



Population

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Edition No: **Social Trends 41**

Editor: **Jen Beaumont**

Office for National Statistics

ISSN 2040-1620

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The population of the UK at both national and regional level is continuously changing. Birth, death, migration and the mobility of residents all affect the size, age and sex structure, and geographical distribution of the population. Changes in demographic patterns influence social structures, and have implications for public policy in a wide range of areas such as the provision of education, transport and health services. Demographic patterns also influence commercial decisions, such as the development of new products and the location of retail outlets and other business premises. This chapter examines the long and short term changes in the population of the UK.

Key Points

UK population

- In 2009 there were an estimated 61.8 million people resident in the UK, an increase of 2.7 million since 2001, and an increase of 23.6 million since the start of the 20th century

Births and deaths

- In 2009 in the UK there were 790,000 live births, a decrease of 0.5 per cent since 2008, and 560,000 deaths, a decrease of 3.5 per cent

Components of population change

- Between 1951 and 2001 and from 2007 onwards the main driver of population increase in the UK is net natural change (the difference between births and deaths)
- For every 1,000 residents in the UK net natural change added 3.5 people and net migration and other changes 2.9 people in the UK between 2008 and 2009

International migration

- Between 2008-09 and 2009-10 provisional estimates are that net migration increased from 166,000 to 226,000 largely because of a decrease in emigration
- The most common country of last residence for long term immigrants to the UK in 2009 was India
- There were 195,100 grants of British citizenship in the UK in 2010, a decrease of 3.9 per cent compared with 2009
- In 2009 an estimated 93 per cent of UK residents were British citizens, and 89 per cent had been born in the UK

Population movement within the UK

- Internal migration resulted in an estimated net loss of 5,700 residents from England to other countries in the UK between 2008 and 2009
- The largest net change for regions within England was a net outward migration of approximately 38,100 residents from London
- The largest net gains from inward migration from other parts of the UK were in the South East and South West

Changes in age structure

- Between 1971 and 2009 the proportion of the UK population aged under 16 years decreased from 25.5 per cent to 18.7 per cent, while the proportion aged 75 and over increased from 4.7 per cent to 7.8 per cent
- It is projected that the number of UK residents aged 65 and over will be larger than the number aged under 16 years by 2018
- It is estimated that the number of residents aged 90 and over increased by 12 per cent between 2002 to 2009, from 388,200 to 436,500
- The average age of the population in the UK has increased from 36 years in 1992 to 40 years in 2009

UK Population

In 2009 there were an estimated 61.8 million people resident in the UK¹, an increase of 2.7 million since 2001, and an increase of 23.6 million since the start of the 20th century (**Table 1**).

Between mid-2001 and mid-2009, the UK population increased by an average of 0.6 per cent per year. Over the same time period growth was highest in Northern Ireland, at 0.7 per cent while the population in England grew by 0.6 per cent, in Scotland by 0.2 per cent and in Wales by 0.4 per cent.

In 2009, 83.8 per cent of the UK population lived in England, 8.4 per cent in Scotland, 4.9 per cent in Wales and 2.9 per cent in Northern Ireland. Despite differences in population growth rates across the UK, these proportions have varied very little since the first edition of Social Trends was published in 1971.

Table 1 **Population¹ of the United Kingdom**

	Millions				
	United Kingdom	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
1901	38.2	30.5	2.0	4.5	1.2
1911	42.1	33.6	2.4	4.8	1.3
1921 ²	44.0	35.2	2.7	4.9	1.3
1931	46.0	37.4	2.6	4.8	1.2
1951	50.2	41.2	2.6	5.1	1.4
1961	52.7	43.5	2.6	5.2	1.4
1971	55.9	46.4	2.7	5.2	1.5
1981	56.4	46.8	2.8	5.2	1.5
1991	57.4	47.9	2.9	5.1	1.6
2001	59.1	49.5	2.9	5.1	1.7
2009	61.8	51.8	3.0	5.2	1.8
2011	62.6	52.6	3.0	5.2	1.8
2016	64.8	54.5	3.1	5.3	1.9
2021	67.0	56.4	3.2	5.4	1.9
2026	69.1	58.3	3.3	5.5	2.0
2031	70.9	60.1	3.3	5.5	2.0

1 Data for 1901 to 1961 are enumerated Census figures, 1971 to 2009 are mid-year estimates, 2011 onward are national projections based on mid-2008 population estimates.

