2021 were Somali 9,167 (1.9%), Pakistani 9,103 (1.9%) and Indian 8,371 (1.8%).

Country of birth (Census 2021)

Bristol has seen a significant rise in net international migration since the Census in 2021, in particular from India, China, Ukraine, Nigeria, Pakistan and Hong Kong.

The non-UK born population in Bristol has more than doubled over the last two decades, increasing from 8.2% in 2001 to 18.8% in 2021, a higher proportion than the England and Wales average where 16.8% of the population were born outside the UK (figure 12). This affects changing health needs of the local community and communicating best routes to access appropriate health services.

In 2021, people born in the European Union (EU) made up 42% (37,251) of the non-UK born Bristol population, the remaining 58% (51,717) were born outside the EU. This continues a longer-term trend of an increasing proportion of non-UK born residents being from within the EU.

Of people born in Europe, the majority 18,316 were born in the original EU14 member states (Western Europe), followed by 13,152 born in EU8 Accession countries (Eastern Europe), 5,055 born in EU2 countries (Romania and Bulgaria), 728 born in other EU countries and 3,294 people born in European countries that are outside of the EU.

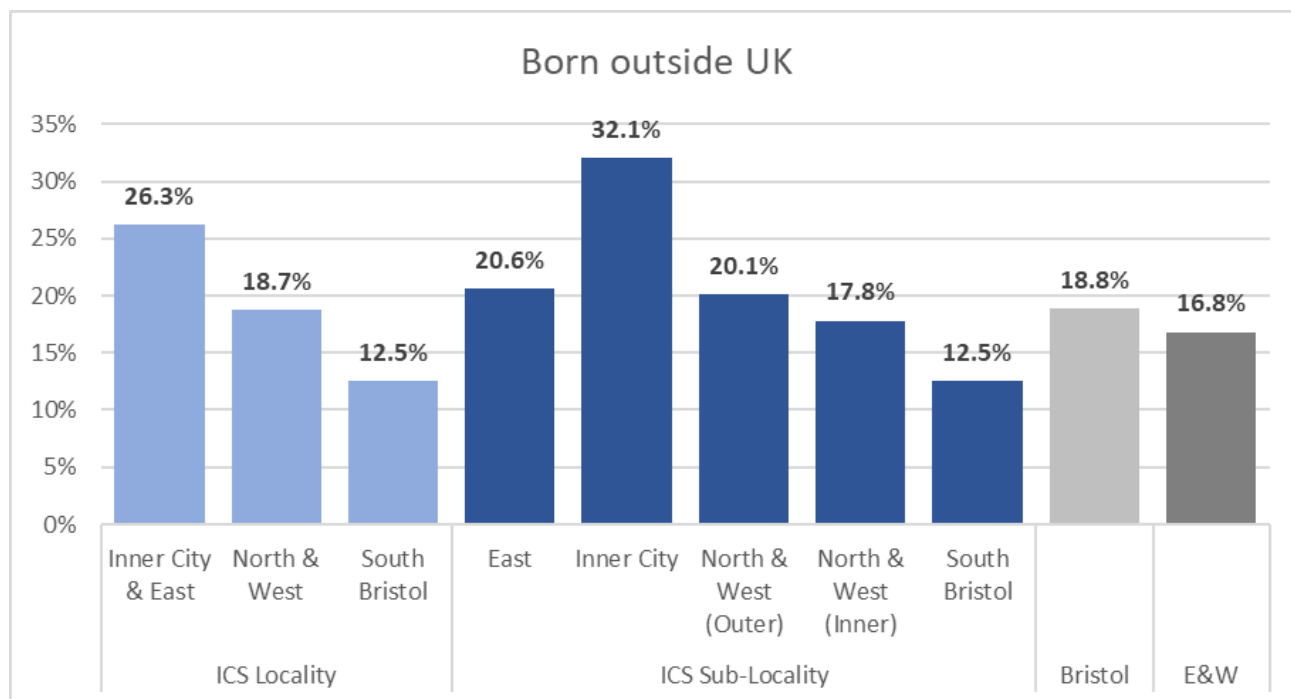


Figure 12 Population Born Outside the UK by ICS Locality and Sub-locality

Source: ONS Census 2021 from NOMIS

Of people born in Africa, by far the largest number were born in Somalia (4,654). This number includes only a proportion of the total Somali population living in Bristol, as many Somalis were born in the UK or other European countries.

