

The Population of Bristol

September 2026

Insight, Performance and Intelligence
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HEADLINES

- Bristol is the largest city in the South West and the 8th largest of the 12 UK 'Core Cities'. The mid-2025 population of Bristol is estimated to be **495,300**.

- In the 12 months to mid-2025, Bristol's population grew by only 0.2% (England & Wales 0.4%). However, Bristol is one of only two Core Cities in England and Wales with an increase in population (though both of less than 1%).

- Looking back over the last decade (2015-2025) Bristol's population grew by an estimated 43,500 people, a 9.6% increase (England and Wales grew by 7.1%). This is the 3rd largest percentage population increase of the nine Core Cities in England and Wales.

- Bristol has a relatively young age profile with an average age of 33.6 years compared to 40.7 years in England & Wales as a whole.

- Over the last decade, people aged 19-28 years accounted for more than half (53%) of the total population increase in Bristol, whilst the number of children aged under 10 fell by 16%.

- Following the national trend, since 2012 births in Bristol have declined, except for brief increases in the calendar years 2016, 2021 and 2024. Births fell again in 2025 to 4,934.

- The population is currently projected to increase to 526,600 people by 2032 – a 10% increase between 2022-32 (England 6.4%) and the 2nd highest % increase of the Core Cities in England.

- From 2021-2024, the main factor behind population growth had been net international migration, as this had increased to levels higher than seen in over two decades. However, this has changed. In the year to mid-2025 population growth was significantly less, and the main factor was a fall in net international migration, mainly from outside the EU.

- The majority of immigration is now from outside the EU, including international students and workers, mainly from India, China, Nigeria, Pakistan and Ukraine. The latest estimates however show a significant slowing of these trends due to recent changes to government policies.

- For the last five years, more people have moved out of Bristol to surrounding areas and other parts of the UK than moved into Bristol from surrounding areas and other parts of the UK. Although there have been net gains in the student age groups.

- The population of Bristol is diverse. There are now more than 287 different ethnic groups in the city, more than 185 countries of birth represented, at least 45 religions and more than 90 languages spoken by people living in Bristol.

- Bristol is home to a wealth of cultures and creative ideas, and the city continues to build on its strengths as a safe and welcoming place to all, including as a City of Sanctuary that values its diversity.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The population of Bristol continued to grow up to mid-2025, reaching an estimated 495,300 people. The population increased by just 1,000 people (0.2%, England & Wales 0.4%) over the 12 months to mid-2025. This was the lowest rate of increase since mid-2021 and was primarily due to fall in international net migration.

1.2 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.

1.3 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. Since 2021, Bristol has seen a large increase in the population, at levels similar to the years before the EU Referendum.

1.4 The main factor behind this most recent growth was net international migration including both international students and people coming to work. For three consecutive years, net international migration increased to levels higher than seen in more than two decades. In the year to mid-2025 however, population growth due to net international migration fell significantly.

1.5 The population of Bristol has become increasingly diverse. The proportion of the population who are not 'White British' has increased over the last two decades from 12% in 2001 to 28% in 2021. In Bristol, there are now at least 45 religions, at least 185 countries of birth represented and at least 90 main languages spoken.

1.6 Estimating and projecting the population of Bristol and areas within Bristol is important in order to meet the needs of our changing society. Population statistics underpin public service finances, strategic planning and the provision of local facilities and services such as schools, hospitals and open space. The particular requirements and characteristics of different population groups also need to be identified, so that inequalities can be addressed.

1.7 This report aims to build a picture of the population of Bristol now and in the future. The report brings together statistics on the current estimated population of Bristol, recent trends in population and future projections. Bristol data in the report refers to the Bristol local authority area unless otherwise stated.

2. POPULATION DEFINITIONS

USUALLY RESIDENT POPULATION

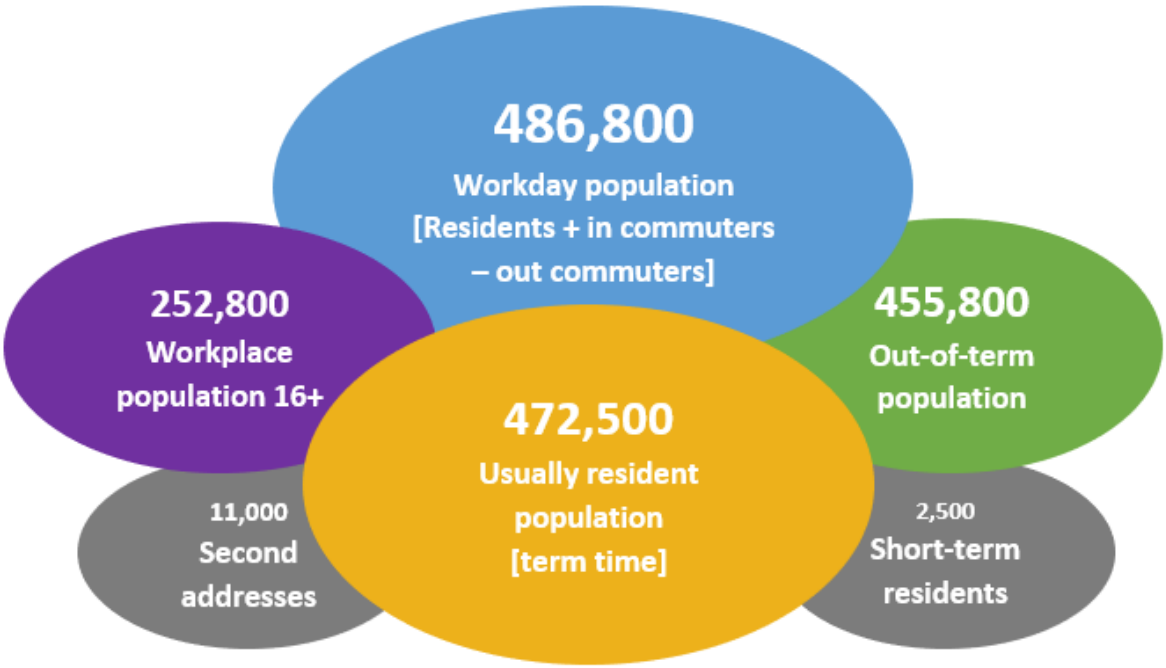
2.1 The usually resident population includes all those people who usually live in an area, regardless of nationality. Arriving international migrants are included in the usually resident population if they remain in the UK for at least a year and emigrants are excluded if they remain outside the UK for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

2.2 The majority of population and census statistics are based on the usually resident population of an area, including ONS mid-year estimates of population and population projections.

ALTERNATIVE POPULATION DEFINITIONS

2.3 Alternative population bases are the different geographical locations where individuals could have been counted for Census 2021, other than their usual residence. Figure 1 shows the various population definitions and the size of the population in Bristol at the time of the Census 2021.

Figure 1. Census 2021 Alternative Population Definitions (not to scale)
Source: ONS Census 2021. Crown Copyright



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2.4 Alternative populations include:

Out-of-term population
The out-of-term population is the usually resident population, redistributed to their out-of-term address if they have one. As a result, the difference relates to the location of some students and schoolchildren.

Workday population
The workday population is an estimate of the population during the working day. It includes everybody who works in an area, wherever they usually live, and all respondents who live in the area but do not work.

Workplace population
The workplace population is an estimate of the usually resident population aged 16 years and over, working in an area. It includes people who work mainly at or from home, or do not have a fixed place of work, in their area of usual residence.

Short-term residents
The short-term resident population are those who were not born in the UK and who intend to stay in the UK for less than 12 months. Non-UK short-term residents are not included in ONS estimates of the resident population. Estimates of short-term migration give a more complete picture of migration into and out of an area.

Second address
The second address population includes people with a second address in Bristol.

2.5 ONS publish some Census data by these alternative population bases.

3. POPULATION ESTIMATE UNCERTAINTY

3.1 Producing estimates for local authorities is more challenging than at national level. A limitation of the methods used to produce population estimates is that they are subject to statistical uncertainty related to:

- the measurement of the census base they are rolled forward from
- the measurement of each component of population change

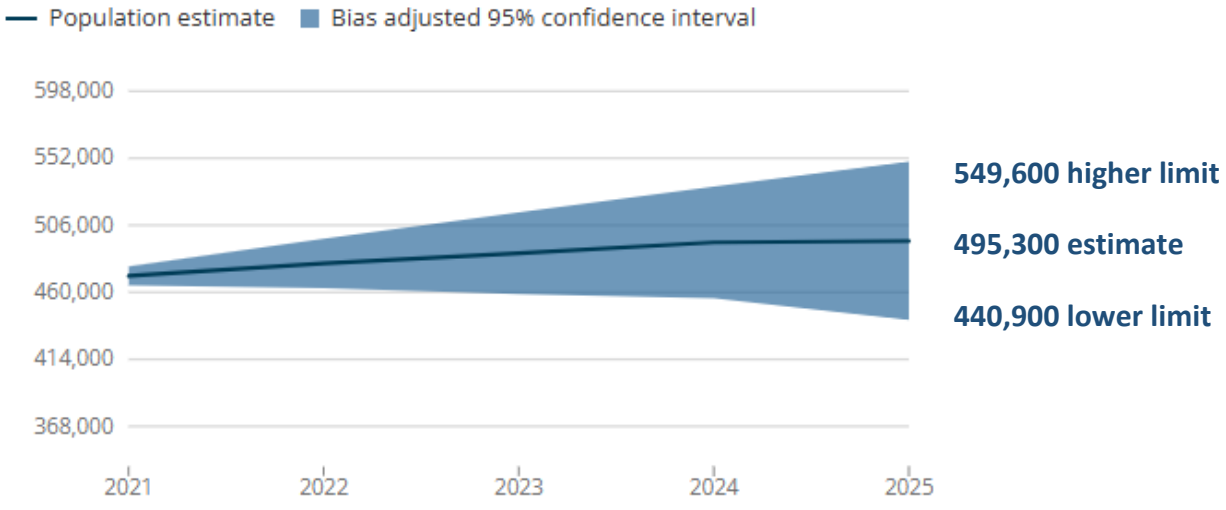
3.2 Statistical uncertainty is lowest immediately following a census, and greatest immediately before the next census. This is because errors accumulate over time as estimates are rolled forward onto the following year.

3.3 Data sources that ONS use for the components of population change are the best available at the time, that are also nationally consistent down to local authority level. Population estimates are produced using these components of change and are subject to the coverage and error associated with these sources.

3.4 Uncertainty is primarily through migration, with higher rates of international and internal migration leading to higher levels of uncertainty.

3.5 For the first time ONS have published confidence intervals which measure the levels of uncertainty at local authority level. Bristol's mid-2025 population has confidence intervals of +/- 54,300 people, which means that Bristol's population could in reality be anywhere between 440,900 people or 549,600 people (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Population and uncertainty range for Bristol between 2021 and 2025
Source: Office for National Statistics



3.6 Population estimates for Bristol have a relatively high level of uncertainty. Higher levels of uncertainty are often associated with high rates of population mobility and are also more likely in areas with relatively small populations.

3.7 For more information about uncertainty ranges see 'Local authority quality of population estimates for England and Wales'.

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4. CURRENT POPULATION

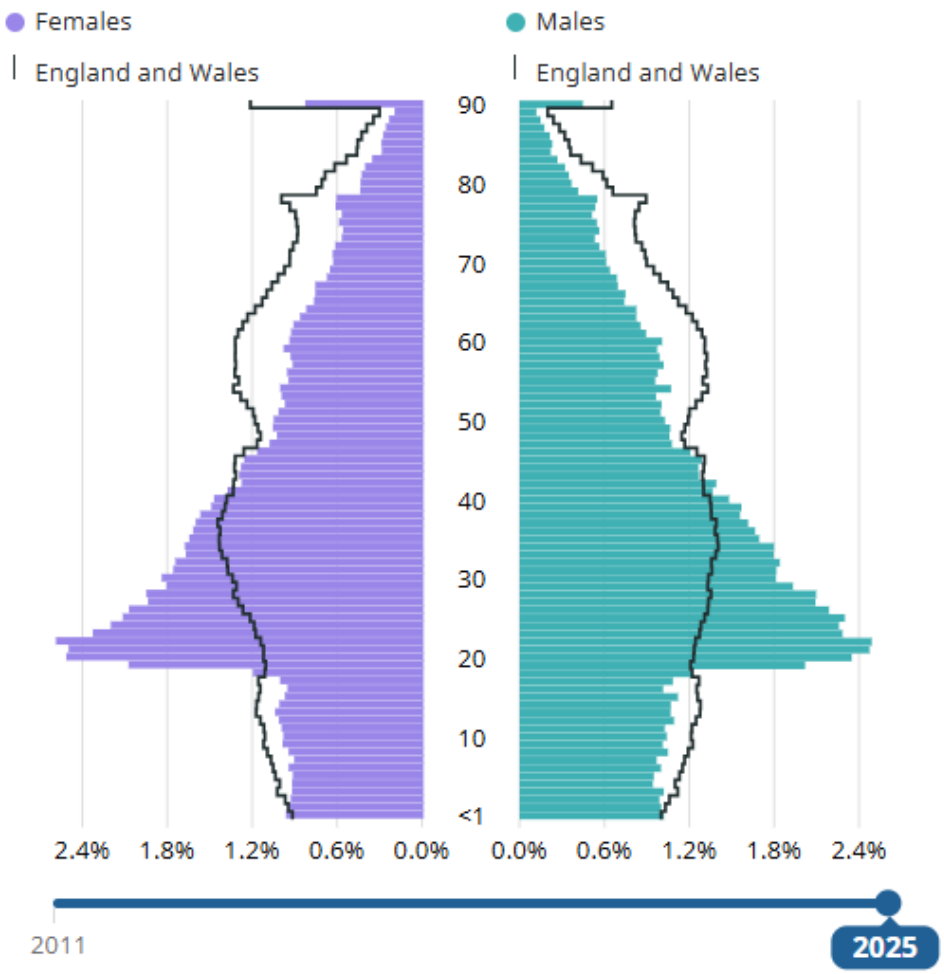
MID-2025 POPULATION ESTIMATES

4.1 Mid-2025 population estimates for local authorities were published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on 29 July 2026. Mid-year population estimates are produced for all local authorities and updated annually using a combination of registration and administrative data to estimate the different components of population change.

4.2 The population of Bristol continued to grow up to mid-2025, reaching an estimated 495,300 people. The population increased by just 1,000 people (0.2%, England & Wales 0.4%) over the 12 months to mid-2025. This was the lowest rate of increase since mid-2021 and was primarily due to fall in international net migration.

4.3 Bristol is the 8th largest of the 12 UK 'Core Cities'. Bristol local authority accounts for 72% of the total population of the built-up area of the city, which is often referred to as 'Greater Bristol', or the 'Bristol Urban Area'. The population of the Bristol Urban Area is estimated to be around 690,000 (Mid-2024).

Figure 3. Mid-2025 Population pyramid
Source: ONS 2025 Mid-Year Population Estimates. Crown Copyright



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4.4 Bristol local authority covers an area of 110 square kilometres – in 2015 there were 4,120 people per sq. km increasing to 4,516 people per sq.km in 2025. Local authorities with similar population density to Bristol include Liverpool, Reading, Nottingham, Birmingham, Southend-on-Sea and Kingston upon Thames.