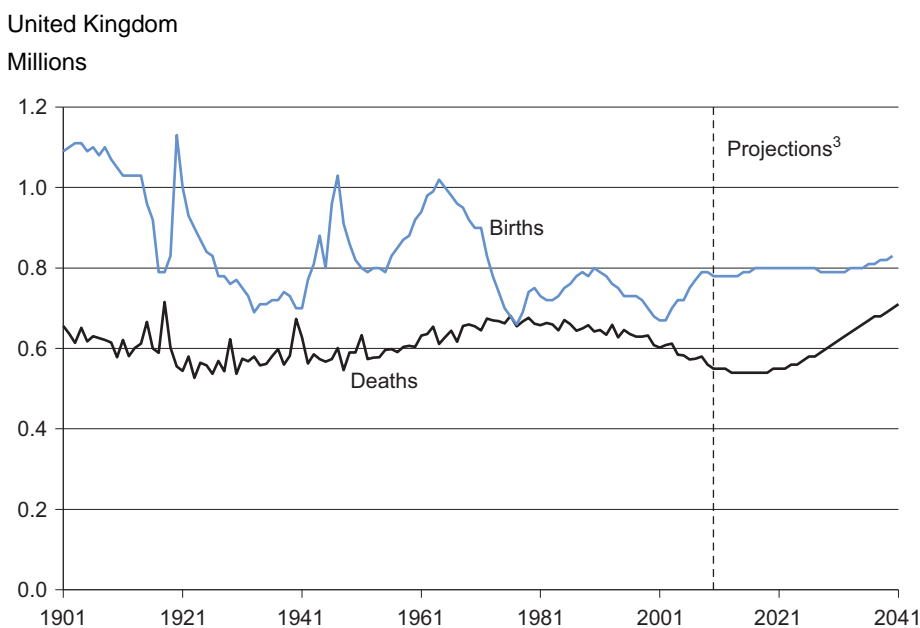
2 Figures for Northern Ireland are estimated. The population at the Census of 1921 was 1,257 thousand (608 thousand males and 649 thousand females).

Source: Office for National Statistics; General Register Office for Scotland; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (ONS, 2009a; 2010a; 2010b)

Births and deaths

The two World Wars had a major impact on births. There was a substantial fall in the number of births during the First World War, followed by a post-war increase with the number of births reaching 1.1 million in 1920, the highest number of births in any one year during the 20th century. Births then decreased and remained low during the 1930s' depression and the Second World War. A second increase occurred after the Second World War and another in the 1960s, peaking in 1964 (**Figure 1**). The lowest number of births in any year in the 20th Century was in 1977 (at 0.7 million).

Figure 1 **Births^{1,2} and deaths¹**



1 Data for 1901 to 1921 exclude Ireland which was constitutionally part of the UK during this period.

2 Data from 1981 exclude the non-residents of Northern Ireland.

3 2008-based projections for 2010 to 2041.

Source: Office for National Statistics

In general, the size of net natural change (the difference between births and deaths) has been driven by changes in the numbers of births rather than in the numbers of deaths. While there are obvious increases in deaths related to the two World Wars and to the Spanish influenza outbreak just after the First World War, the numbers do not vary by as much as those for births. In the mid 1970s there were a number of years when the number of births and deaths were very similar. More recently people are living longer and the number of deaths has been decreasing in spite of the increase in population. In 2009 in the UK there were 790,000 live births, a decrease of 0.5 per cent since 2008, and 560,000 deaths, a decrease of 3.5 per cent since 2008.

The number of births in the UK is projected to fall in 2010, with a longer-term rise over the next 30 years. This longer-term projected increase in births, when the total fertility rate is assumed to be constant, is due to an increase in the female population of childbearing age resulting from assumed net inward migrationⁱⁱ.

The declining trend in the annual number of deaths is projected to continue until about 2019, when an upward trend in the number of deaths is suggested as the large cohorts born immediately after the Second World War and during the 1960s baby boom begin to reach elderly ages.

Components of population change

Historically, net natural change – the difference between births and deaths – was the main driver behind population increase, accounting for 98 per cent of population change in the UK between 1951 and 1961. Over the same time period, the impact of net migration on the change in the UK population was either a very small increase or a decrease when emigration was higher than immigration.