Of people born in Asia, the highest numbers were born in India (4,381), Pakistan (3,586) and China (2,638). For the Americas and Caribbean region, the largest populations were born in Jamaica (2,594), South America (2,468) and the United States (2,422).

In Bristol, the 3 most common non-UK countries of birth in 2021 were the same as in 2011:

- Poland, which increased from 6,415 in 2011 to 8,770 in 2021
- Somalia, which fell from 4,947 in 2011 to 4,654 in 2021
- India, which increased from 3,809 in 2011 to 4,381 in 2021

Spain, Italy, Romania and China all entered the top 10 non-UK countries of birth in Bristol. Those who listed Romania as their country of birth increased from 587 in 2011 to 3,782 in 2021, an increase over the decade of 3,195 (544%). This increase is driven by working restrictions for Romanian citizens being lifted in 2014.

Diversity across the city (Census 2021)

Inner City and East has the largest ethnic minority population of the three ICS localities with 43.5% of the total resident population belonging to an ethnic minority group, this is higher than

the Bristol average 28.4%. In Inner City sub-locality more than half (52.6%) of the usual residents belong to an ethnic minority group. Lower ethnic minority populations are in North and West 26.1% and South Bristol 17.8%.

The distribution of the ethnic minority population across Bristol is shown in figure 14 and summary data by ICS Localities and Sub-localities is shown in figure 13.

