



# Mid-2023 Population Estimates for Bristol

## 1.0 The Bristol population at mid-year 2023 was estimated to be 483,000

Provisional mid-2023<sup>1</sup> population estimates were published by the Office for National Statistics on 15 July 2024; these estimates were accompanied by revised mid-2022 population estimates, that incorporated updated estimates of international migration.

Mid-year Population Estimates are produced for all local authorities and updated annually using a combination of registration, survey and administrative data to estimate the different components of population change. 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.

## 2.0 Population trend

Bristol is one of the 11 UK 'Core Cities' and the 8th largest city in England and Wales outside of London with an estimated population of 483,000 (mid-2023).

Bristol's population grew by an estimated 44,000 people over the decade (2013-23), a 10% increase compared to 6.8% in England and Wales. Bristol was the second fastest growing of all the Core Cities in England and Wales, after Manchester whose population increased by 13.5%.

In the 12 months to mid-2023, the population of Bristol grew by 4,362 (0.9%) up from 478,600 (mid-2022<sup>2</sup>). The main factor behind this growth was the continuing increase in international migration.

---

<sup>1</sup> Mid-year estimates are provisional for the first 12 months after publication. Provisional estimates may be revised to incorporate updated international migration data.

<sup>2</sup> The final mid-2022 estimate is 400 lower than the provisional estimate 479,000 previously published.

Figure 1 shows how the population of Bristol has changed over time. It shows the mid-year population estimates for 2011 to 2023 alongside the 2011 and 2021 Census results, together with the 2018-based population projections.

### Figure 1: Bristol Population Estimates 2011 to 2023

Source: Office for National Statistics. ONS licensed under the Open Government Licence.

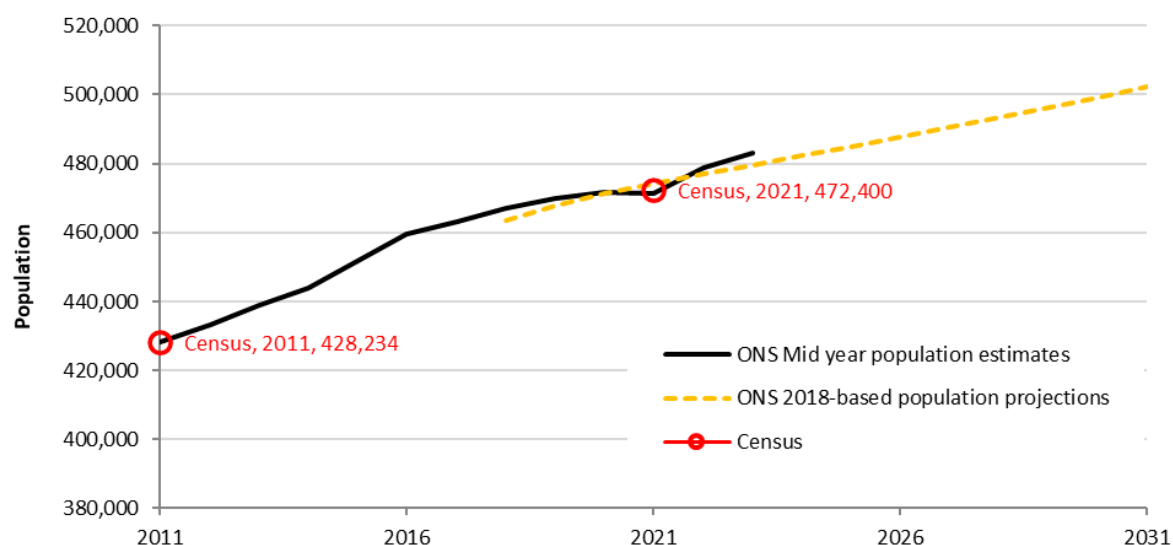
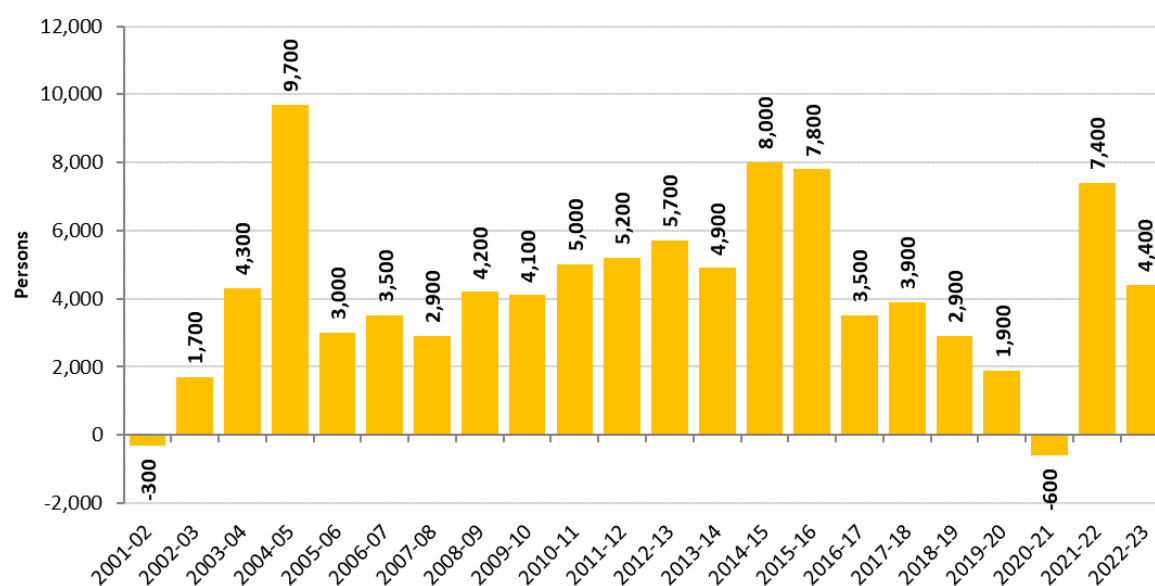