In the decade between 1991 and 2001, the effects of net inward migration and other changesⁱⁱⁱ on overall population change begins to be more noticeable with an average annual increase of 68,000. However, net natural change was a larger part of the increase with an annual average change of 100,000 (**Table 2**).

Table 2 **Population change¹**

United Kingdom

Thousands

	Population at start of period	Annual averages				Overall change
		Live Births	Deaths	Net natural change	Net migration and other ²	
1951–1961	50,287	839	593	246	6	252
1961–1971	52,807	962	638	324	-12	312
1971–1981	55,928	736	666	69	-27	42
1981–1991	56,357	757	655	103	5	108
1991–2001	57,439	731	631	100	68	167
2001–2002	59,113	663	601	62	143	205
2002–2003	59,319	682	605	77	156	233
2003–2004	59,552	707	603	104	186	290
2004–2005	59,842	717	591	127	267	394
2005–2006	60,235	734	575	159	190	349
2006–2007	60,584	758	571	187	214	401
2007–2008 ³	60,986	791	570	220	192	413
2008–2009	61,398	787	570	217	177	394
2009–2010	61,794	780	557	223	206	429
2010–2011	62,222	778	552	226	201	427
2011–2021	62,649	791	544	248	183	431

1 Mid-year estimates for 1951–1961 to 2008–2009; 2008-based projections for 2009–2021.

2 'Other changes' at the UK level includes changes in the population due to changes in the number of armed forces (both foreign and home) and their dependents resident in the UK.

3 Population at start of period for 2008–2009 and overall change will not sum to the population at start of period for 2009–10 due to the transition between population estimates and projections.

Source: Office for National Statistics; General Register Office for Scotland; Northern Ireland Statistics & Research

Agency (ONS, 2010c)

Between mid-2001 and mid-2009, the number of live births in the UK increased and the number of deaths decreased so that net natural change went up from 62,000 between 2001 and 2002 to 217,000 between 2008 and 2009. Over the same time period, the contribution to population change of net migration has varied. Between 2001 and 2007, net migration and other change was larger than net natural change. Over this time period, the largest increase because of net migration and other changes of 267,000 was between 2004 and 2005, coinciding with the Accession countries joining the European Union^{iv}. However, net natural change was again larger than net migration and other changes between 2007 to 2008 and 2008 to 2009 and is projected to remain the larger component of change up to 2021.

Between 2008 and 2009, net natural change added 3.5 people and net migration and other changes 2.9 people for every 1,000 residents in the UK.