Core Cities

England & Wales 9 Core Cities:	Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Nottingham, Sheffield
UK 12 Core Cities:	England & Wales Core Cities + Edinburgh, Glasgow and Belfast

England & Wales Core Cities are used throughout this report unless otherwise stated

POPULATION BY AGE

4.5 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 in 2025 was 33.6 years old, this compares to the England and Wales median of 40.7 years. The profile of Bristol's population by five-year age band and sex is illustrated in Figure 3 and estimates for broad age bands and sex are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. 2025 Population estimates by age and sex

Source: ONS 2025 Mid-Year Population Estimates. Crown Copyright

	Males	%	Females	%	Persons	%	E&W%
0-15	40,400	*16.4*	38,600	*15.5*	79,000	*15.9*	*17.9*
16-24	42,400	*17.2*	43,400	*17.4*	85,800	*17.3*	*10.7*
25-49	99,300	*40.2*	97,000	*39.0*	196,300	*39.6*	*33.1*
50-64	35,500	*14.4*	35,700	*14.4*	71,200	*14.4*	*19.1*
65 and over	29,100	*11.8*	33,900	*13.6*	63,100	*12.7*	*19.3*
All ages	**246,700**	***100.0***	**248,600**	***100.0***	**495,300**	***100.0***	***100.0***

Children

4.6 Bristol's 79,000 children make up 15.9% of the total population, lower than the England & Wales average of 17.9%. The number of children as a proportion of the total population continues to fall due to falling numbers of births.

Working age

4.7 Bristol has a higher proportion of working age (16-64 years) people than nationally – 71.3% of the total population in Bristol is of working age compared to 62.9% 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 19% nationally. Many of the people in this age group are students living in Bristol during term time.

Older people

4.8 Bristol's 63,100 older people aged 65 years and over make up 12.7% of the total population. The proportion of older people is much lower than in England and Wales where almost a fifth (19.3%) of the population are aged 65 and over. There are 8,600 people living in Bristol aged 85 years and older.

POPULATION BY WARD

4.9 Bristol City Council has 34 wards, represented by 70 councillors. Five wards have 3 councillors, 26 wards have 2 councillors and 3 wards have 1 councillor[1].

4.10 In July 2026, there was on average 4,703 electors per councillor, however this varies ward by ward. The highest ratio was in Lawrence Hill ward where there was 5,600 electors per councillor compared to the lowest ratio found in Clifton Down ward with 3,661 electors per councillor.

4.11 Looking at the total number of people living in each ward, this differs substantially. As a result, statistics presented by ward should be treated with care and rates should be used for comparison purposes rather than counts or numbers.

4.12 The latest population estimates by ward are for mid-2024. The largest ward in Bristol is Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston with an estimated population of 23,300 people and the smallest is St George Troopers Hill ward with an estimated 6,500 people.

4.13 The age profile within each ward also varies significantly. Figure 3 shows the population within each ward broken down by broad age group.

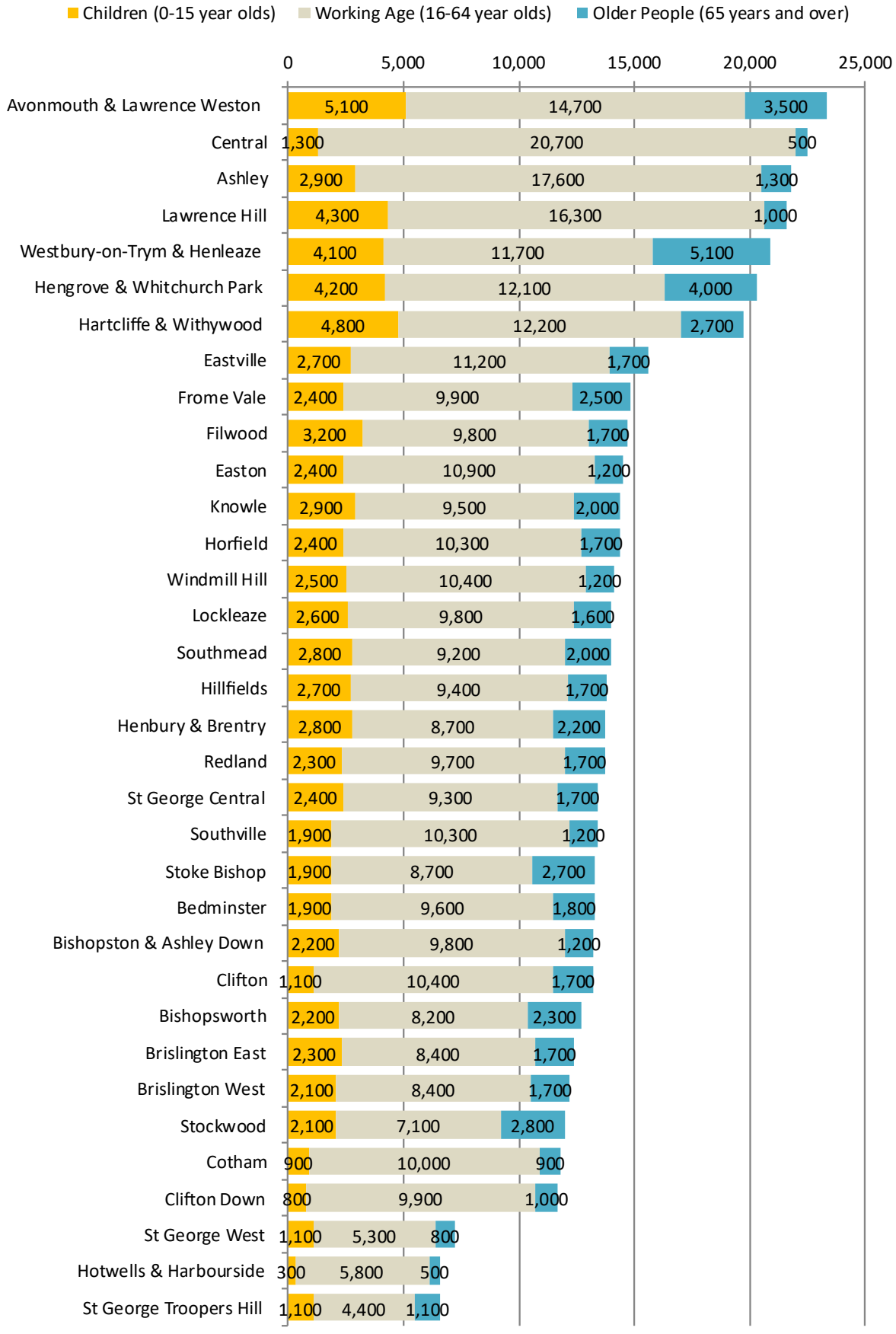
4.14 Hartcliffe and Withywood ward has the largest proportion of children – almost a quarter (24.3%) of the total population of the ward are aged under 16. Other local authority housing areas also have high proportions of children, including Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston (21.7%), Filwood (21.7%), Hengrove and Whitchurch Park (20.7%), Henbury and Brentry (20.3%), Knowle (20.2%) and Southmead (20%).

4.15 The wards with the lowest proportions of children are all in areas in the inner west and central areas of Bristol including Hotwells and Harbourside (5.2%), Central (5.9%), Clifton Down (6.5%), Cotham (7.3%) and Clifton (8.3%). These wards have the highest proportions of people aged 18-24, due to the large student population, and low proportions of people aged 65 and over. In Central ward, almost half (48.6%) of the usual residents are aged 18-24 years. Other wards, where more than a quarter of the total population are aged 18-24 years include Cotham (33.5%), Clifton Down (33.0%), Hotwells and Harbourside (32.9%) and Clifton (26%).

[1] Bristol City Council is currently subject to a ward boundary review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. The Draft Recommendations are for 36 wards represented by 76 councillors. For more information www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/bristol

Figure 4. Mid-2024 ward population estimates by broad age band

Source: ONS Small Area Population Estimates Crown Copyright 2025



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4.16 The wards with the highest proportions of working age people (16-64 years) are all in the inner west and central areas of Bristol. In five wards more than 80% of the usually resident population are of working age – Central (91.9%), Hotwells & Harbourside (87.4%), Clifton Down (84.9%), Cotham (84.7%) and Ashley (80.8%).

4.17 Wards with an older population profile, where more than a fifth of the total population are aged 65 years and over include Westbury-on-Trym & Henleaze (24.4%), Stockwood (23.7%) and Stoke Bishop (20.6%).

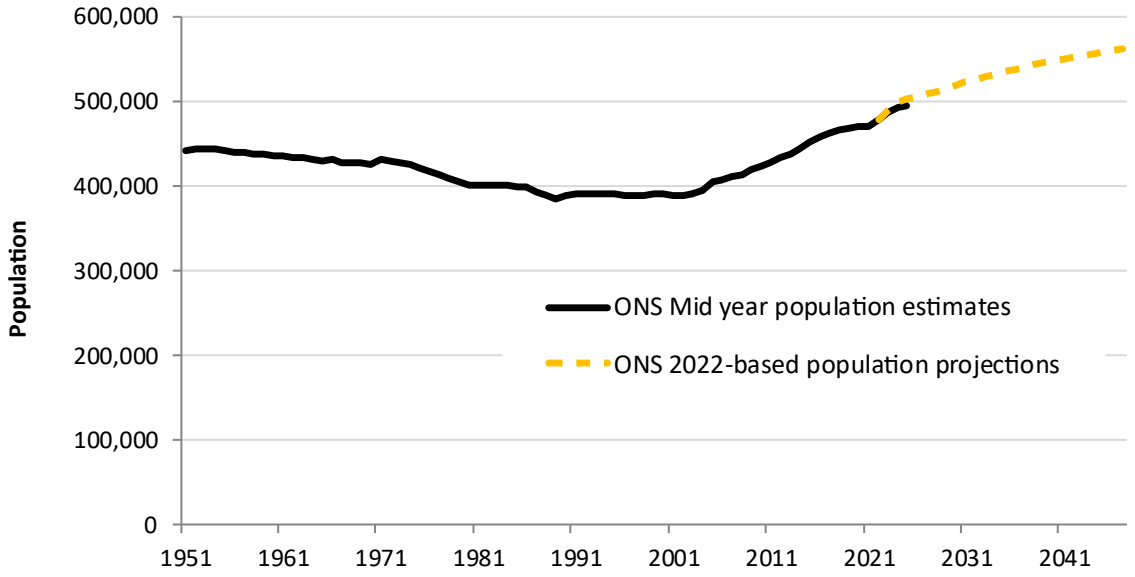
5. RECENT POPULATION TRENDS

ONS have been working in partnership across the Government Statistical Service to develop new methods using administrative data sources to improve international migration statistics and to produce more regular and timely population statistics at both national and local levels. Estimates based on administrative data provide a more accurate picture of international migration over this period than the previously published estimates based on the International Passenger Survey (IPS), which underestimated migration of some groups.

BRISTOL TRENDS

5.1 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 (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Bristol population trend 1951 to 2047
Source: Office for National Statistics. Crown Copyright.



5.2 Between 2016 and 2020, the population of Bristol increased annually but at a slower rate than the previous decade. Between 2021 and 2024, Bristol once again saw a large increase in

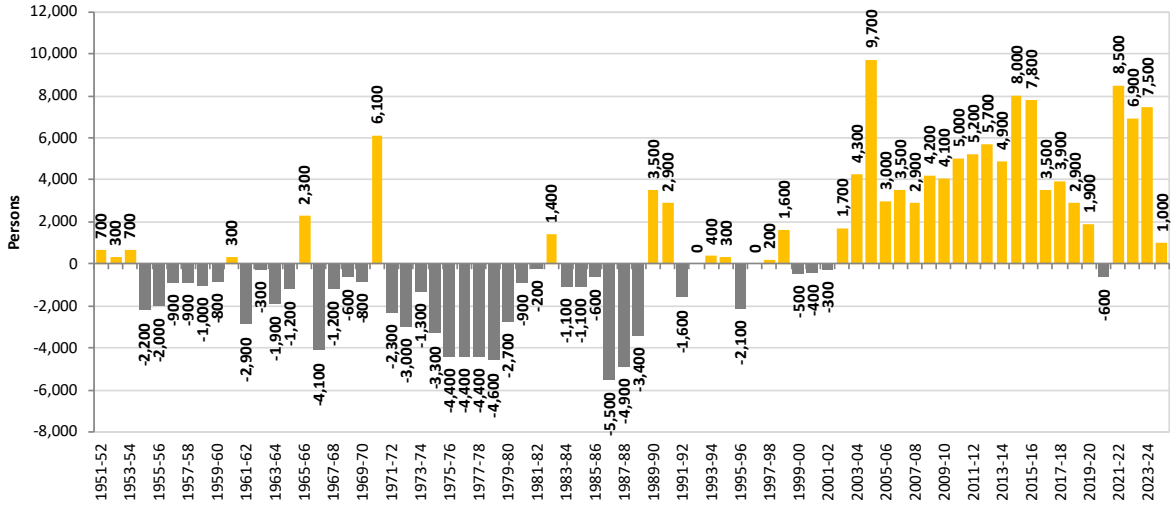
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population, at levels similar to the years before the EU Referendum. In the year to mid-2025 however, population growth has slowed significantly.

5.3 Annual population change in Bristol since 1951 is illustrated in figure 6. Most years between 1951 and 1990 saw Bristol's population decrease, whilst throughout the 1990s annual population change was more volatile. Since 2002/3 however, Bristol has experienced annual increases in population, with the exception of 2020/21 when population movement was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 6. Bristol annual population change 1951 to 2025

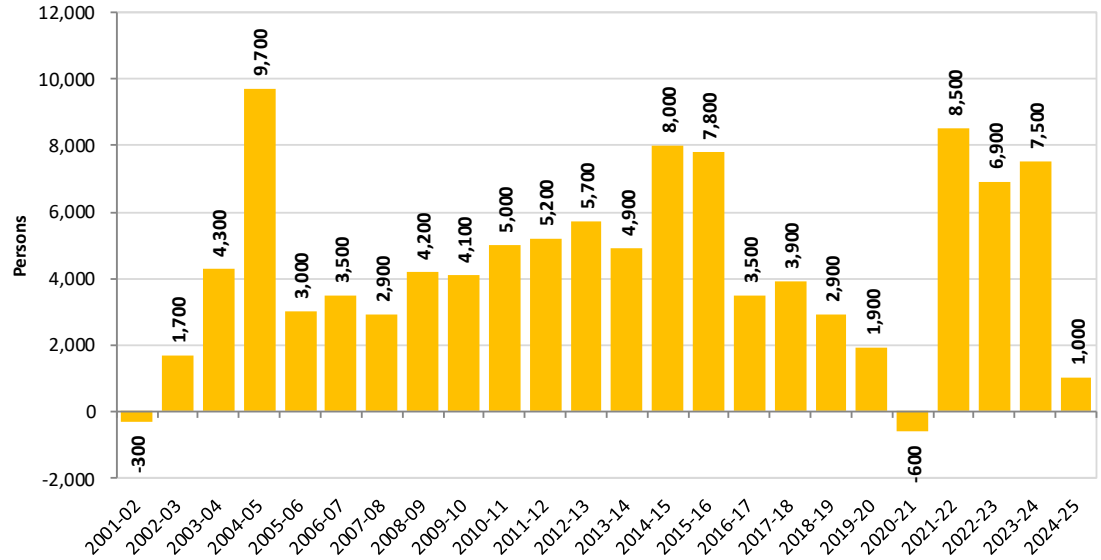
Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates. Crown Copyright.