Figure 2 shows the annual increase/decrease in population over the last two decades. Following the EU Referendum in June 2016, the population of Bristol increased but much more slowly up to 2020/21, then the COVID-19 pandemic saw the population fall. The 12 months to mid-2022 saw a large population increase, at a level similar to the years before the EU Referendum, whilst in the 12 months to mid-2023 there was a lower level of population growth.

### Figure 2: Bristol Annual population change 2001 to 2023

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

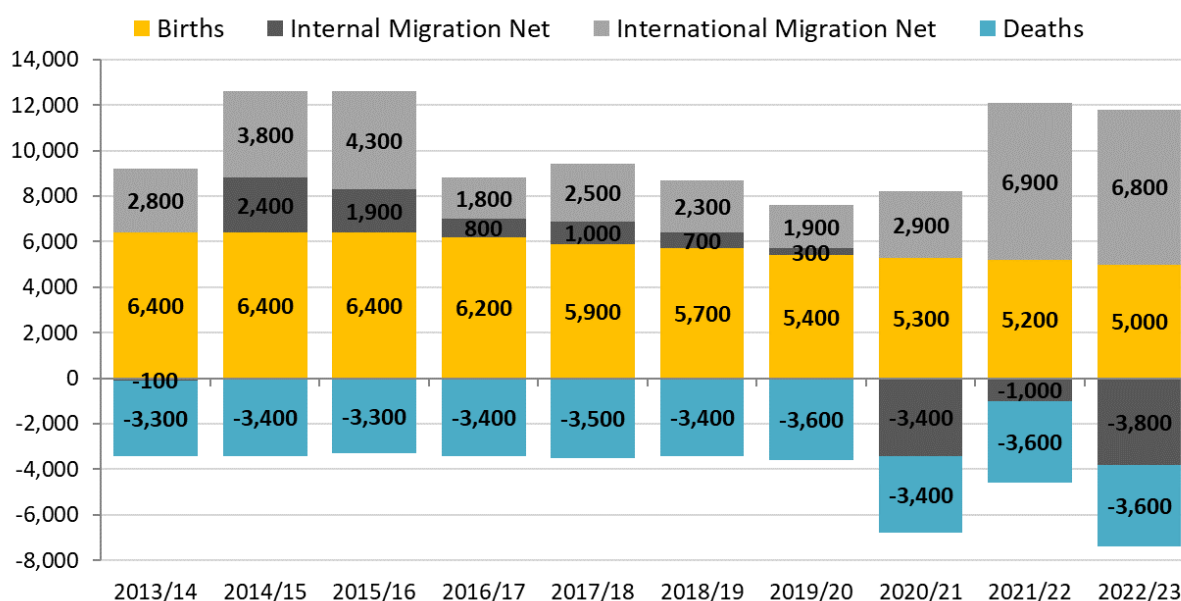


### 3.0 Components of Population Change

Net international migration was the largest component of population growth in Bristol for two consecutive years 2021/22 and 2022/23. For the first time since the expansion of the EU in 2004/5, net international migration to Bristol was almost 5 times higher than natural change (births minus deaths) and was the highest net international migration in almost two decades.

**Figure 3: Components of population change 2011 to 2023**

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



Components of population change are shown in figure 3. Between mid-2022 and mid-2023 changes include:

- Natural change saw the population increase by +1,386 people, (4,971 births and 3,585 deaths) with births falling to the lowest number for 20 years.