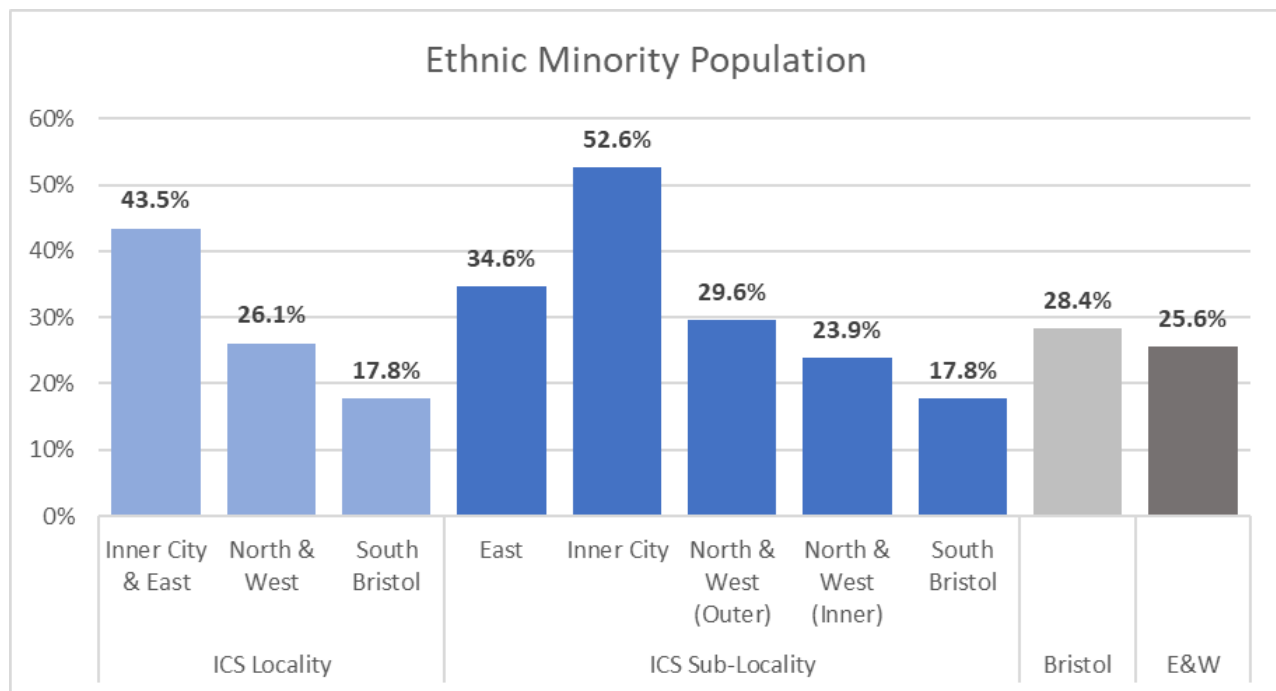


Figure 13 Ethnic Minority Population by ICS Locality and Sub-locality
Source: ONS Census 2021 from NOMIS

Uncertain population trends

ONS 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.

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.

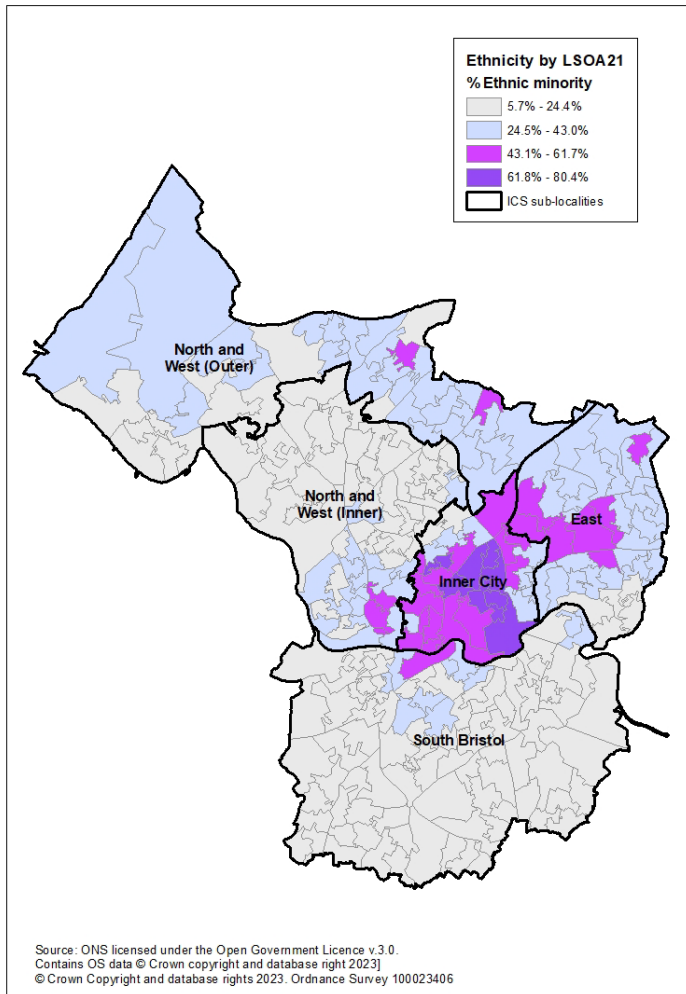


Figure 14 Ethnic Minority Population by Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA21) and ICS Sub-locality
 Source: ONS Census 2021 from NOMIS

Further data / links:

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

Population profiles for equalities groups are also available on the [BCC population web page](#) including ethnic group, religion, Disabled, sexual orientation, Trans, older people and Somali population.

Bristol Census 2021 results are presented via two new dashboards:

- Headline Census 2021 results for Bristol overall are presented in the [Census 2021 Dashboard](#).
- Detailed data for areas within Bristol are in the [Bristol Census Data Profiles dashboard](#). The new Census Data Profiles dashboard include: Area Profiles (all census indicators for a selected geographic area) and Topic Profiles (an individual indicator mapped across the city)

Links to ONS tools are available from the [Bristol City Council Census web page](#)

Date updated: November 2025

Date of next update: August 2026