5.4 Notably large increases in the population were in 2004/5 when the A8 Accession countries joined the European Union and in 2014/15 and 2015/16 before the EU Referendum. Similar level of annual population change were seen between 2011 and 2024.
In the 12 months to mid-2025 however, the population of Bristol grew by just 1,000 (0.2%) up from 494,200 in mid-2024 (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Bristol annual population change 2001 to 2025

Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates. Crown Copyright.



5.5 Over the last decade (2015-2025) Bristol's population grew by an estimated 43,470 people – a 9.6% increase. England and Wales grew by 7.1%. Over the decade Bristol had the third highest percentage population increase of the Core Cities in England and Wales, after Manchester (12.4%) and Newcastle-upon-Tyne (11.4%) (Table 2).

5.6 In the 12 months to mid-2025, of all the Core Cities in England and Wales, only Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Bristol saw an increase in population, though both of less than 1%.

Table 2. Population estimates 2015-2025 West of England and Core Cities

Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates. Crown Copyright.

Area	mid-2015	mid-2025	change 2015 to 2025	% change
Bath & NE Somerset	182,561	200,898	18,337	10.0
Bristol	**451,790**	**495,260**	**43,470**	**9.6**
North Somerset	210,553	227,160	16,607	7.9
South Gloucestershire	272,189	308,787	36,598	13.4
West of England	**1,117,093**	**1,232,105**	**115,012**	**10.3**
West of England Combined Authority	**906,540**	**1,004,945**	**98,405**	**10.9**
Core Cities in England & Wales				
Birmingham	1,114,932	1,176,960	62,028	5.6
Bristol	**451,790**	**495,260**	**43,470**	**9.6**
Cardiff	351,600	381,516	29,916	8.5
Leeds	777,987	840,550	62,563	8.0
Liverpool	469,953	507,915	37,962	8.1
Manchester	523,321	588,256	64,935	12.4
Newcastle upon Tyne	287,955	320,838	32,883	11.4
Nottingham	313,265	325,765	12,500	4.0
Sheffield	555,074	579,517	24,443	4.4
England and Wales	**57,881,415**	**62,009,993**	**4,128,578**	**7.1**

POPULATION TRENDS BY AGE

5.7 Table 3 shows the estimated population change in Bristol's age structure over the last decade (2015-2025) by broad age band and Figure 8 shows the change by five year age band.

Children

5.8 Over the decade, the overall number of children living in Bristol fell by 4,381 (-5.3%), whilst England and Wales saw an increase of 1.7%. There are however differing trends within this age group.

5.9 Between 2015-2025, the number of children aged under 5 years old in Bristol fell by 21% (-6,532) and the number of children aged 5-9 years fell by 10% (-2,676). Over the same period, the number of 10-15 years increased by 18.5% (+4,827). The trends reflect the fall in the number of

births in Bristol in recent years (*see section on Components of Population Change for more information*).

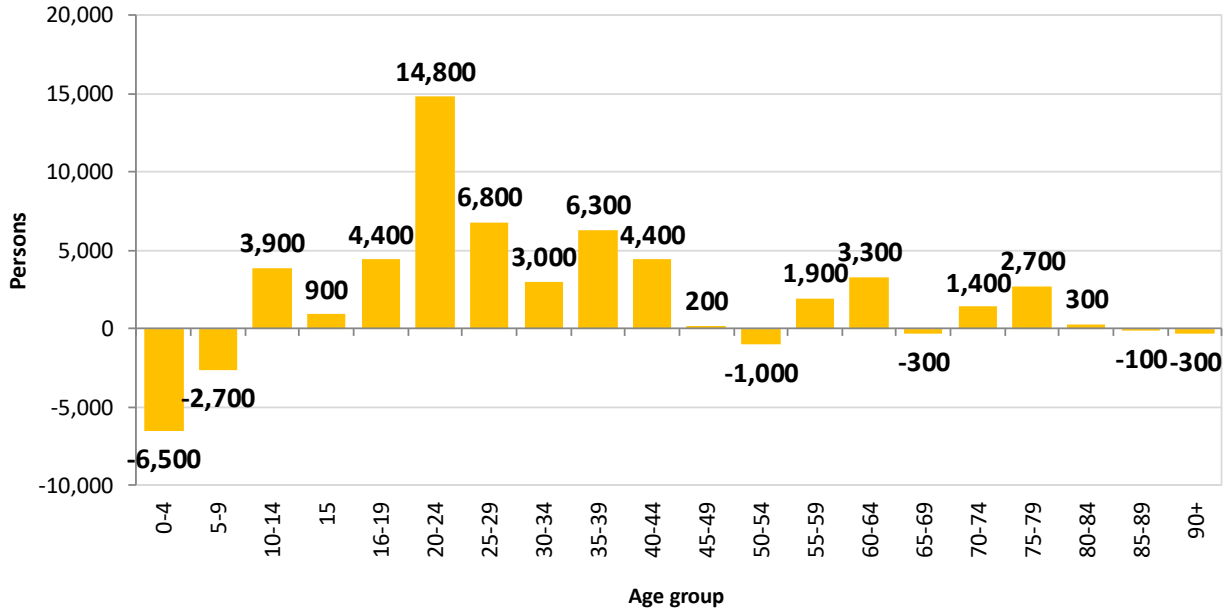
Table 3. Bristol population change by broad age band 2015 to 2025

Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates. Crown Copyright.

Broad age band	Mid-2015	Mid-2025	% share of total population	Change 2015-25	% change 2015-25
0-15 years	83,342	78,961	15.9	-4381	-5.3
16-24 years	66,621	85,782	17.3	19,161	28.8
25-49 years	175,498	196,276	39.6	20,778	11.8
50-64 years	67,106	71,185	14.4	4,079	6.1
65 and over	59,223	63,056	12.7	3,833	6.5
All ages	**451,790**	**495,260**	**100.0**	**43,470**	**9.6**

Figure 8. Bristol population change by five year age band 2015 to 2025

Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates. Crown Copyright.



Working age

5.10 The working age population in Bristol has increased by 44,000 people (+14.2%) since 2015 compared to an increase of just 6.2% in England and Wales as a whole.

5.11 In Bristol, the greatest increase was in the number of 19-28 year olds, with this age group growing by 23,000 (+26%) over the decade; nationally this age group grew by less than 1%. The population increase in this age band alone accounted for more than half (53%) of the total population increase in Bristol between 2015 and 2025.

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Older people

5.12 Although the number of older people has increased year-on-year, Bristol does not have an ageing population according to the official definition[2] as the median age of the population and older people as a proportion of the total population in Bristol has been falling.

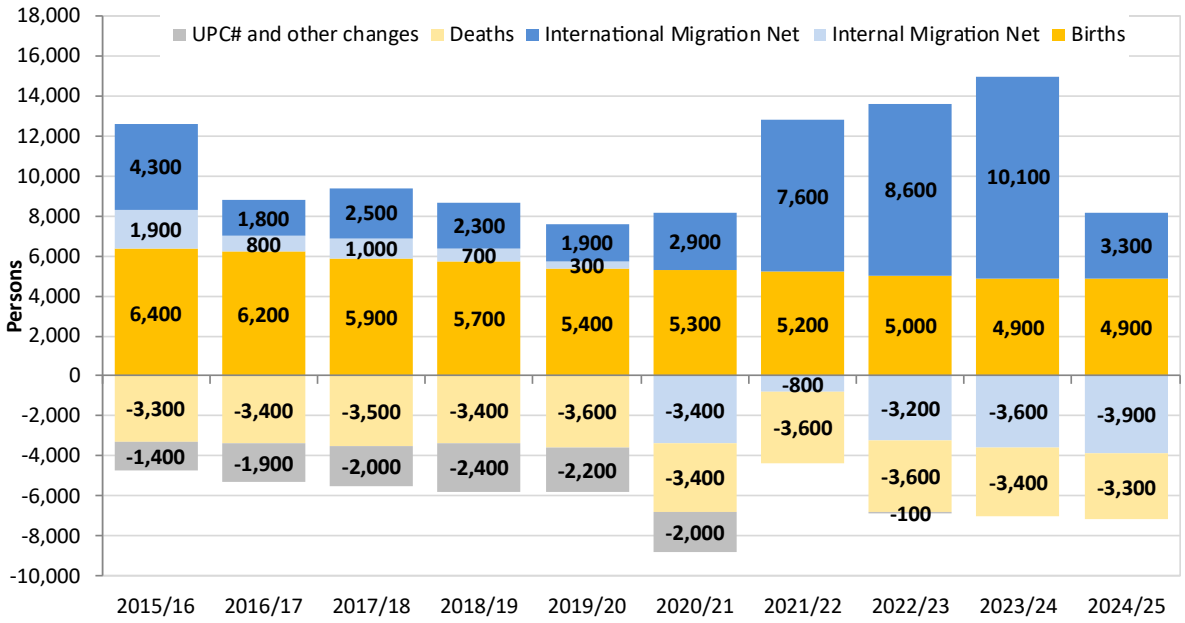
5.13 Over the decade 2015-25 the number of older people aged 65 and over in Bristol increased by 6.5%, a much lower increase than in England and Wales where there was a 16.1% increase. Within this large age group, the number of older people aged 70-79 years in Bristol grew by 4,138 (+17.3%), whilst the number aged 80 years and over remained unchanged. Nationally, the number of people aged 70-79 increased by 24.3% and those aged 80 and over by 20.2%.

COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE

5.14 Annual population change is driven by births, deaths and migration. Collectively, these are referred to as the 'components of change' (see Figure 9 and Table 4). The difference between the number of live births and the number of deaths is known as 'natural change'.

Figure 9. Components of population change in Bristol 2015/16 to 2024/25

Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates. Crown Copyright.



Unattributable Population Change (change not attributed to a specific cause) and other changes to special populations including prisoner, armed forces and their overseas based dependent populations

[2] Ageing of the population refers to both the increase in the average (median) age of the population and the increase in the number and proportion of older people in the population.

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Unattributable Population Change - Following the Census in 2021, ONS revised the population trend between 2011 and 2021 to bring it in line with Census 2021 results. The revised population estimates for Bristol are higher than those previously published for mid-2011 to mid-2021. The main change was a higher level of international net migration than previously estimated.

Not all of the change between censuses can be explained by natural change or migration. Unattributable Population Change (UPC) is the remaining population change seen between the census-based and the rolled-forward population estimates, which cannot be explained by any of the components of change.

UPC is a normal feature of rebasing population estimates following a census and is allocated across the decade to create a plausible distribution of change.

Table 4. Components of population change in Bristol 2020/21 to 2024/25

Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates. Crown Copyright.

Numbers may not add to total due to rounding

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Births	5,300	5,200	5,000	4,900	4,900
Deaths	3,400	3,600	3,600	3,400	3,300
Natural Change	**1,900**	**1,500**	**1,400**	**1,600**	**1,600**
Internal Migration In	42,000	41,500	40,400	41,300	42,500
Internal Migration Out	45,400	42,300	43,600	44,900	46,300
Internal Migration Net	**-3,400**	**-800**	**-3,200**	**-3,600**	**-3,900**
International Migration In	7,200	12,700	15,200	15,900	11,700
International Migration Out	4,300	4,900	6,400	6,300	8,300
International Migration Net	**2,900**	**7,800**	**8,800**	**9,500**	**3,300**
Other changes	-2,000	0	-100	0	0
Migration & Other changes	**-2,500**	**7,000**	**5,500**	**5,900**	**-600**

BIRTHS AND DEATHS

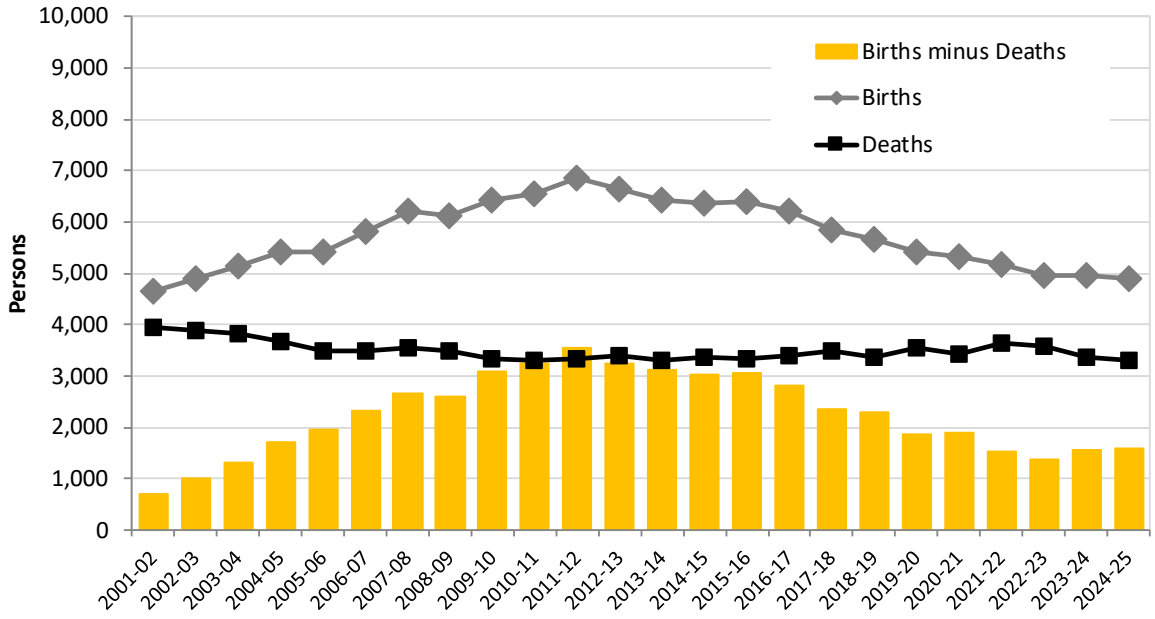
5.15 In Bristol, there are more live births than deaths each year resulting in an increase in the population due to natural change (see Figure 10). Over the last decade (2015-2025), there were a total of 54,800 births and 34,500 deaths, resulting in a population increase of 21,400 due to natural change alone.

5.16 Natural change accounted for just under half (47%) of the total population change in Bristol over the decade.

5.17 The number of births in Bristol gradually increased from the year 2001, reaching a peak of 6,781 births per annum in 2012 (calendar year). Since then births in Bristol have declined following the national trend, except for brief increases in the calendar years 2016, 2021 and 2024. Births fell again in 2025 to 4,934 live births in total.

