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Coverage
England

New experimental population estimates by ethnic group

In mid-2003, the non-White British population of England was estimated to be 7.1 million, an increase of 506,300 since mid-2001, according to new experimental statistics from the Office for National Statistics.

The new population estimates by ethnic group for 2001, 2002 and 2003 are available for England and its constituent local authority districts, by age and sex. They are based on similar methods to the ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates but use the results of the 2001 Census to estimate differences between ethnic groups in, for example, fertility or migration patterns.

The experimental status of the estimates means that they have not yet been shown to meet the quality criteria for National Statistics, but are being published to involve users in the development of the methodology and to help build quality at an early stage.

The methodology used produces an estimate for the White British population in mid-2003 of 42.8 million, a decrease of 100,300 since mid-2001. This implies an average annual growth rate of 3.8 per cent for the non-White British group between mid-2001 and mid-2003 compared to -0.1 per cent for the White British group.

The fastest population growth between 2001 and 2003 in England was in the Chinese ethnic group with an average annual growth rate of 11.1 per cent, largely due the net international in-migration of people born in China.

While the population of most ethnic groups grew over the period, two groups showed a small decline in population; the White Irish and White British groups. This is due to net emigration, and, in the case of the White Irish group, an excess of deaths over births.

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The non-White British population has increased in all Government Office Regions (GOR) between 2001 and 2003, and the results suggest the growth in urban areas such as London is being driven by international in-migration, while growth in less urban areas is largely attributable to in-migration from those urban areas.

London continues to have the largest concentration of non-White British ethnic groups of all the GORs, with 40.7 per cent of London's population belonging to a non-White British group in 2003. However, faster growth of the non-White British population in all other GORs means that London's share of the non-White British population has been falling - from 44.7 per cent in 2001 to 42.5 per cent in 2003. The North East has both the lowest proportion of its population from a non-White British group (4.6%) and the highest average annual growth of those groups between 2001 and 2003 (9.9 per cent).

These estimates are fully consistent with the published mid-year local authority population estimates (for the same years) and are available for the 16 ethnic groups used in the 2001 Census.

They have been published primarily to encourage feedback and comments from users about the methodology employed, and the usefulness of the statistics. It is therefore important that users are aware of the status of these estimates and the associated limitations. Further details are given in the Issues & Guidance Paper (see Background Notes below).

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. The Population Estimates by Ethnic Group for 2001-2003 are available free on the National Statistics website at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=14238>.
2. These statistics have been assigned an **experimental** status, which should be borne in mind when using the data. They have not yet met the high quality standards required of National Statistics and will undergo further development. More information on Experimental Statistics and National Statistics is provided in the National Statistics Code of Practice: Protocol on Data Presentation, Dissemination and Pricing available at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/national_statistics/cop/protocols_published.asp.

3. The Population Estimates by Ethnic Group have been produced in response to substantial user demand for up-to-date and reliable estimates of the population by ethnic group, with interest from policy-makers in national and local government; public and private sector organisations requiring information to assess equal opportunities policies; and academic researchers attempting to understand the characteristics of national and local populations. The research underlying the production of the estimates is primarily based on commissioned tables from the 2001 Census and has now reached a stage where ONS is able to publish them on an experimental basis.
4. The National Statistics Ethnic Group Classification has been used for presentation purposes and is the same classification used in the 2001 Census of Population for England and Wales. Further information about the ethnic group classification can be found at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/ethnic_group_statistics/.
5. The methodology used to produce the estimates can be found at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=14238>.
6. The Issues & Guidance Paper can be found at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=14238>
7. These estimates are available for England and its constituent local authority districts, counties, Government Office Regions and Strategic Health Authorities only.
8. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the Press Office.