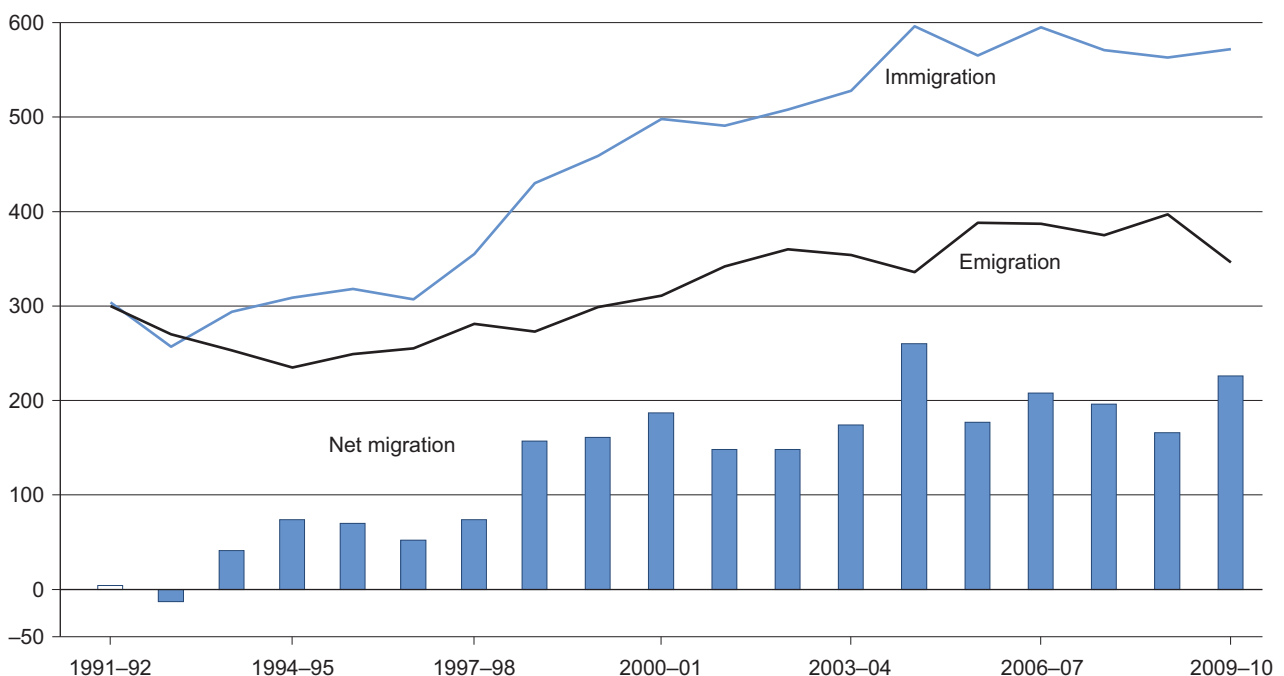
International migration^v

The previous section discussed net natural change and net migration and other changes in UK. This section looks at the number of immigrants and emigrants and the difference between them (net migration) for the years between mid 1991 and mid 2010.

Figure 2 Long-term international migration into and out of the UK^{1,2}

United Kingdom

Thousands



1 An international long-term migrant is defined as a person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least 12 months.

2 The 2001-02 to 2006-07 estimates were revised in February 2010 following changes to source data. Therefore they may not agree with estimates published prior to this date. 2009-10 data are provisional.

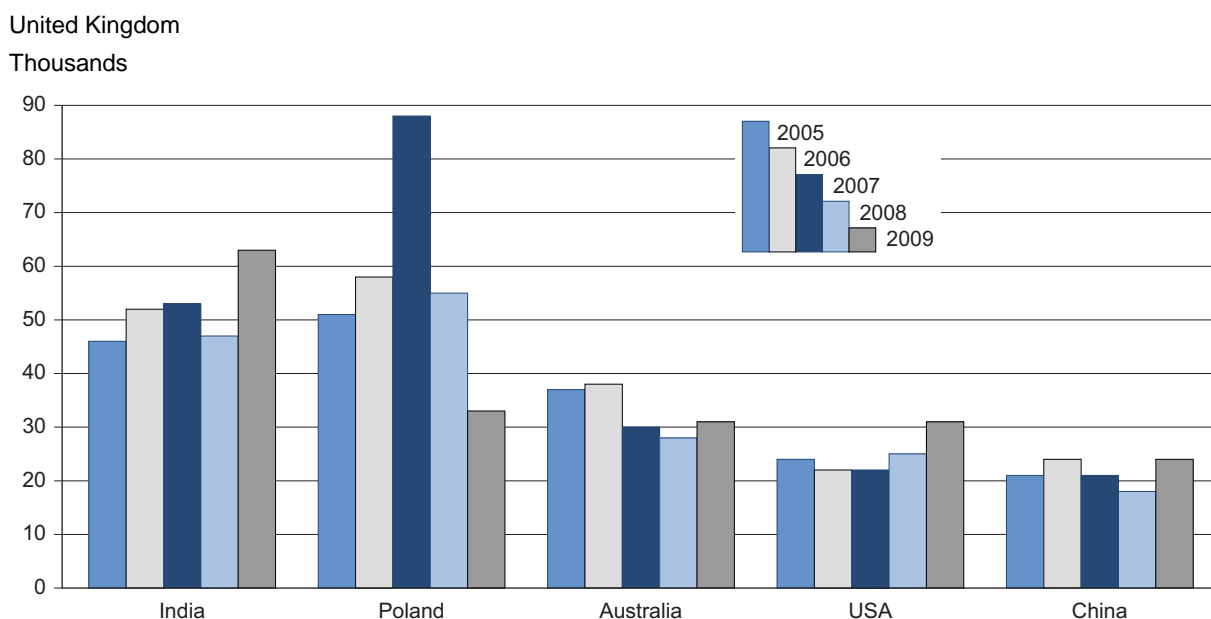
Source: Long-Term International Migration (LTIM), (ONS 2010d)

For the first two years shown in **Figure 2** immigration and emigration were about the same. However, between 1993-94 and 2009-10 there has been a bigger inflow to the UK than outflow from it. Between 1993-94 and 1997-98 net migration to the UK varied between 41,000 and 74,000. There was an increase in net migration in 1998-99 to 157,000 resulting from an increase of immigrants to the UK while the number of emigrants fell slightly. From then until 2003-04 there were only small variations in net migration.