5.18 Nationally, the story of births is one of decreases and record lows, with the total number of births continuing to fall. The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) for England and Wales dropped to 1.39[3] children per woman in 2025, its lowest level since records began in 1938[4]. The Total Fertility Rate in Bristol in 2025 was 1.15 children per woman, unchanged from 2024.

Figure 10. Natural change (births minus deaths) in Bristol mid-2001 to mid-2025
Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates. Crown Copyright.



5.19 The average age of mothers at childbirth in England and Wales in 2025 was 31.1 years. The average age of mothers in Bristol is older than nationally at 33.4 years.

5.20 Possible reasons for the decrease in TFRs in recent years could be due to improved access to contraception, the reduction in mortality rates of children aged under five years (resulting in women having fewer babies) and lower levels of fertility, or difficulties conceiving due to postponement in childbearing.

5.21 Changes in total fertility rate are driven mainly by women born in the UK as they make up the majority of the population of childbearing age (see Figure 11). However, non-UK born women made up an increasing share of the population, which also acted to push fertility rates upwards.

[3] Provisional estimate

[4] Births in England and Wales: 2025

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The percentage of live births in Bristol to non-UK born mothers has increased from 13% in 2001 to 34.4% in 2025.

Figure 11. Live births by mother's country of birth Bristol 2005-25
Source: ONS Annual District Birth data by calendar year

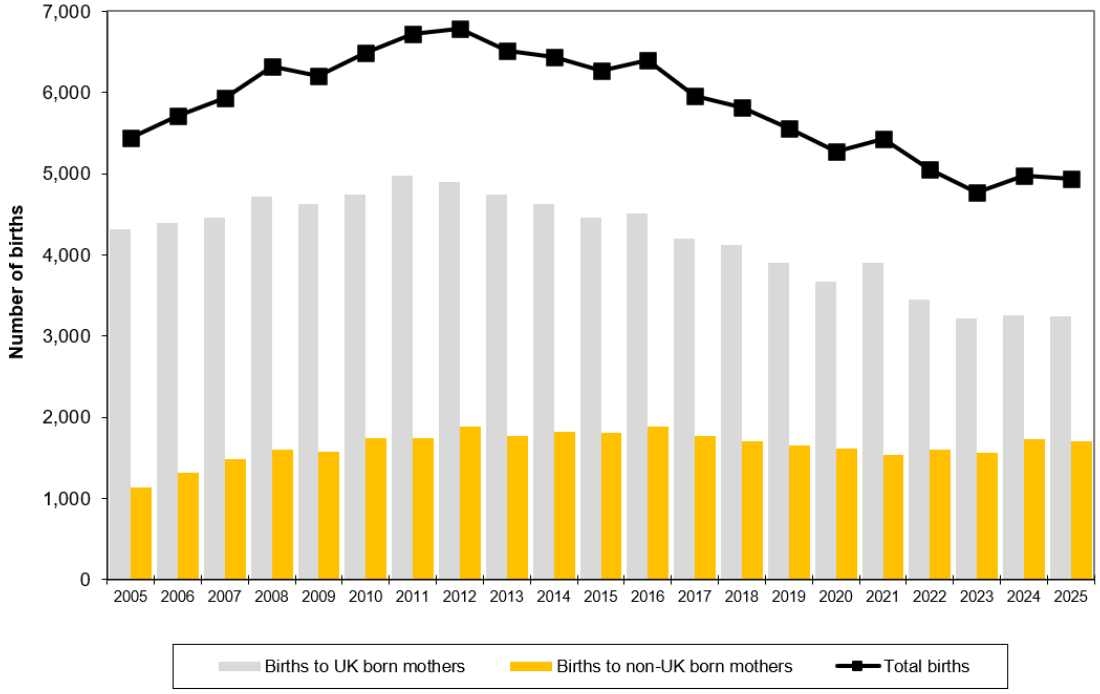
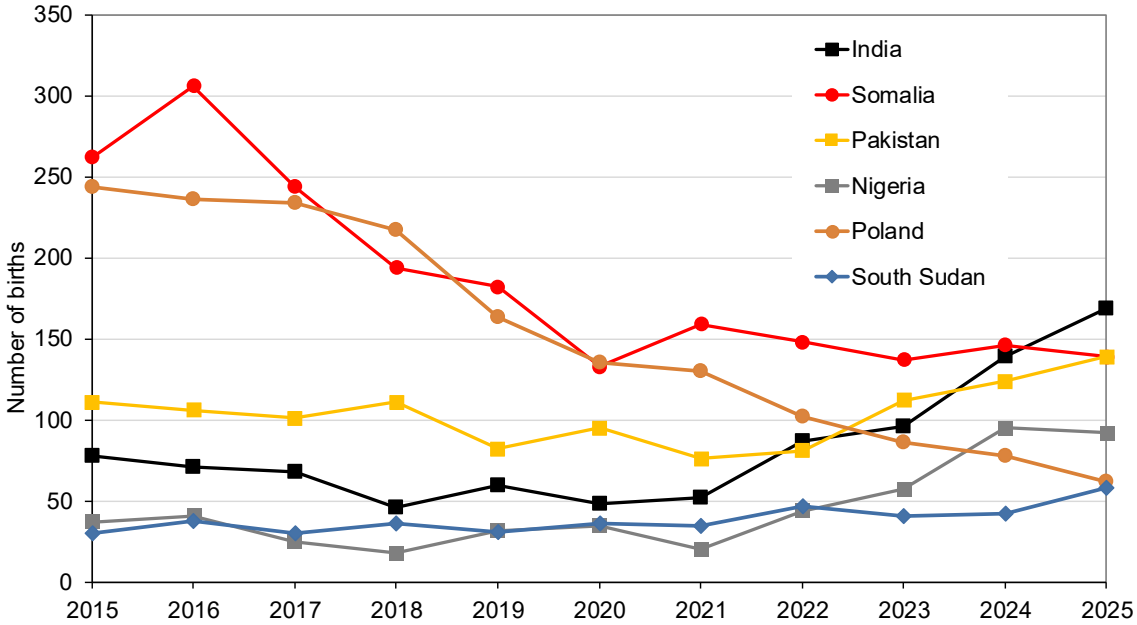


Figure 12. Births to non-UK born mothers in Bristol 2015-2025
Six highest countries of birth
Source: Public Health, Bristol City Council based on NHS Digital birth registrations data



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5.22 In 2021, the Total Fertility Rate for non-UK born women in England and Wales was estimated to be 2.03 children per woman, compared to 1.54 for women born in the UK[5].

5.23 Statistics are also available on the country of birth of the mother. Figure 12 shows the number of live births in Bristol since 2015 for the top six countries (not including UK born mothers).

5.24 Mirroring the changing population trends in the years since 2021, births to Indian, Pakistani, and Nigerian-born mothers have risen for the last four years, whilst births to Somalia-born and Poland-born mothers are declining.

5.25 The six countries shown in figure 11 clearly reflect the change from mainly EU migrants coming to Bristol up until 2021 to now mainly migrants from outside the EU who have come to Bristol to study or work and have since started families.

MIGRATION - NATIONAL CONTEXT

5.26 The number of people **immigrating** to England and Wales from outside the UK decreased in the year to mid-2025, compared with the three previous years. The number of people **emigrating** from England and Wales to outside the UK also increased in the same period. This led to an overall decrease in net international migration compared with the previous year.

5.27 Although estimated net international migration was lower in the year to mid-2025 compared with the previous year, it continued to contribute the most to population growth.

5.28 The most recent ONS analysis[6] shows that at the UK level, long-term international net migration for year ending December 2025 has nearly halved from year ending December 2024. The number of nationals from outside of the EU[7] arriving for work-related reasons fell by 47% in 2025, which was the main reason for the continued fall in net migration; in the same period, overall emigration fell slightly. Net migration for EU nationals in the year ending December 2025 was negative, with more people leaving the UK than arriving.

5.29 Net migration to the UK since 2021 had been running at record levels, driven by a rise in people coming for work, increasing numbers of students and world events.

5.30 Before the pandemic, migration was relatively stable, but patterns and behaviours have shifted considerably since then[8]. ONS estimates show a marked change in immigration since 2021 because of a rise in immigration from countries outside of the EU driven by a range of factors including:

- free movement ending for EU nationals in January 2021 as part of the introduction of the new immigration system
- the easing of travel restrictions in July 2021 following the coronavirus pandemic
- world events including the war in Ukraine and British National (Overseas) scheme

[5] Births in England and Wales: 2025

[6] Long-term international migration, provisional - Office for National Statistics

[7] 'EU' refers to EU member states plus Norway, Iceland, Lichenstein and Switzerland

[8] Behaviour shifts and the implications for migration statistics | National Statistical

5.31 The places people are coming from have changed. Instead of migration to the UK being driven by arrivals from the European Union, as was the case up until 2019, people are now coming from further afield, especially China, India and Nigeria.

MIGRATION – BRISTOL CONTEXT

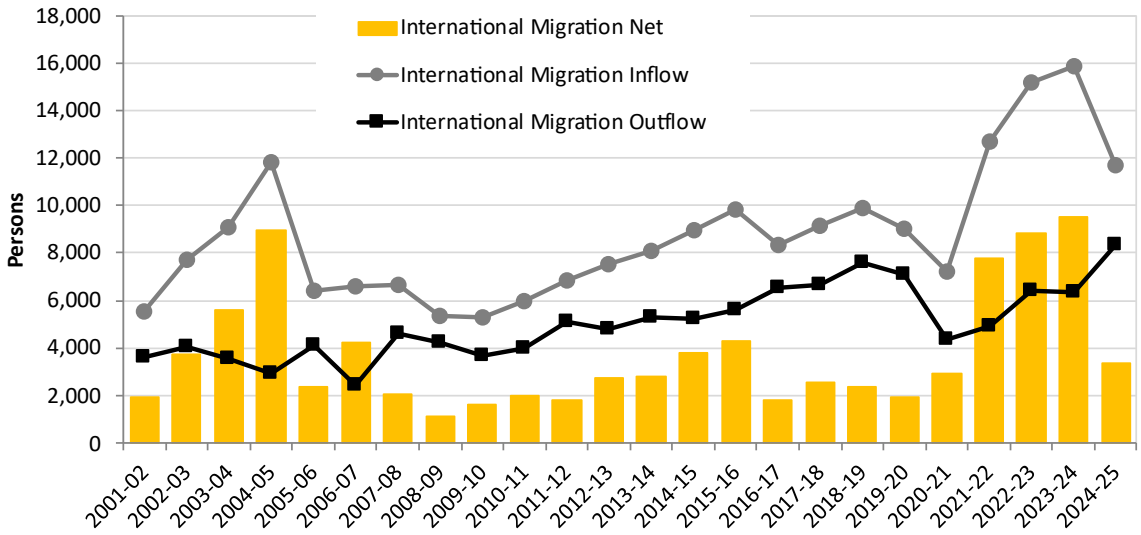
5.32 Over the last decade, the population of Bristol has increased by 23,100 people due to overall net migration and other changes, accounting for 53% of the total population change in Bristol in that period. Migration is split into international migration and internal migration (moves to/from surrounding areas and other parts of the UK).

International migration

5.31 From 2021-2024, the main factor behind population growth had been net international migration, as net international migration had increased to levels higher than seen in over two decades. However, this has changed. In the year to mid-2025 population growth was significantly less (Figure 13).

Figure 13. International migration in Bristol mid-2001 to mid-2025

Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates. Crown Copyright.



5.32 The number of people **immigrating** to Bristol from outside the UK decreased in the year to mid-2025 and the number of people **emigrating** from Bristol to outside the UK also increased in the same period. This led to an overall decrease in net international migration compared with the previous year.

5.33 In the 12 months to mid-2025, there were 11,700 international in-migrants and 8,300 international out-migrants, a net gain of 3,300 people. Similarly to internal migration, the majority of the change can be seen in people aged 18-23 years, with this age group accounting for 84% of the overall net gain due to international migration, many of these will be students.

5.34 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

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majority of immigration is now nationals from countries outside of the EU, including both international students and workers. A fall in migration from countries outside of the EU is driving the decrease in total net migration.

5.35 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. *For more information on individual countries see section on National Insurance Number registrations.*

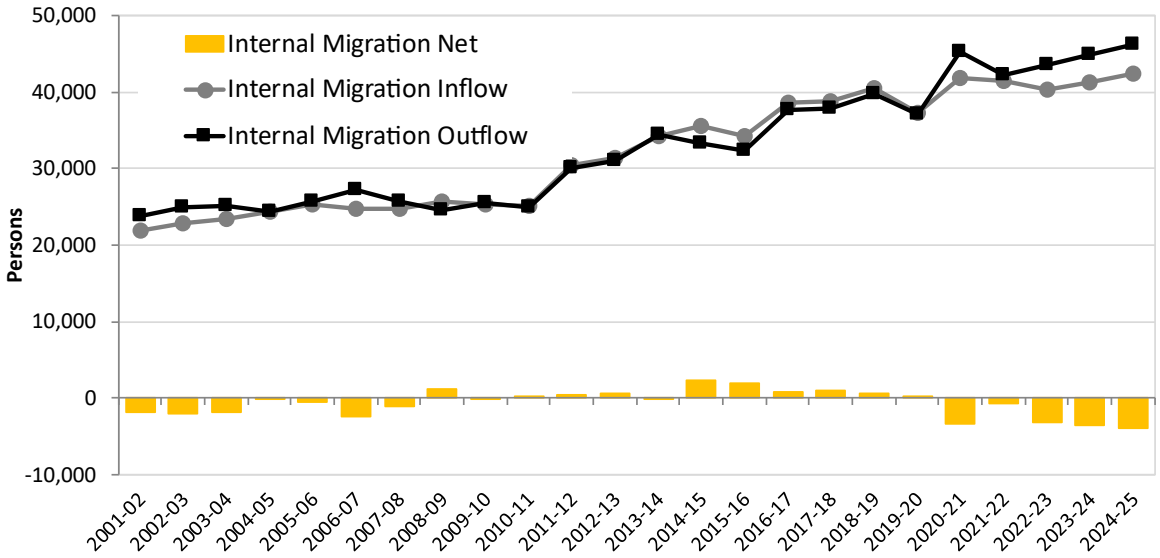
Internal migration

5.36 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 almost doubled resulting in an increasingly transient population.

5.37 The long-term trend of little net change annually due to internal migration has changed in the last five years, 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-2025 saw a net loss of 3,900 people to others areas (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Internal migration in Bristol mid-2001 to mid-2025

Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates. Crown Copyright.



5.38 In the 12 months to mid-2025, all age groups saw a net loss of people except 18-21 year olds. There was an estimated 11,900 in-migrants aged 18-21 years from other parts of the UK and 3,200 out-migrants resulting in a net gain of 6,700 18-21 year olds. The largest losses due to net internal migration were 22 year olds as people leave university and in the 30-39 year age group as well as young children, suggesting that people with young families are moving out of the Bristol local authority area.

5.39 In 2024-25, the main moves to and from Bristol were to and from surrounding local authorities plus London, Somerset, Wiltshire, Cardiff and Cornwall. There were around 6,500 people moving between Bristol and London, with similar numbers in each direction.