- International migration increased the population by +6,800 (13,079 in-migrants and 6,279 out-migrants). This was a higher number of in-migrants than in the previous 12 months to mid-2022 but also a higher number of out-migrants resulting in a similar net increase in international migration.
- Internal migration to/from other parts of the UK saw a loss of -3,774 people (38,688 in-migrants and 42,462 out-migrants). The number of people moving to Bristol from other parts of the UK has fallen for the second year in a row, whilst the number of people moving out of Bristol to other parts of the UK increased in the last 12 months, resulting in negative net internal migration.

As seen nationally, there has been a marked change in immigration 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. This coincides with free movement ending for EU nationals in January 2021, the introduction of the graduate visa route, the easing of travel restrictions following the COVID-19 pandemic in July 2021, and external developments such as the war in Ukraine.

Increases in non-EU migration include both international students and workers. Bristol has seen a very significant rise in the number of in-migrants from India in the last 3 years, plus other countries including China, Ukraine, Nigeria, Pakistan and Hong Kong.

## 4.0 Population by age

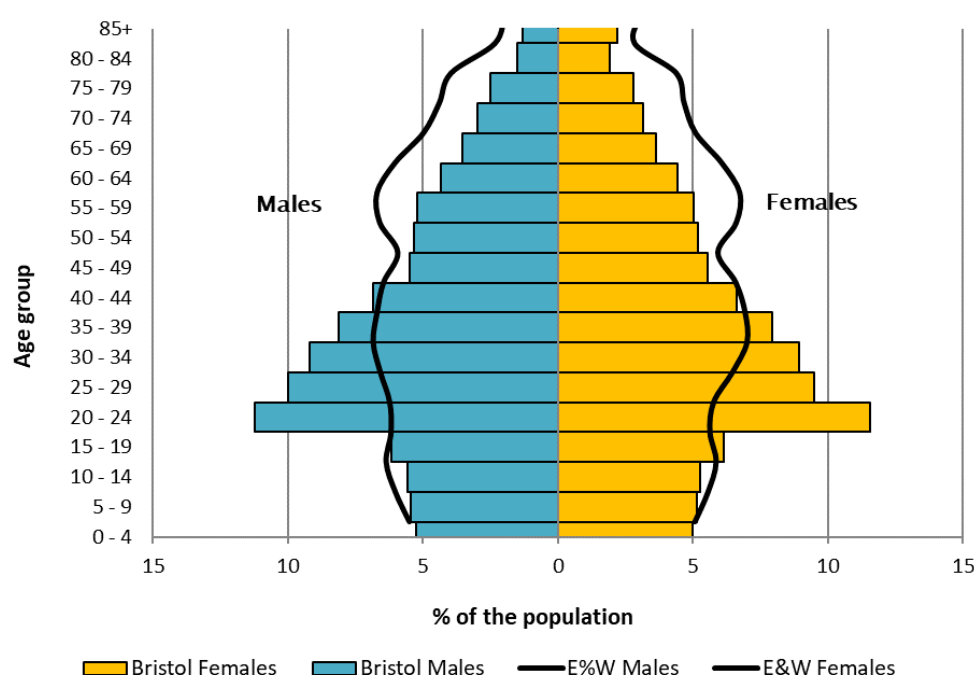
Bristol has a relatively young age profile with more children aged 0-15 than people aged 65 and over. The median age of people living in Bristol is 33.7 years compared to 40.5 years in England and Wales.