The largest net migration over the time period 1991-92 to 2009-10, of 260,000, was in 2004-2005. This was largely because of an increase in immigrants coinciding with the Accession countries joined the European Union. The increase in net migration to 226,000 in 2009-10 from 166,000 in 2008-09 is due largely to a fall in emigration rather than an increase in immigration.

Estimates from the International Passenger Survey show that the last place of residence for the highest number of long-term international immigrants in 2009 was India (63,000). This is a change from the previous four years when the highest number of immigrants stated that their last place of residence was Poland (**Figure 3**).

Figure 3 Top five¹ countries of last residence of immigrants



¹ Top five countries in 2009.

Source: *International Passenger Survey, Office for National Statistics (ONS 2009b)*

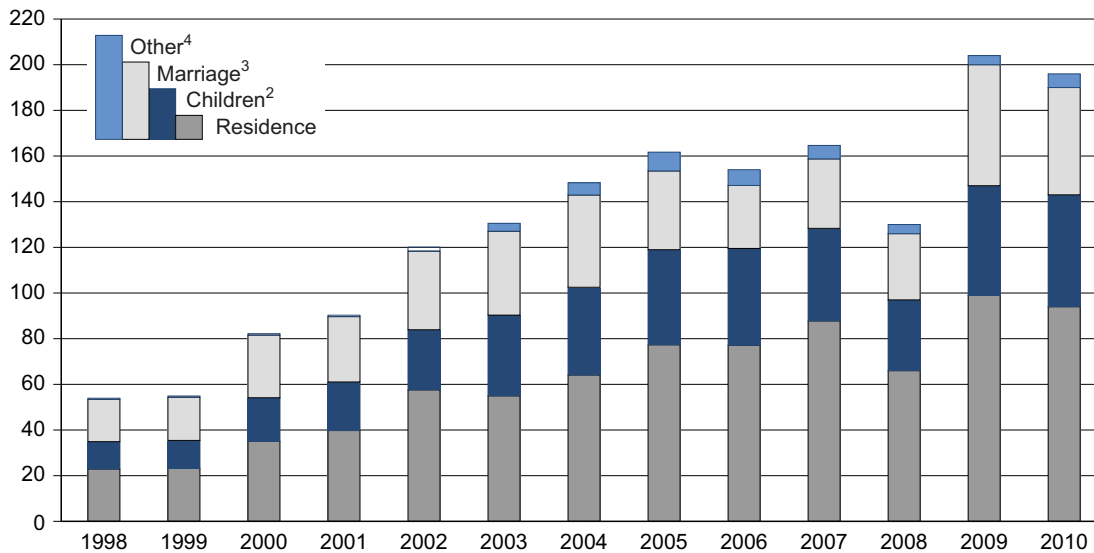
Apart from changing the total population of the UK, international migration can change the proportion of residents who are British citizens and also of those who were born in the UK.

It can take some time after the arrival of long term immigrants to this country before they are eligible to obtain British Citizenship. In 2010, there were 195,100 grants of British Citizenship in the UK, a 4.2 per cent decrease compared to 2009 when 203,800 grants were made. Nearly half (48 per cent) of these grants of citizenship were made because of qualification by residence,^{vi} with approximately a quarter made because of the applicant's children (25 per cent) and a further quarter following marriage or civil partnership (24 per cent) (**Figure 4**).

Figure 4 Grants of British citizenship:¹ by basis of grant

United Kingdom

Thousands



1 Data from November 2001 include grants of British citizenship in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man.

2 Children aged under 18.

3 Includes civil partnerships from 5 December 2005.

4 Includes British Overseas Territories citizens from Gibraltar registered as British citizens under section 5 of the *British Nationality Act 1981*.