5.40 It is important to note that the flows of people moving in and out of Bristol to surrounding areas and to other parts of the UK are considerably greater than the numbers of international migrants moving into and out of Bristol. In the 12 months to mid-2025, 42,500 people moved into Bristol from other areas of UK whilst 46,300 moved out of Bristol to other areas of UK. In contrast, 11,700 people moved into Bristol from outside the UK and 8,300 people moved out of Bristol to go abroad.

5.41 Estimates of migration are subject to high levels of uncertainty. ONS estimates of long-term international migration are the best possible given the available data sources, however, they remain in development. Users should be aware that they are likely to be revised as new sources of information become available and ONS refine the methodology for measuring migration.

Summary
From 2021-2024, the main factor behind population growth had been net international migration, as net international migration had increased to levels higher than seen in over two decades. However, this has changed. In the year to mid-2025 population growth was significantly less, and the main factor behind this was a fall in net international migration, mainly from outside the EU.

SMALL AREA POPULATION TRENDS

5.42 Figure 15 and Table 5 show population change between 2014 and 2024 by ward. The areas of highest population growth have been in central areas of Bristol.

5.43 Whilst there have been increases in population across all wards over the decade, by far the greatest increases have been in Central ward where the population has increased by 9,352 people (+71.2%) and Hotwells and Harbourside ward with an increase of 40.3%.

Figure 15. Population change 2014 to 2024 by ward

Source: Mid-2014 and Mid-2024 population estimates ONS © Crown Copyright 2025

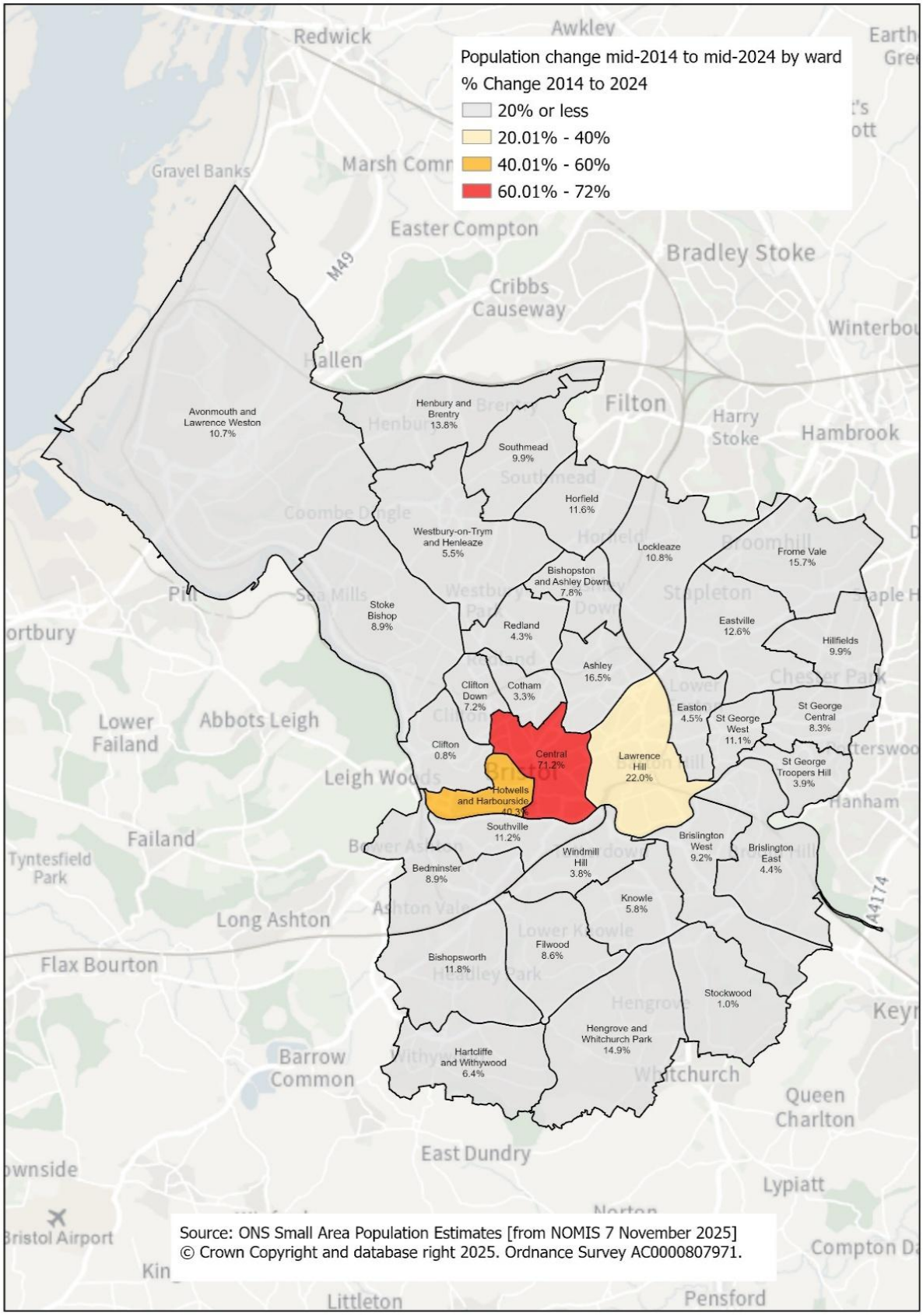


Table 5. Population estimates 2014-2024 (revised) by ward

Source: Mid-2014 and Mid-2024 population estimates ONS © Crown Copyright 2025

			Change 2014-2024	
Ward	**2014**	**2024**	**number**	**%**
Central	13,140	22,492	9,352	71.2
Hotwells & Harbourside	4,737	6,648	1,911	40.3
Lawrence Hill	17,738	21,641	3,903	22.0
Ashley	18,730	21,827	3,097	16.5
Frome Vale	12,858	14,876	2,018	15.7
Hengrove & Whitchurch Park	17,702	20,331	2,629	14.9
Henbury & Brentry	12,015	13,675	1,660	13.8
Eastville	13,763	15,504	1,741	12.6
Bishopsworth	11,369	12,712	1,343	11.8
Horfield	12,938	14,434	1,496	11.6
Southville	11,999	13,338	1,339	11.2
St George West	6,453	7,170	717	11.1
Lockleaze	12,660	14,029	1,369	10.8
Avonmouth & Lawrence Weston	21,024	23,264	2,240	10.7
Hillfields	12,608	13,861	1,253	9.9
Southmead	12,745	14,009	1,264	9.9
Brislington West	11,121	12,143	1,022	9.2
Bedminster	12,158	13,243	1,085	8.9
Stoke Bishop	12,199	13,284	1,085	8.9
Filwood	13,454	14,615	1,161	8.6
St George Central	12,409	13,436	1,027	8.3
Bishopston & Ashley Down	12,214	13,167	953	7.8
Clifton Down	10,896	11,681	785	7.2
Hartcliffe & Withywood	18,424	19,601	1,177	6.4
Knowle	13,645	14,437	792	5.8
Westbury-on-Trym & Henleaze	19,830	20,912	1,082	5.5
Easton	13,927	14,551	624	4.5
Brislington East	11,861	12,385	524	4.4
Redland	13,013	13,570	557	4.3
St George Troopers Hill	6,285	6,533	248	3.9
Windmill Hill	13,592	14,104	512	3.8
Cotham	11,454	11,835	381	3.3
Stockwood	11,872	11,990	118	1.0
Clifton	13,001	13,101	100	0.8
Bristol	**443,834**	**494,399**	**50,565**	**11.4**

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6. POPULATION PROJECTIONS

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.

6.1 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) published new 2022-based Sub-National Population Projections on 24 June 2025. These replace the previously published 2018-based Sub-National Population Projections.

6.2 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.

6.3 Projected population change is the result of assumptions about future births, deaths and migration. For each local authority in England, ONS collect data on these components of change to project the trends forward. The 2022-based subnational projections use data from 2018 to 2022. ONS project these data forward for 25 years and use the national population projections for England to constrain the projections.

6.4 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.

6.5 Due to high levels of uncertainty, the projections presented here only include projections up to 2032. Projections are however available for a longer 25-year time period.

6.6 For further information about how the population is projected to change in Bristol and other areas see the new ONS Population Projection Explorer

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POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR BRISTOL

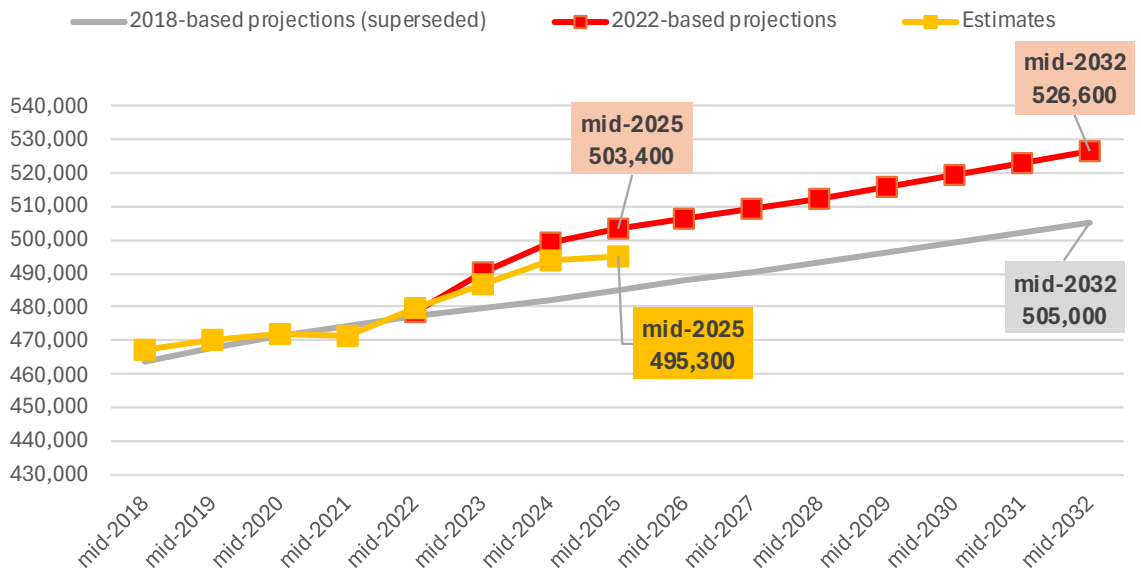
6.7 The population in Bristol is projected to increase from 478,600 people in 2022 to 526,600 people in 2032. This is a 10% increase, which is higher than the England average of 6.4% and the second highest percentage increase of the England Core Cities - only Manchester has a greater projected increase at 11%.

6.8 The biggest factor in this projected population change is net international migration, which is projected to increase the population by an estimated 49,800 people. 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.

6.9 Figure 16 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. 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.

Figure 16. 2022-based population projections compared to 2018-based population projections and population estimates

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

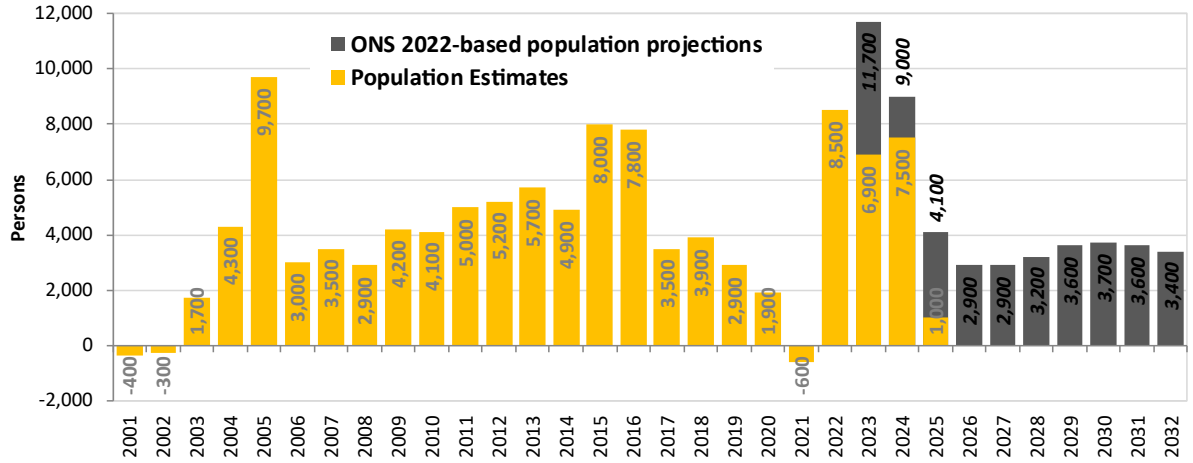


6.10 Figure 17 shows levels of annual population change between 2001 to 2025 together with projected levels of annual population change up to 2032. The mid-2023, mid-2024 and mid-2025 population estimates for Bristol are much lower than was projected by the 2022-based population projections.

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Figure 17. Annual population change 2001-2032

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

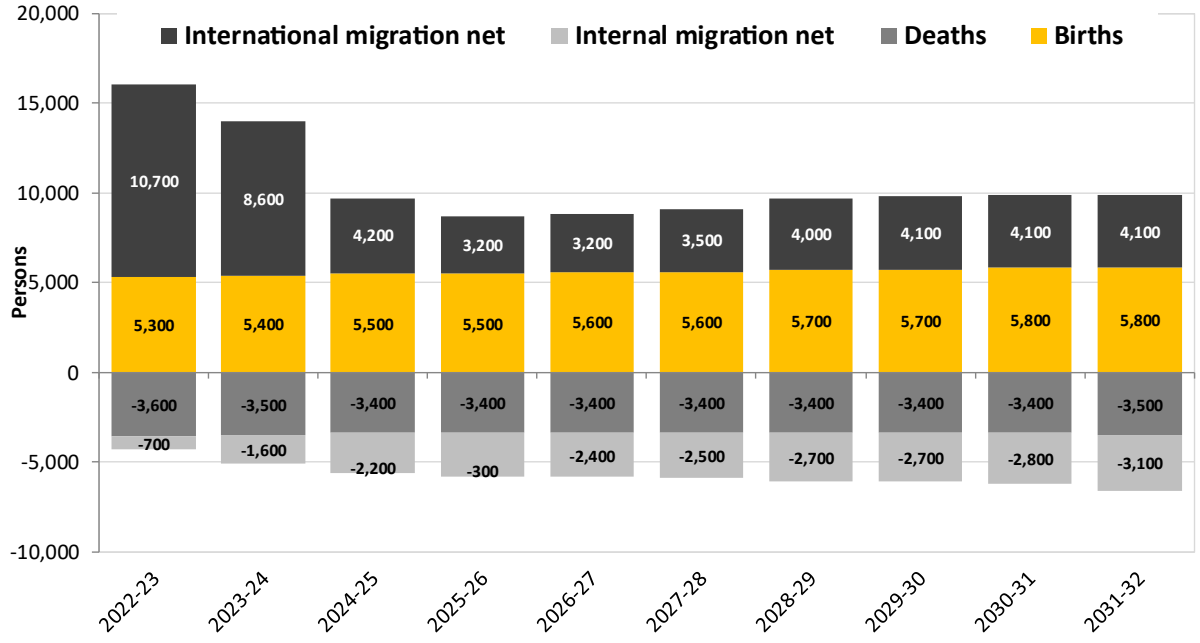


COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE

6.11 Population change is projected by looking at births and deaths (natural change) and people moving in and out of areas. Figure 18 shows the projected components of population change in Bristol between 2022 and 2032.

