



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS, DOCUMENT

Mid year estimates of the population: 2023

The mid-year estimates refer to the population on 30 June of the reference year and are published annually.

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Introduction

The mid-year estimates refer to the population on 30 June of the reference year and are published annually.

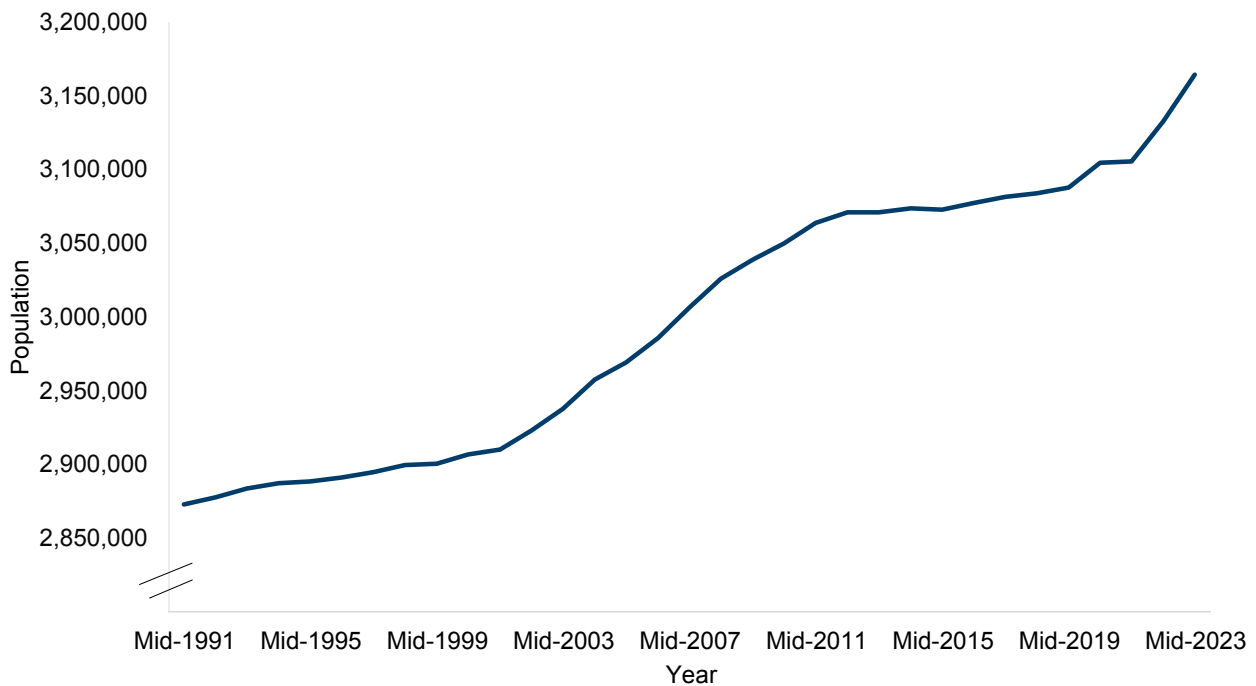
The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published mid-2023 population estimates for Wales and England as a whole. This bulletin refers specifically to estimates for Wales.

Estimates for mid-2022 have been revised by the ONS to account for updated estimates of international migration for Wales and England. This means that the **population of Wales in mid-2022** is now estimated to be around 1,000 people higher than the figure originally published on 23 November 2023.

Main points

- On 30 June 2023, it was estimated that around 3,164,000 people were living in Wales, an increase of 1.0% since mid-2022, or around 32,000 more people.
- This is the same percentage increase seen in England between mid-2022 and mid-2023.
- The population increase in Wales between mid-2022 and mid-2023 has been driven by an increase in net international and internal migration.
- People aged 65 years or older were estimated to account for just over a fifth (21.6%, or 682,000 people) of the total population in Wales in mid-2023.
- The local authority in Wales with the largest percentage population increase between mid-2022 and mid-2023 was Cardiff, an increase of 3.4%. This was the second largest increase of any local authority in Wales and England between mid-2022 and mid-2023.

Figure 1: Population estimates in Wales, 1991 to 2023 [Note 1] [Note 2]



Description of Figure 1: This map shows that, between mid-2022 and mid-2023, Cardiff has seen the largest percentage change in its population. Merthyr Tydfil was the only local authority in Wales to experience a percentage decrease in population.

Source: Population estimates from the ONS.