Source: Home Office (2009; 2011)

Estimates from the Annual Population Survey^{vii} show that the proportions of the UK resident population who are either of British nationality or who were born in the UK have decreased between 2004 and 2009.

An estimated 91 per cent of UK residents in 2004 were born in the UK and this had decreased to 89 per cent by 2009. A larger percentage of UK residents were of British nationality: 95 per cent of the UK population reported that they were of British nationality in 2004 although this had decreased to 93 per cent by 2009.

Of the countries within the UK in 2009, England had the smallest percentage of its resident population who were born in the UK at 88 per cent, followed by Scotland at 94 per cent, Northern Ireland at 94 per cent and Wales at 95 per cent. The pattern is repeated for residents who are British nationals: 92 per cent in England, 95 per cent in Scotland, 96 per cent in Northern Ireland and 97 per cent in Wales.

Population movement within the UK

In addition to births, deaths and international migration, changes in population numbers in areas within the UK occur because residents move from one area to another (internal migration).

Population gains and losses due to internal migration have important implications for housing planning as well as for the provision of welfare services and are estimated using information on re-registrations with NHS doctors and other sources.

Between 2008 and 2009, England experienced a net loss to other countries in the UK of around 5,700 people with an outflow of 97,900 people and an inflow of 92,200 people. Over the same time period Scotland and Wales experienced net gains and Northern Ireland a net loss because of internal movement in the UK (ONS, 2010e).

At a regional level within England, London experienced the most population movement overall between 2008 and 2009: around 216,200 people moved from the capital to other parts of the UK while 178,100 people moved into the area, resulting in a net loss of 38,100 residents. The majority of those moving out of London go to the adjacent regions of the South East and the East of England. Four other regions were also estimated to have had net outflows between 2008 and 2009: the North East, the North West, Yorkshire and The Humber and the West Midlands. The largest regional net increases because of internal movements were into the South East (20,600 people) and the South West (18,500 people) (ONS, 2010f).

If you want to know more about changes in population including birth, deaths, international and internal migration at regional and local authority area level in England and Wales, the Office for National Statistics population analysis tool can be downloaded from our website.^{viii}

Changes in age structure

The age structure of the resident population is also very important for planning services in the UK. For example a local area with a high proportion of children will require a very different mix of services when compared to an area with a high proportion of elderly people. Over time the proportions and numbers of residents in different age groups in the UK has changed. In particular there has been an increase in the number and proportion of those in the older age groups as a result of increased survival due to improved medical treatment, housing and living standards.

Table 3 **Population:¹ by age**

United Kingdom									Percentages
	Under 16	16–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65–74	75 and over	All ages (thousands) = 100 per cent
1971	25.5	13.2	12.5	11.6	12.2	11.8	8.5	4.7	55,928
1981	22.3	14.3	14.2	12.0	11.1	11.0	9.2	5.8	56,357
1991	20.3	13.0	15.5	13.8	11.5	10.1	8.8	6.9	57,439
2001	20.1	11.0	14.3	15.0	13.2	10.6	8.4	7.5	59,113
2009	18.7	12.1	12.9	14.6	13.5	11.8	8.5	7.8	61,792
2011	18.6	11.9	13.4	13.8	13.9	11.7	8.8	8.0	62,649
2016	18.5	10.9	14.3	12.5	14.0	11.5	9.8	8.5	64,773
2021	18.7	10.1	14.0	12.8	12.7	12.4	9.8	9.5	66,958
2026	18.4	10.3	13.0	13.6	11.5	12.6	9.7	10.9	69,051
2031	18.0	10.6	12.3	13.5	11.9	11.5	10.6	11.7	70,933