Figure 18. Components of population change in Bristol between 2022 and 2032

Source: ONS 2022-based Sub-national Population Projections



Natural change

6.12 In Bristol, the projections show that between 2022 and 2032 there is estimated to be more births than deaths. The population is projected to increase by 21,465 due to natural change, with 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.

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6.13 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.

Internal migration

6.14 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%.

International migration

6.15 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.

6.16 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.

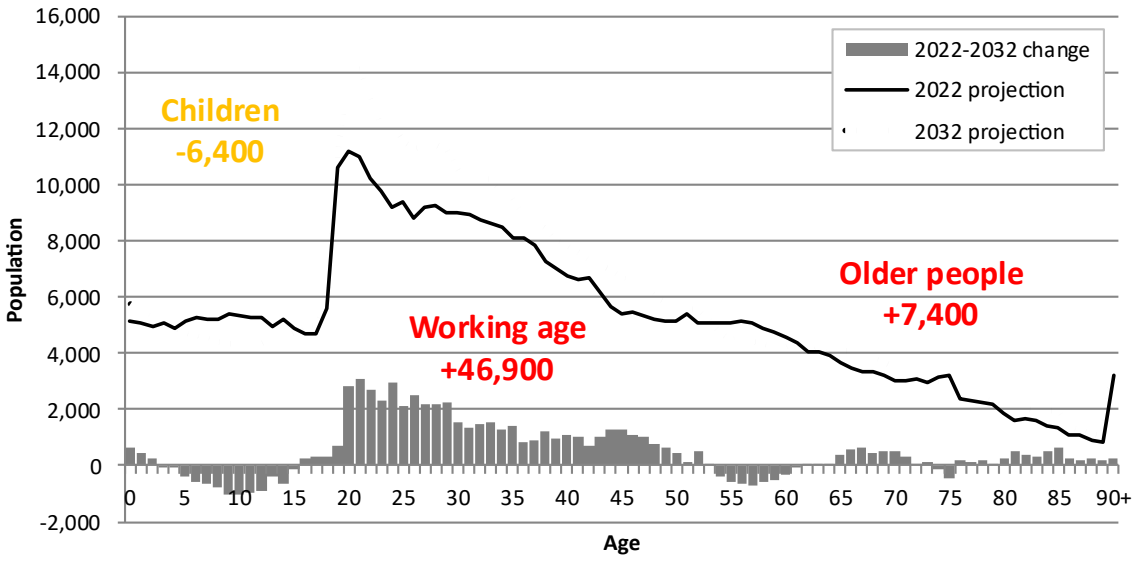
6.17 The mid-2023, mid-2024 and mid-2025 population estimates for Bristol show lower levels of net international migration than the 2022-based population projections.

AGE PROFILE IN 2032

6.18 The median age in Bristol is projected to remain the same at around 33 years by 2032. In England, the median age is projected to be 41 years in 2032. Figure 19 shows the population profile of Bristol in 2032 and compares it to 2022.

Figure 19. Population age profile of Bristol in 2032 compared to 2022

Source: ONS 2022-based Sub-National Population Projections



6.19 In 2032 in Bristol, there is projected to be 6,400 fewer children (aged 0-15), 46,900 more people of working age and 7,400 more older people (aged 65 and over). The 20 to 29 age group are set to see the largest growth in Bristol between 2022 and 2032.

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6.20 Figure 20 shows how the number of children (aged 0-17) living in Bristol is projected to change over the decade 2022-32, together with the mid-year population estimates for 2018 to 2025 and the superseded 2018-based projection.

Figure 20. Projection of children (aged 0-17) in Bristol in 2032 compared to 2018-based projections and population estimates
Source: ONS Sub-National Population Projections

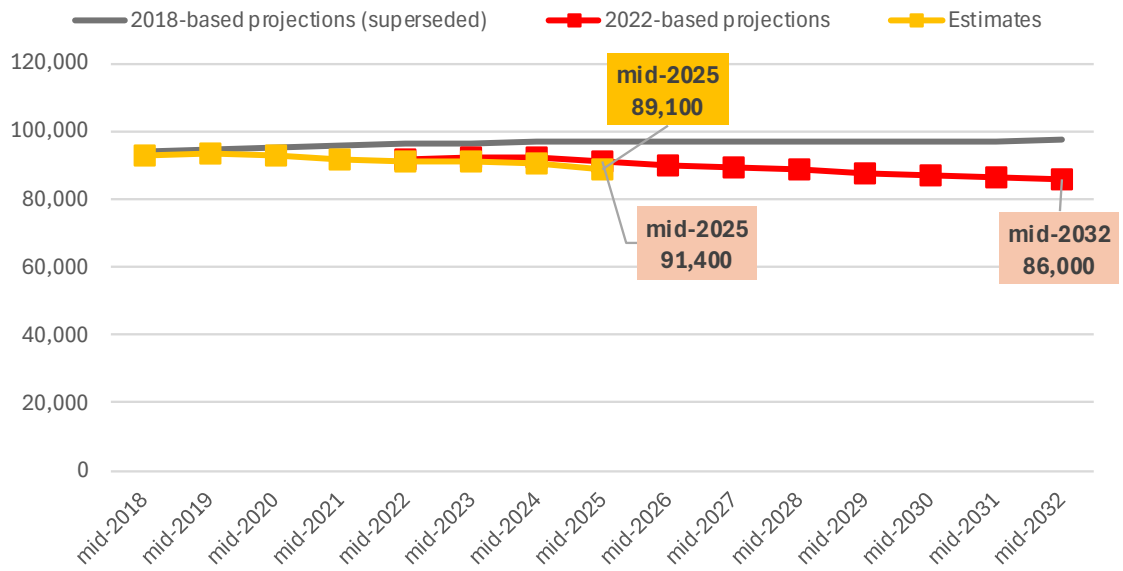
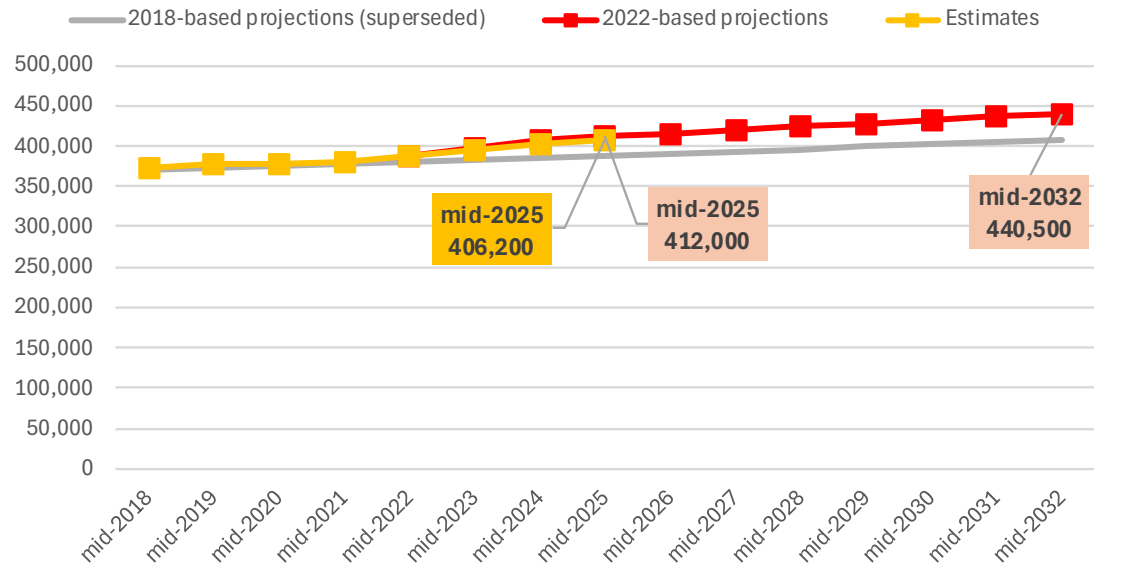


Figure 21. Projection of adults (aged 18 and over) in Bristol in 2032 compared to 2018-based projections and population estimates
Source: ONS Sub-National Population Projections



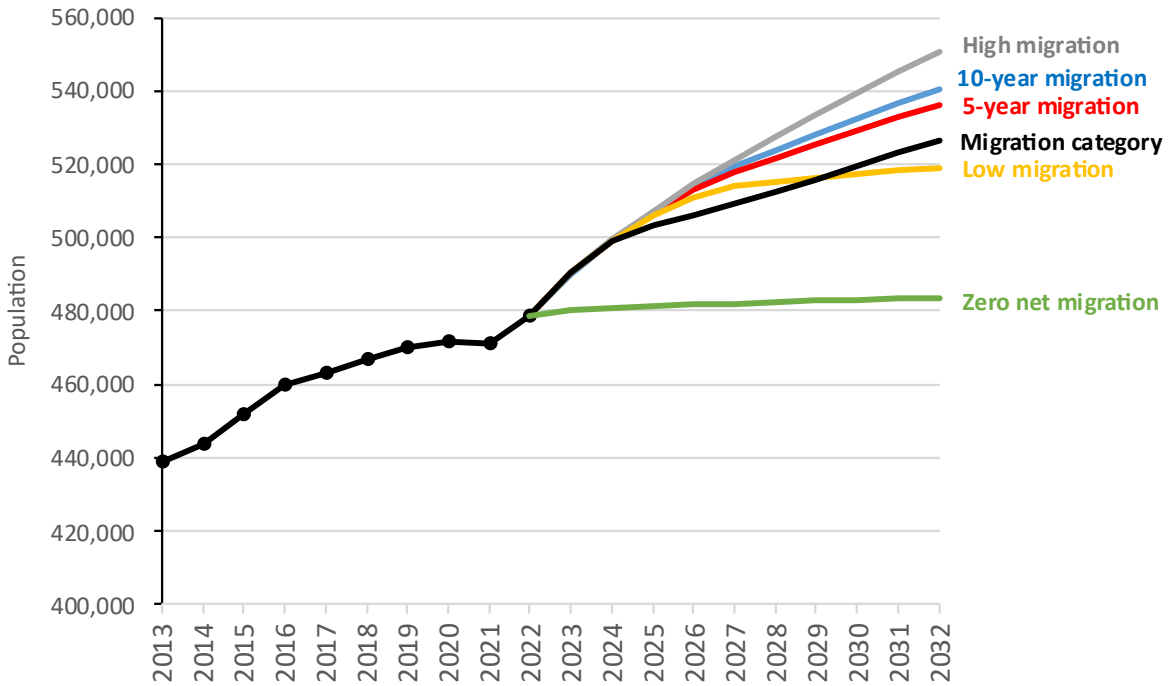
6.21 Figure 21 shows how the number of adults (aged 18 years and over) living in Bristol is projected to change over the decade 2022-32, together with the mid-year population estimates for 2018 to 2025 and the superseded 2018-based projection.

VARIANT PROJECTIONS

6.22 Figure 22 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).

Figure 22. Variant population projections showing a range of future demographic scenarios, mid-2022 to mid-2032

Source: ONS Sub-National Population Projections



6.23 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.

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7. OTHER POPULATION STATISTICS

7.1 There are additional sources of population statistics that can be used to supplement estimates from the Office for National Statistics. These include administrative sources such as National Insurance Registrations to Overseas Nationals (NINo) and student registration statistics.

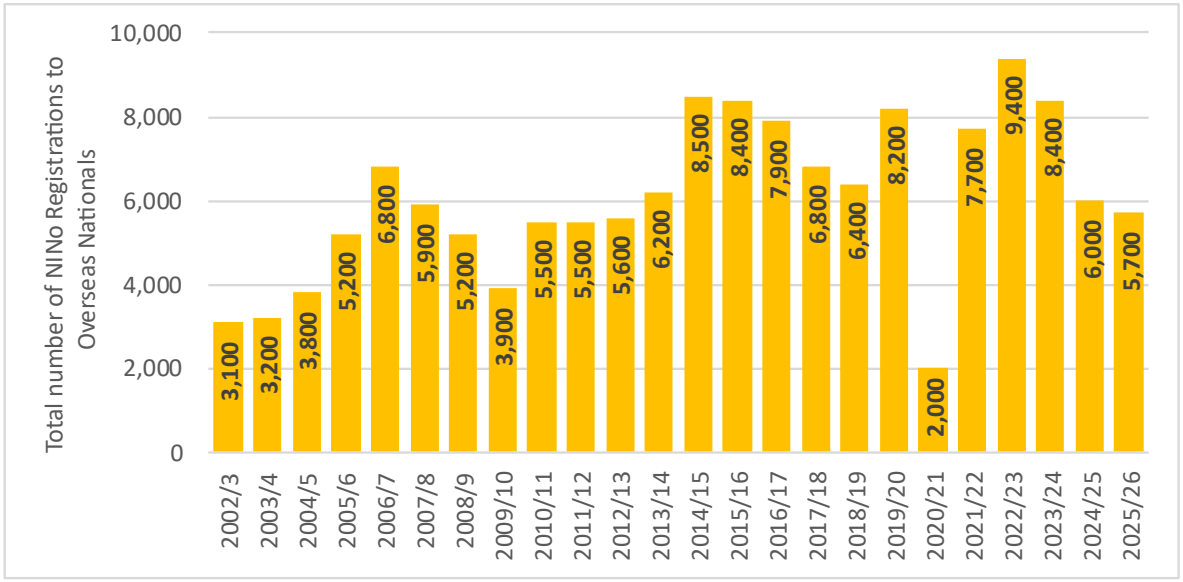
7.2 These sources can be used to substantiate ONS population estimates and often to provide pointers towards the most recent demographic trends. ONS are increasingly making use of administrative datasets to estimate the population.

NATIONAL INSURANCE NUMBER REGISTRATIONS (NINOS)

7.3 National Insurance Number registrations to adult overseas nationals entering the UK (NINos) are produced by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The DWP NINo data covers people allocated a NINo for all types of work – including the self-employed and students working part-time – and whatever the length of stay in the UK. It also covers adult overseas nationals allocated a NINo to claim benefits or tax credits.

7.4 The DWP NINo data does not show when overseas nationals subsequently depart the UK, nor does it show length of stay in the UK. The DWP figures are therefore a measure of inflow of overseas nationals registering for a NINo. For this reason, the figures do not show the number of foreign nationals working or claiming benefit at any given point nor do they distinguish between long and short-term migrants.