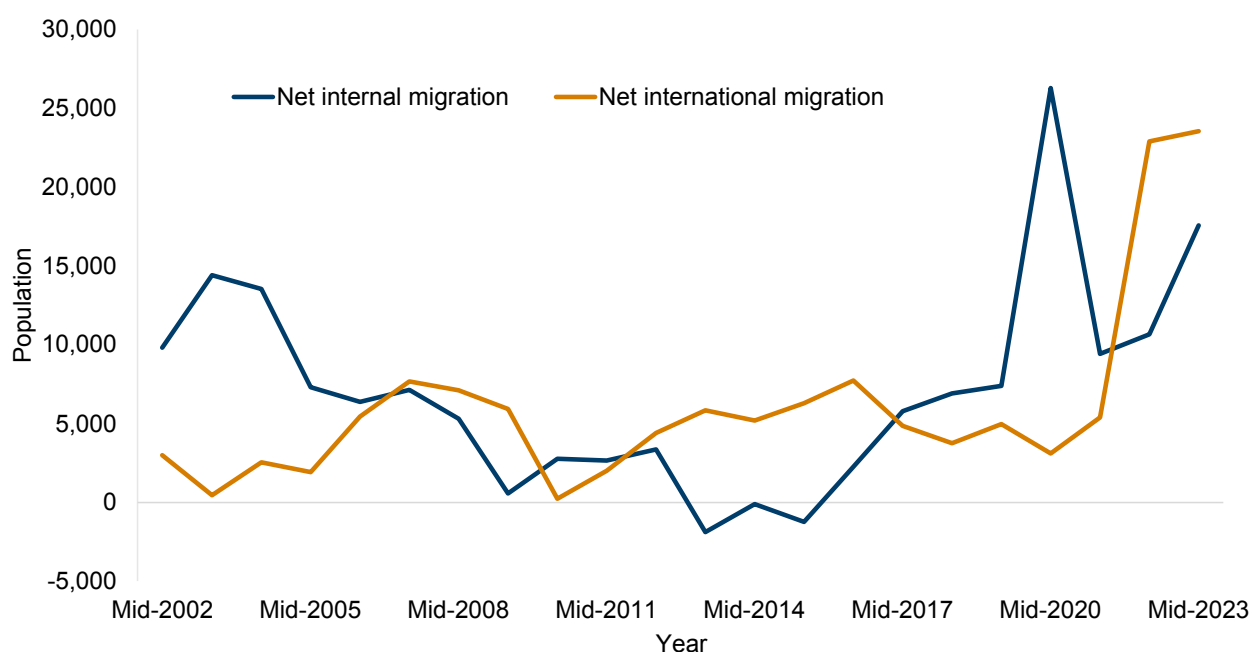
[Note 1] The figures for mid-2022 have been revised.

[Note 2] The y axis on this chart does not start at zero.

Components of population change

Components of population change are the factors that contribute to population change. This includes births and deaths (commonly referred to as natural change) and net migration. Migration is separated into internal migration (movements between local authorities in the UK) and international migration (movements between Wales and the other countries of the world outside the UK).

Figure 2: Net internal and international migration in Wales, mid-2002 to mid-2023 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 2: This line chart shows that, in recent years, net international migration is around four times higher than the average over the previous two decades. Net internal migration is around 2.5 times higher than the average over the previous two decades.

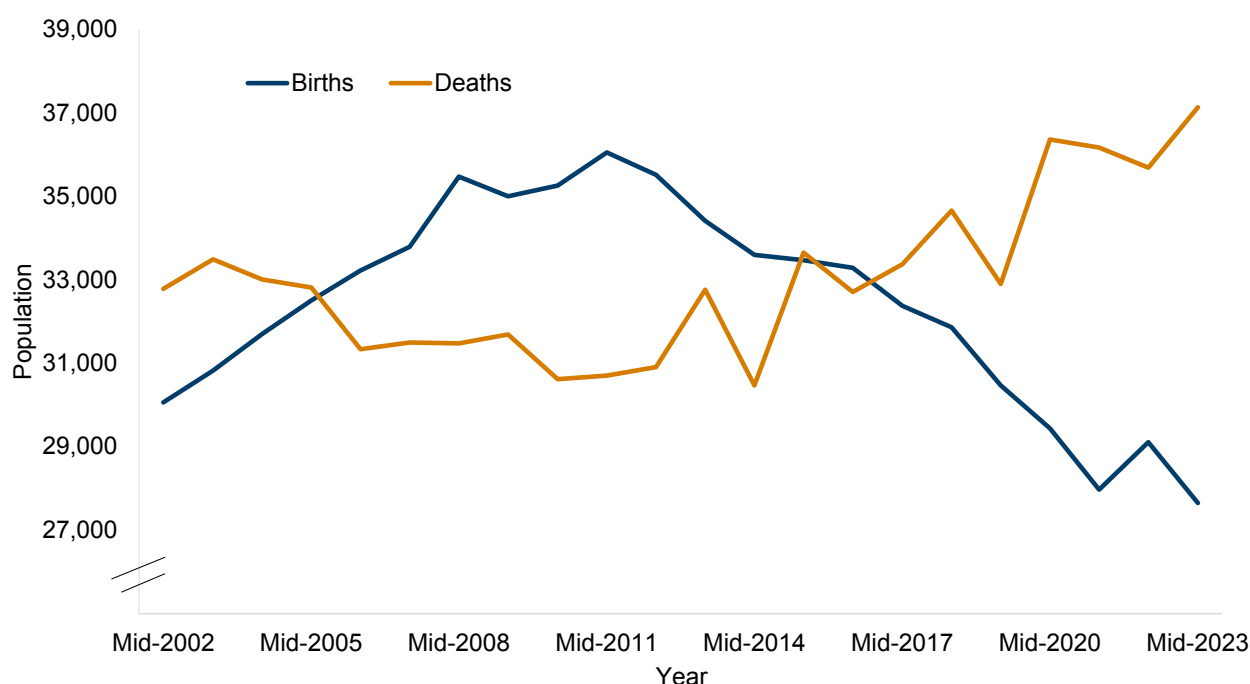
Source: Population estimates from the ONS.