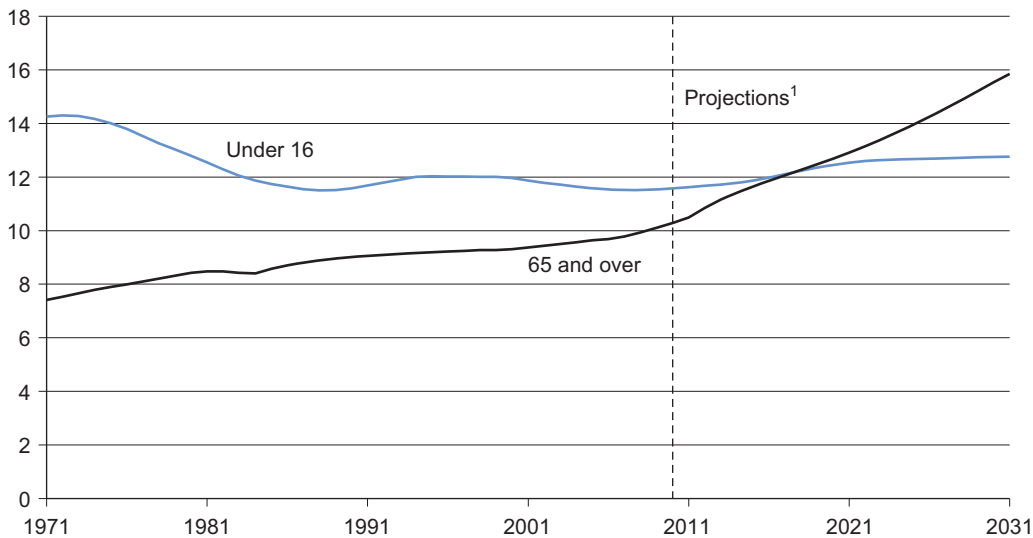
¹ Mid-year estimates for 1971 to 2009; 2008-based projections for 2011 to 2031.

Source: Office for National Statistics; General Register Office for Scotland; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (ONS 2009c; 2010a)

In 1971 just over a quarter (25.5 per cent) of the resident population in the UK were children aged less than 16. In the next three decades this proportion decreased so that by 2001 only about a fifth (20.1 per cent) of the UK population was in this age group. By 2009 the proportion had fallen to 18.7 per cent and it is projected to vary around this level up until 2026 before falling to 18.0 per cent in 2031. At the other end of the age spectrum, the proportion of the population aged 75 and over increased from 4.7 per cent in 1971 to 7.8 per cent in 2009 and then is projected to rise to 11.7 per cent by 2031. Combining the two oldest age groups, the proportion of those aged 65 and over is projected to rise to more than one in five of the population (22.3 per cent) by 2031 (**Table 3**).

Figure 5 Population¹ aged under 16 and 65 and over

United Kingdom
Millions



¹ Mid-year estimates for 1971 to 2001; 2008-based projections for 2011 to 2031.

Source: Office for National Statistics; General Register Office for Scotland; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (ONS 2009c; 2010a)

Figure 5 shows the estimated and projected number of residents in the UK in two age groups, under 16 and 65 and over. There was a decrease in the number of children between 1971 and 1991 from 14.2 to 11.7 million followed by relatively stable numbers between 1991 and 2001 and a slight rise to a projected 12.8 million in 2031. For the older age group there is a steady increase in numbers from 7.4 million in 1971 to 9.4 million in 2001, followed by a higher projected rate of growth which leads to an increase from 10.5 to 15.8 million between 2011 and 2031. The number of those aged 65 and over is projected to become larger than the number aged less than 16 in about 2018.

In terms of planning one area of concern is the growth of the numbers in the oldest age groups as it is likely that older people will make more use of health and social care services. Estimates for 2009 were that around one in 13 of the UK resident population were aged 75 and over (4.8 million residents) while projected growth suggests that about one in nine will be in this age group by 2031 (8.3 million) (ONS 2009c; 2010a).

The actual numbers of residents and the growth rates in the 75 and over age group differ by sex: the main cause being that life expectancy for males is increasing at a faster rate than for females^{ix}. About 32 per cent of UK residents aged 75 and over were male in 1971; by 2031 this is projected to rise to 44 per cent (ONS 2009c).

Table 4 **Population¹ aged 90 years and over: by sex**

United Kingdom				Numbers
	90–94	95–99	100 and over	Total aged 90 and over
Men				
2002	76,800	11,900	800	89,500
2003	80,100	12,600	800	93,500
2004	83,800	13,500	900	98,200
2005	87,300	14,600	1,000	102,900
2006	89,000	15,400	1,200	105,600
2007	90,000	16,800	1,300	108,100
2008	89,100	17,900	1,500	108,500
2009	96,900	20,200	1,800	118,900
Women				
2002	235,200	56,700	6,900	298,800
2003	239,200	58,600	7,100	304,900
2004	242,700	60,300	7,300	310,300
2005	245,600	62,400	7,900	315,900
2006	244,700	64,400	8,200	317,300
2007	241,100	67,200	8,700	317,000
2008	231,200	68,700	9,200	309,100
2009	235,600	72,400	10,000	318,000

¹ 2002 to 2008 figures are based on revised mid-year population estimates. Data are to the nearest hundred.