Figure 24. Total National Insurance Registrations in Bristol for non-UK Nationals 2002/3-2025/26
Source: Stat-Xplore, Department for Work and Pensions https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/



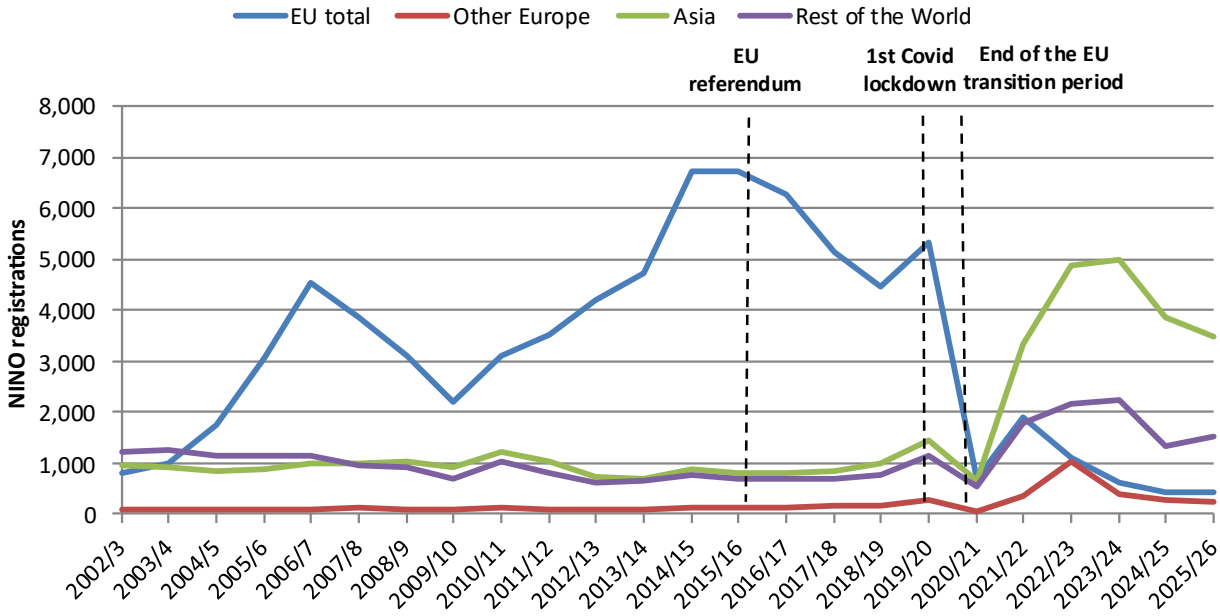
7.5 Figure 25 shows that the total number of NINo registrations in Bristol each year since 2002/3. Following the expansion of the EU in 2004, the number of registrations increased up to 2006/7. Numbers again increased reaching a peak at 8,500 registrations in 2014/15. A sharp drop in registrations can be seen in 2020/21 during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the following three years, registrations returned to pre-pandemic levels.

7.6 Since 2024/25 however registrations have fallen for two consecutive years. The latest data for 2025/26 shows a fall to a total of 5,700 registrations. This follows recent changes to government policy on visas to overseas nationals.

7.7 The trend in the number of NINo registrations can be broken down by broad World area of origin and country of origin. Figure 25 shows the trend in Bristol registrations of EU nationals, other Europe nationals, Asian nationals and people from the rest of the World.

Figure 25. National Insurance Registrations for non-UK Nationals in Bristol 2002/3-2025/26 by Broad World Area

Source: Stat-Xplore, Department for Work and Pensions https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/



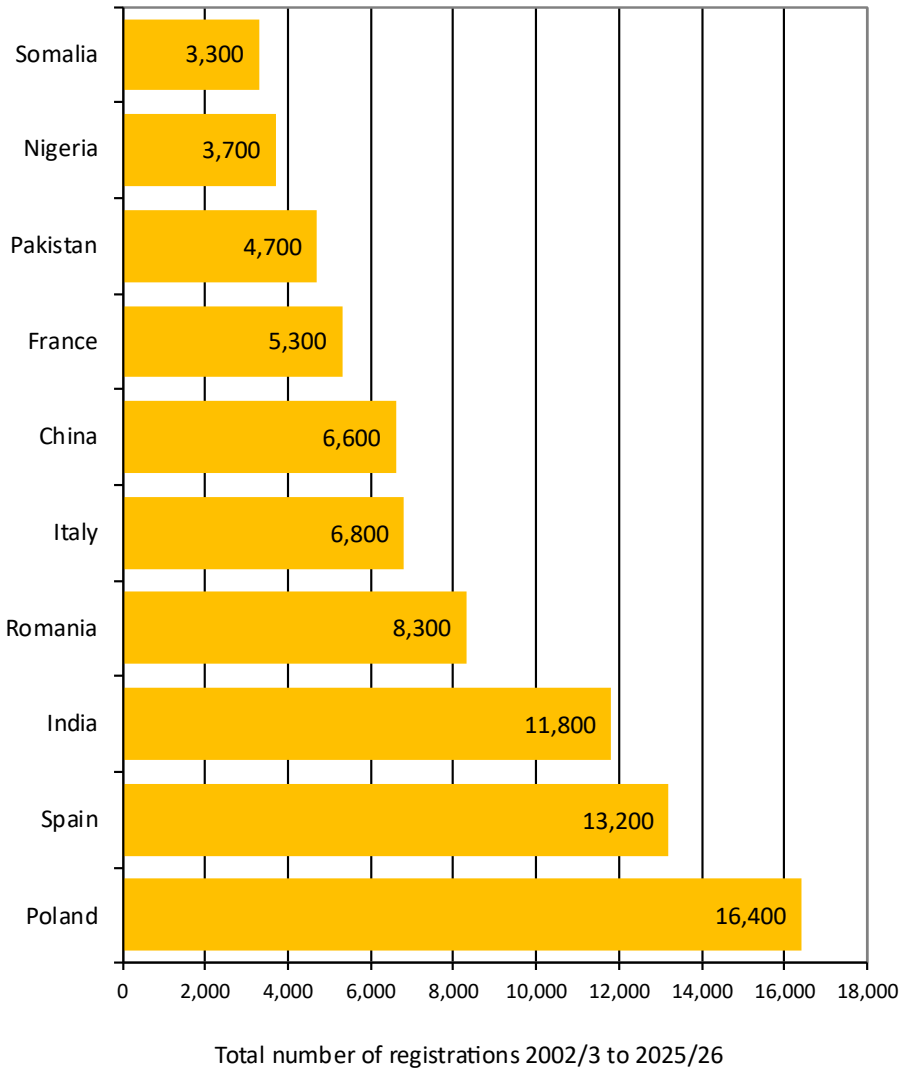
7.8 NINo registrations show the fundamental change from EU nationals to nationals from other parts of the World, in particular Asia. The decline in the number of EU nationals registering for National Insurance in Bristol after the EU Referendum is clear, together with the affect of the Covid-19 pandemic first lockdown in March 2020 and the end of the EU transition period with the introduction of the new immigration system at the start of 2021.

7.9 The increase in registrations by nationals from outside of the EU can be seen from 2021 onwards. However, following the most recent government policy changes, there has been a fall in registrations for the last two years, with fewer people arriving on work and study-related visas.

7.10 A more detailed breakdown is possible by country of origin (Figure 26). In total between 2002/3 and 2025/26, almost 145,400 National Insurance numbers were issued to non-UK nationals in Bristol. Of these, more than half were issued to people from just 8 countries including: Poland 16,400, Spain 13,200, India 11,800, Romania 8,300, Italy 6,800, China 6,600, France 5,300 and Pakistan 4,700. Overall, people registering for a NI number in Bristol come from more than 173 different countries.

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Figure 26. National Insurance Registrations for non-UK Nationals by Nationality in Bristol
Chart only shows countries with more than 3,000 registrations in total since 2002/3
Source: Stat-Xplore, Department for Work and Pensions https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/

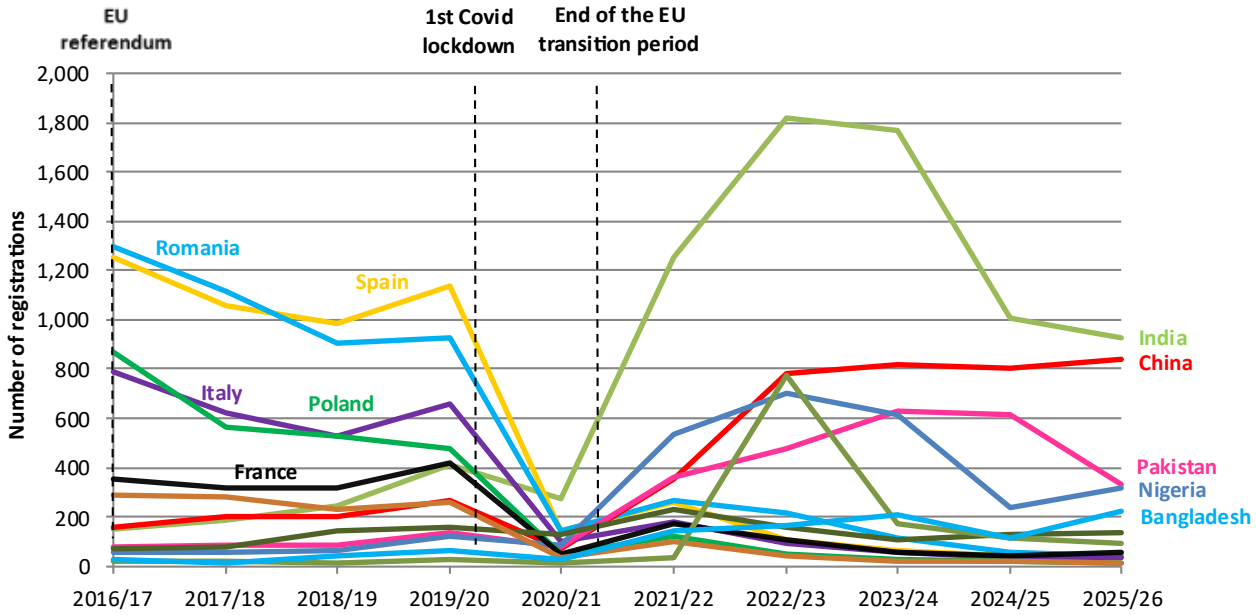


7.11 Figure 27 shows countries with a total of 1,000 or more NI registrations since 2016/17. In the period before the first Covid pandemic lockdown in March 2020, the majority of NI registrations were people from EU countries, in particular Polish, Spanish, Romanian and Italian nationals - although numbers had been declining following the EU Referendum in June 2016.

7.12 Following the Covid pandemic and the end of the EU transition period, NINo registrations in Bristol have been dominated by registrations of Indian, Chinese, Pakistani and Nigerian nationals. Indian was the most common nationality, with people coming to the UK for mainly work-related and study-related reasons. The same was true for both Pakistani and Nigerian nationals. For Chinese nationals, study-related immigration was far more common that work-related reasons.

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Figure 27. National Insurance Registrations for non-UK Nationals in Bristol
Countries with a total of 1,000 or more NI registrations since 2016/17
Source: Stat-Xplore, Department for Work and Pensions https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/



7.13 Following the most recent government migration policy changes, in 2024/25 there were fewer people arriving on work and study-related visas. NINo registrations in Bristol fell most significantly for India and Nigeria nationals.

STUDENTS

University registrations

NOTE not all registered university students live in the Bristol local authority area

7.14 In 2024/25 there were 68,815 students in total registered at the two main Bristol universities - 32,435 at the University of Bristol and 36,380 at the University of the West of England (UWE).

7.15 In the 10 years up to 2024/25 university student numbers increased by 43% (+20,600) (Table 7). The majority of this increase can be accounted for by an increase in full time students at both universities (Figure 28).

7.16 The upwards trend in student numbers may have peaked, with the number of students registered at UWE falling for the first time since 2015/16. In 2024/25 there were 2,440 fewer students registered at UWE than in the 2022/23 academic year peak. The number of students at the University of Bristol however continued to increase.

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Table 7. Higher Education students at the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England 2014/15 to 2024/25

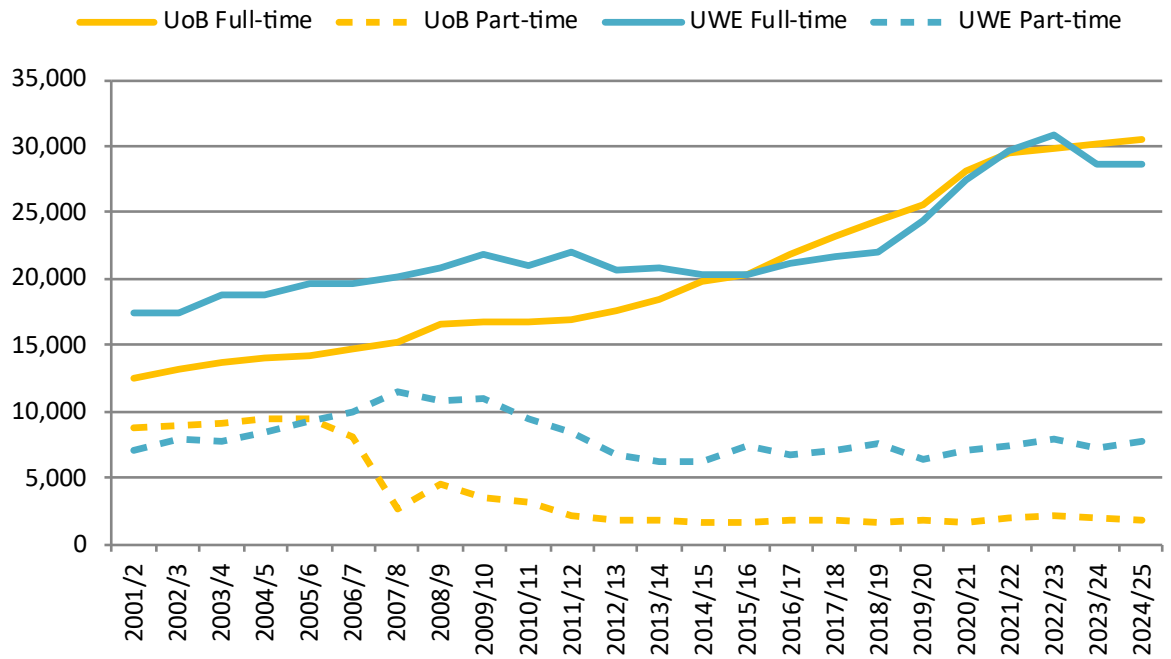
Source: Higher Education Statistics Authority 2026

Academic year	University of Bristol	University of the West of England	Total
2014/15	21,560	26,665	48,225
2015/16	21,900	27,710	49,610
2016/17	23,595	27,880	51,475
2017/18	24,850	28,790	53,640
2018/19	25,955	29,555	55,510
2019/20	27,375	30,680	58,055
2020/21	29,785	34,410	64,195
2021/22	31,485	37,170	68,655
2022/23	32,100	38,820	70,920
2023/24	32,145	35,925	68,070
2024/25	32,435	36,380	68,815
10 year change	**10,875**	**9,715**	**20,590**
% change	**50%**	**36%**	**43%**

NOTE not all registered university students live in the Bristol local authority area

Figure 28. Higher Education students at the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England 2014/15 to 2024/25 – Full time and part time trends

Source: Higher Education Statistics Authority 2026

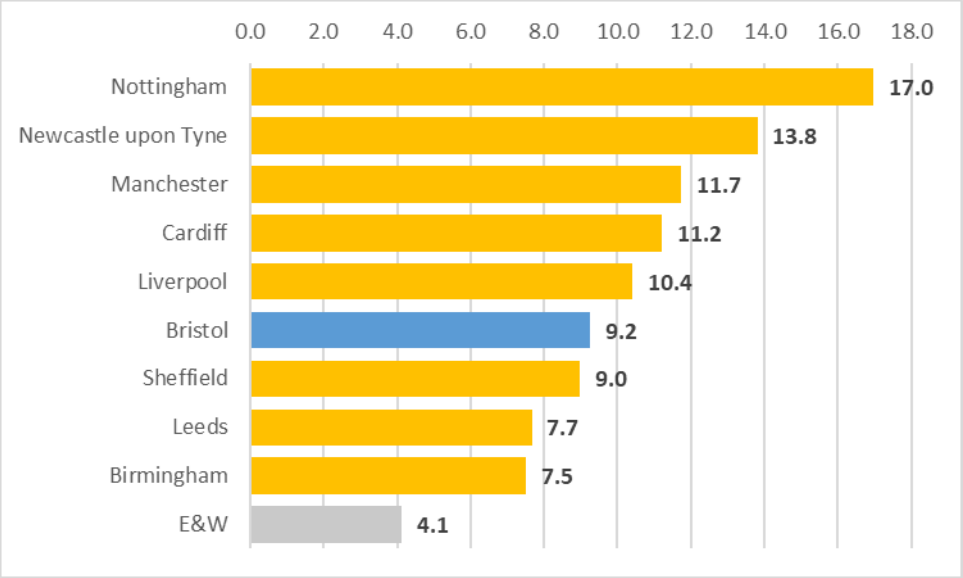


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7.17 The number of overseas students studying at the two Bristol universities has increased by 11,600 over the last decade - an increase of 12 percentage points - and now make up more than a quarter (29%) of all university students. Of these, 27% come from countries outside of the EU and the remaining 2% come from EU countries.