In Bristol, the proportion of the population in age groups 20 to 34 is much higher than nationally – this age group makes up almost a third (30%) of the total population of Bristol compared to 19% in England and Wales. Conversely the population in age groups 50 and over is much lower than nationally – 28% of the total population of Bristol compared to 38% in England and Wales.

Figure 4 shows the population profile of Bristol by five year age band and sex compared to the profile of England and Wales. Figure 5 shows the population estimates by five year age band in mid-2013 and in mid-2023.

### Figure 4: Mid-2023 Population by age band and sex

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



### Figure 5: Mid-2023 Population by five year age band

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

Age band	mid-2013	mid-2023	change
0-4	30,890	24,750	-6,140
5-9	25,139	25,604	465
10-14	21,182	26,212	5,030
15	4,433	5,193	760
16-19	21,445	24,610	3,165
20-24	43,399	55,092	11,693
25-29	42,117	46,972	4,855
30-34	39,520	43,732	4,212
35-39	31,343	38,764	7,421
40-44	28,730	32,491	3,761
45-49	27,862	26,604	-1,258
50-54	24,739	25,422	683
55-59	21,245	24,750	3,505
60-64	18,983	21,124	2,141
65-69	17,234	17,259	25
70-74	12,894	14,858	1,964
75-79	10,427	12,828	2,401
80-84	8,541	8,304	-237
85-89	5,468	5,269	-199
90+	3,393	3,160	-233
<b>Total</b>	<b>438,984</b>	<b>482,998</b>	<b>44,014</b>

Between 2013 and 2023, the population in all age groups increased except for:

- 0-4 year olds fell by 6,140 (-20%) - a much higher fall than in England and Wales (-10%) and reflecting the falling birth rates since 2012
- people aged 80 and over which fell by almost 700 (-3.8%) which was opposite to the national trend where the population aged 80 and over increased by 15.4%, and
- a small drop -4.5% in the population aged 45-49

By far the largest increase in Bristol was seen in the student age population (19-23 years). In mid-2023 there was a total 54,800 people in this age group, up from 42,700 in mid-2013, an increase of 12,100 – this was a 28% increase compared to a decrease in this age group nationally and accounting for 27% of the total population increase in Bristol over the decade.

## **5.0 Population density**

Bristol local authority covers an area of 110 square kilometres – in 2012 there were 3,951 people per sq. km increasing to 4,404 people per sq.km in 2023. Local authorities with similar population density to Bristol include Southend-on-Sea, Liverpool, Reading, Nottingham and Birmingham.

## **6.0 Uncertain population trends**

Future population projections are uncertain. Recent events and their potential impacts on our economy and society, are not reflected in the current 2018-based population projections. ONS will publish 2022-based population projections in early 2025.

## **7.0 Further information**

The Population of Bristol report will be updated in August 2024 to include detailed analysis of population trends.

More information about the population of Bristol can be found on the Bristol City Council [Population web page](#).

For further information please go to the [Office for National Statistics](#)

Strategic Intelligence and Performance

Bristol City Council

E: [jayne.mills@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:jayne.mills@bristol.gov.uk)

19 July 2024