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS 2009d)

ONS experimental estimates for 2002 to 2009 show that the inequality in the number of males and females continues in the very oldest ages. In 2009 an estimated 27 per cent of UK residents aged 90 and over were male. The proportion of men reduced as age increased: 29 per cent of those aged 90-94, 22 per cent of those aged 95-99 and 16 per cent of those aged 100 or more were male (**Table 4**). The estimated growth in the number of UK residents aged 90 and over between 2002 and 2009 was 12 per cent (from 388,200 to 436,500 people).

As a result of these structural changes in the UK the average age of the population has risen. In 1992, the median age of the population^x in the UK was 36 years. By 2009, this had increased by over three years to 39 and a half years and is projected to increase to nearly 42 years by 2031 (ONS, 2010g).

These UK averages mask considerable variation across the UK, differences which have implications for the planning of local services. The median age of residents in individual local authority areas in 1992 varied from 27 years to 48 years, a difference of 21 years. In 2009 the

difference between the local authority area with the lowest and highest median age was slightly larger at 23 years, and the difference is projected to increase to 28 years in 2023.

Local authority areas with resident populations with low median ages tend to be urban and have large university populations: in 2009 the lowest median ages in UK local authorities were in Manchester, Oxford, Cambridge and Nottingham, all of which had average ages below 30 years. At the other extreme, local authorities with the highest median ages were largely coastal areas which attract those who have retired: in 2009 the highest median ages were in West Somerset, North Norfolk, Rother and Christchurch, all of which had median ages above 50 years.

If you want to explore the differences in age distribution at regional and local authority area level ONS have made these data available through an interactive map^{xi}.

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Notes

ⁱ The estimated and projected populations are of the resident population of an area, that is all those usually resident there, whatever their nationality. Members of HM Forces stationed outside the UK are excluded; members of foreign forces stationed in the UK are included. Students are taken to be resident at their term-time addresses. Figures for the UK do not include the population of the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man.

ⁱⁱ Further information about the assumptions underlying national population projections are available at www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/pproj1009.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ 'Other changes' at the UK level include changes in the number of armed forces (both foreign and home) and their dependents resident in the UK

^{iv} Residents of the EU enjoy freedom of movement and work within the UK. On May 1st 2004 Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovak Republic and Slovenia (known as the 'Accession' countries) became full members of the European Union.

^v An international migrant is defined as someone who changes his or her country of usual residence for a period of at least a year, so that the country of destination becomes the country of usual residence. The richest source of information on international migrants comes from the International Passenger Survey (IPS), which is a sample survey of passengers arriving at, and departing from, the main UK air and sea ports and the Channel Tunnel. This survey provides migration estimates based on respondents' intended length of stay in the UK or abroad.

Adjustments are made to account for people who do not realise their intended length of stay. An estimate is made for the number of people who initially come to or leave the UK for a short period but subsequently stay for a year or longer ('visitor switchers'). The number of people who intend to be migrants, but who in reality stay in the UK or abroad for less than a year ('migrant switchers') are also estimated.

Data from other sources are used to supplement the IPS migration estimates. Home Office asylum seeker data are used to estimate the number of asylum seekers and their dependants who enter or leave the country without being counted in the IPS. Estimates of migration between the UK and Ireland are made using information from the Irish Central Statistics Office.

^{vi} The rules for qualification for British Citizenship include being resident in the UK for a qualifying period of five years, being the spouse or civil partner of a British Citizen, or being the child of a British Citizen. More information can be found at www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/britishcitizenship/eligibility/naturalisation/standardrequirements/

^{vii} Data available from 'Population by country of birth and nationality' available at www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=15147

^{viii} The mid 2009 population analysis tool can be found at www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=14060

^{ix} More information about period life expectancy by sex is available at www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=15354

^x Median age is the age above and below which the ages of half the population lie

^{xi} The interactive map of age statistics can be found at www.statistics.gov.uk/ageingintheuk/agemap.html