Full-time students living in Bristol during term-time

Figure 29. % Full-time students aged 18 and over by Core City (England and Wales only)
Source: Census 2021 Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright 2023



7.18 In 2021, there are 43,700 full-time students aged 18 and over living in Bristol, making up 9.2% of the total usually resident population (England and Wales 4.1%). ***This includes all full-time students not just university students.***

7.19 Over the decade 2011 to 2021, the number of full-time students aged 18 and over living in Bristol increased by 8,000 – this is a 22.5% increase and compares to a 0.9% increase in England and Wales as a whole.

7.20 Of the Core Cities in England and Wales, full-time students make up a higher proportion of the total population in Nottingham (17.0%), Newcastle (13.8%), Manchester (11.7%), Cardiff (11.2%) and Liverpool (10.4%) (Figure 29).

7.21 Students living in Bristol are concentrated in particular areas of the city. More than half (52%) of all full-time students aged 18 and over live in just six wards and account for more than a fifth of the total ward population, including:

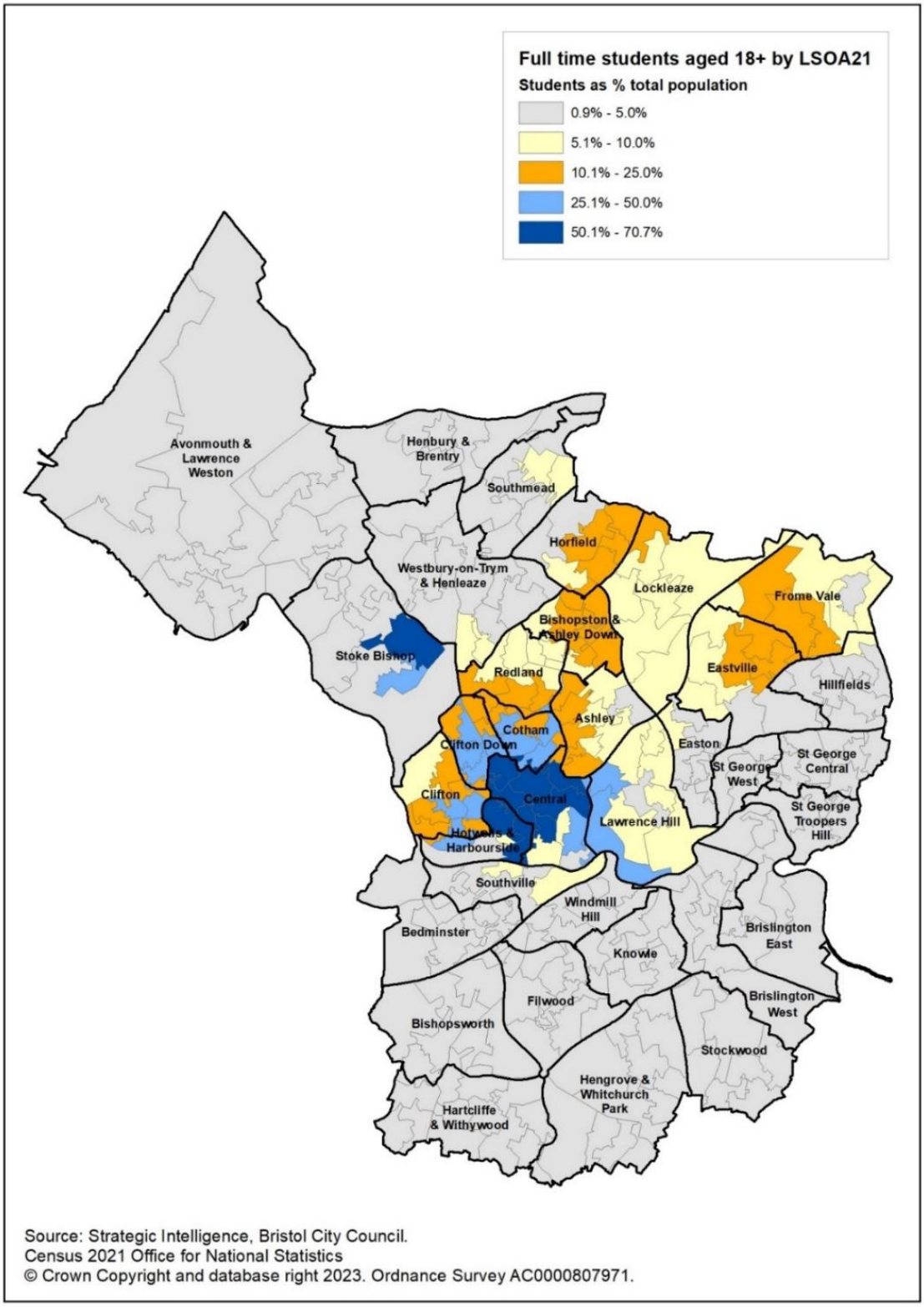
- Central - 8,634 (47%)
- Clifton Down - 3,363 (29%)
- Cotham - 3,218 (28%)
- Hotwells and Harbourside (1,570 (26%)
- Clifton - 3,062 (24%)
- Stoke Bishop - 2,692 (21%)

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7.22 Figure 30 maps students as a percentage of the total population by small neighbourhood (Lower Layer Super Output Area[9]).

Figure 30. Full-time students aged 18 and over living in Bristol during term-time

Source: Census 2021 Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright 2023

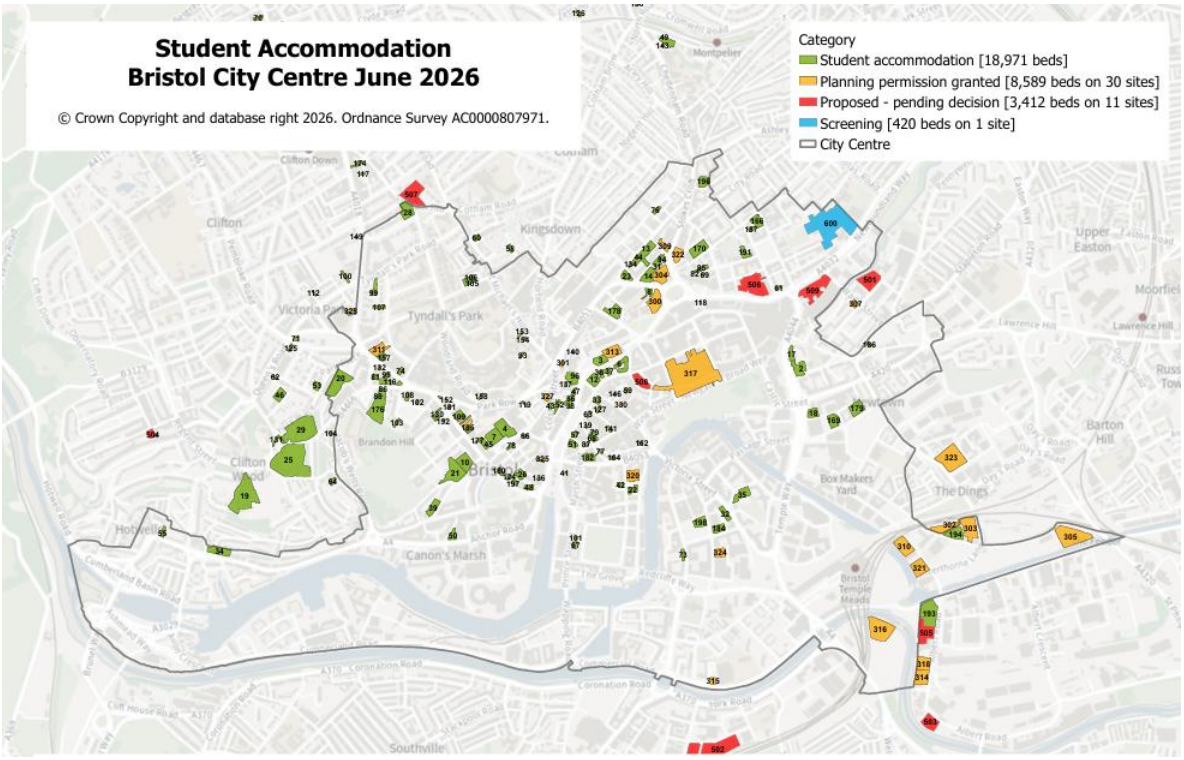


[9] Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are a statistical geography created by the Office for National Statistics for presenting small area data in England and Wales. LSOAs include between 400 and 1,200 households and have a usually resident population between 1,000 and 3,000 persons.

Purpose built student accommodation

7.23 Purpose built student accommodation is increasing in Bristol, particularly in Central Bristol. A student accommodation map (Figure 31) is available which maps all forms of residential accommodation built or converted for use by students in the city centre. The map also shows development sites with planning permission for student accommodation and sites where a planning application for student accommodation has been made but where permission has not yet been granted.

Figure 31. Student Accommodation Bristol City Centre June 2026
Source: Strategic Intelligence and Performance, Bristol City Council



7.24 The most recent map is available on the [population web page].

8. POPULATION CHANGE AND POLICY

8.1 The last 100 years or so witnessed unprecedented change in the UK population. Estimating exactly how the population will look in the future is not possible to say with certainty. However, recent trends in births, deaths and migration can help to form a set of assumptions about how they will shape the future population.

8.2 Understanding the size and characteristics of the population and how it is changing is important to our understanding of society and the economy. Statistics about the population and migration are a vital input into decision-making by public, private, and voluntary sector bodies. They help people understand the evolving society that we live in. They help central and local government ensure that public services are delivered to the people who need them, and that resources are allocated effectively. They help businesses invest in the right places. They provide key contextual information for research and analysis and in calculating rates for key demographic measures, performance targets and economic indicators such as employment rates.

8.3 Below are some policy implications of the changing population of Bristol:

- Population growth in Bristol and the wider sub-region can help support a growing economy through increasing demand for goods and services and moderate the impacts of an ageing labour supply. The relative economic growth of Bristol together with new housing provision will, to some extent, generate additional migration into the area. However a range of other factors will influence migration patterns both into and out of the area, including education, retirement, lifestyle, etc.

- The increase in population has service delivery implications. Concentration of this growth on particular population groups in certain areas of the city, will have localised implications.

- New communities bring both advantages and new challenges around cohesion, integration and equality of opportunity.

- Increasing numbers of new dwellings to accommodate additional households is likely to have an impact on a wide range of environmental, social and economic issues.

- The fall in Bristol's birth rate will have implications for health and education provision in the city. The projected growth or decline in the school age population has significant implications for education provision.

- Large numbers of young people move into and out of the city each year. Provision of purpose-built student accommodation can help accommodate future increases in student numbers without adding to demand on the private housing stock. Over concentrations of people living in multi-occupied households, including students, can lead to particular localised amenity issues.

- Bristol has increasing numbers of older people, although future changes in the age structure of the population are not as acute as other local authorities. An older population will have implications for primary and secondary health care services and social care

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provision. A range of health issues, including disabilities and long-term health conditions, will be more prevalent in a more elderly population.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 Bristol is home to a wealth of cultures and creative ideas, and the city continues to build on its strengths as a safe and welcoming place to all, including as a City of Sanctuary that values its diversity.

9.2 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.

9.3 From 2021-2024, the main factor behind population growth had been net international migration, as net international migration had increased to levels higher than seen in over two decades. However, this has changed. In the year to mid-2025 population growth was significantly less, and the main factor behind this was a fall in net international migration, mainly from outside the EU.

9.4 The population of Bristol has become increasingly diverse and some local communities have changed significantly. There are now more than 287 different ethnic groups in the city, more than 185 countries of birth represented, at least 45 religions and more than 90 languages spoken by people living in Bristol.

9.5 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.

9.6 Future population projections are uncertain. A combination of factors is likely to influence future population change. These include economic performance, health and well-being, household dynamics and finances, the potential impact of conflict, cultural change, social developments, and political and policy responses to these factors, or interventions that affect them.

10. USEFUL LINKS & MORE INFORMATION

The Bristol City Council population page includes the latest version of this report and the most recent **population estimates** and **projections** for Bristol.

Population profiles for equalities groups on the population page include ethnic group, religion, Disabled population, sexual orientation, Trans population, Somali population and older people. The profiles analyse Census 2021 data, looking at the differences between groups in characteristics, health, work and housing.

Census 2021 results on the Bristol City Council census page are presented in two dashboards:

1. Headline Census 2021 results for Bristol overall in the **Census 2021 Dashboard**
2. Detailed data for areas within Bristol are in the Bristol Census Data Profiles dashboard which include **Area Profiles** and **Topic Profiles**

Topics presented in the dashboards include:

- Population and migration
- Country of birth, ethnicity, religion and language
- Sexual orientation and gender identity
- Health, disability and carers
- Economic activity status and hours worked
- Socio-economic groups, industry and occupation
- Mode and distance travelled to work
- Qualifications
- Veterans
- Housing type and tenure
- Central heating and car availability
- Occupancy and bedrooms
- Household composition, size and deprivation

Bristol Ward Profiles include demographic information for Bristol wards. The profiles can be accessed using our interactive Bristol Ward Profiles and are also available in pdf format.

Most information in this report is based on **Office for National Statistics** data which is available here Population and migration - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

More information
Jayne Mills, Strategic Intelligence and Performance
Email: jayne.mills@bristol.gov.uk

Bristol City Council
August 2026