[Note 1] The figures for mid-2022 have been revised.

In the year to mid-2023, it is estimated that net international migration to Wales was around 23,600, which is similar to mid-2022. In the period from mid-2011 to mid-2021, average yearly net international migration was around 5,200.

Net internal migration to Wales (from other UK nations) was around 17,600 in mid-2023, higher than in mid-2022 when net internal migration was 10,700.

Figure 3: Births and deaths in Wales, mid-2002 to mid-2023 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 3: This line chart shows that, since mid-2011, the number of births has steadily decreased while the number of deaths has increased.

Source: Population estimates from the ONS.

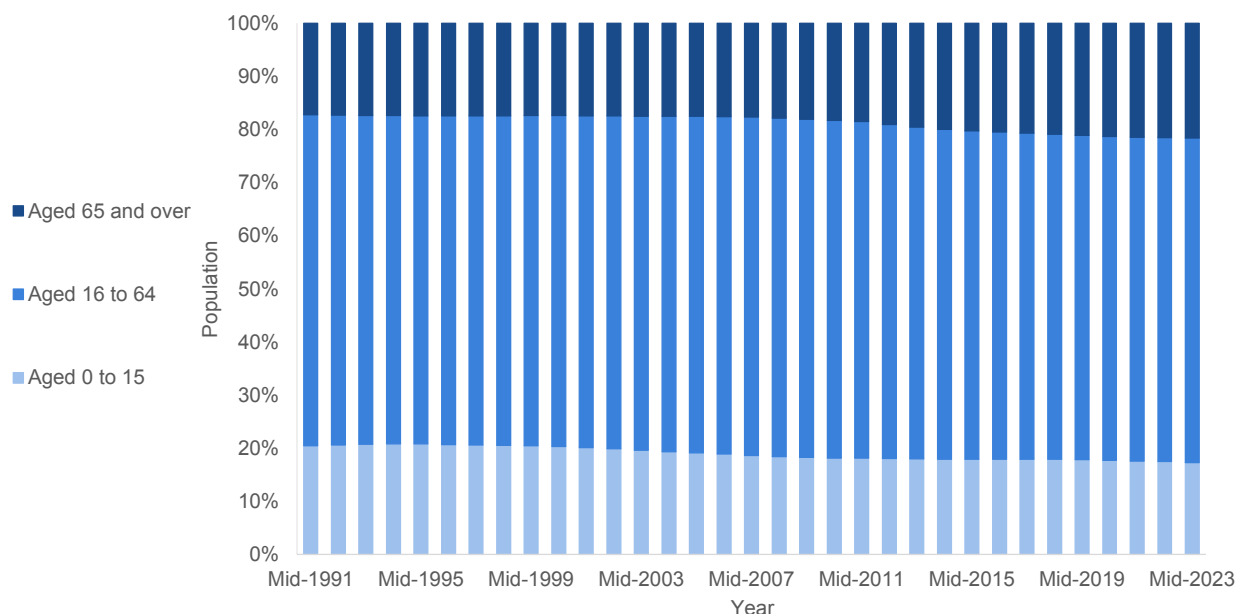
[Note 1] The y axis on this chart does not start at zero.

In the year to mid-2023, there continued to be more deaths than births in Wales. There were around 37,100 deaths in Wales in the year to mid-2023, nearly 1,500 more deaths than in the year to mid-2022. This was higher than the number of deaths in Wales for the year to mid-2020 (36,400), which covered the first wave of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The number of births in the year to mid-2023 was around 27,600, which was a decrease of 1,500 compared with the year to mid-2022.

Population by age

Figure 4: Population in Wales by broad age group, mid-1991 to mid-2023 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 4: This stacked bar chart shows that, since the year to mid-1991, the percentage of the population aged 65 years or older has increased, while the percentage of people aged 0 to 15 years old has decreased slightly. The percentage of people aged 16 to 64 years old has remained similar over the period from mid-1991 to mid-2023.

Source: Population estimates from the ONS

[Note 1] The figures for mid-2022 have been revised.

People aged 65 years or older were estimated to account for just over a fifth (21.6%, or 682,000 people) of the total population in Wales in mid-2023. This has increased by 13.9% in the last 10 years, since mid-2013. The number of

people aged 75 years or older has increased by 22.5% during the same period, from around 270,000 people in mid-2013 to around 331,000 people in mid-2023.

61.1% of the population were aged 16 to 64 years old in mid-2023 (around 1,934,000 people). This has increased by 0.8% in the last 10 years, since mid-2013.

Children and young people aged 0 to 15 years old accounted for the remaining 17.3% of the population in mid-2023 (around 549,000 children and young people). This has decreased by 0.9% in the last 10 years, since mid-2013.

Population by local authority

The population is estimated to have increased in all but one of the 22 local authorities in Wales between mid-2022 and mid-2023, with the largest increases in Cardiff (3.4% increase), Swansea (1.9% increase) and Ceredigion (1.6% increase).

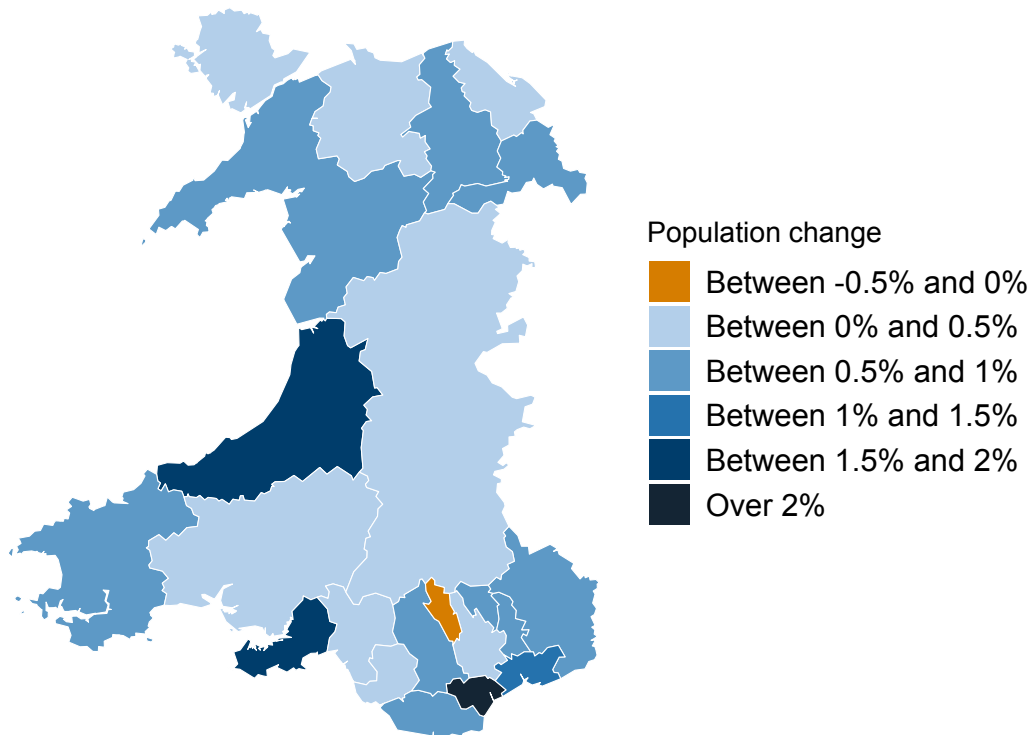
The population increase in Cardiff was the second largest increase of any local authority in Wales and England between mid-2022 and mid-2023.

Merthyr Tydfil is the only local authority in Wales whose population is estimated to have decreased between mid-2022 and mid-2023, decreasing by 0.5%, or by around 300 people.

In Wales, every local authority saw positive net international migration in the year to 2023, and 20 out of 22 local authorities saw positive net internal migration. Merthyr Tydfil and Newport both saw negative net internal migration in the year to 2023.

Cardiff and Newport were the only local authorities who saw more births than deaths during mid-2023.

Figure 5: Percentage population change in Wales between mid-2022 and mid-2023, by local authority



Description of Figure 5: This map shows that, between mid-2022 and mid-2023, Cardiff has seen the largest percentage change in its population. Merthyr Tydfil was the only local authority in Wales to experience a percentage decrease in population.

Source: Population estimates from the ONS

Admin-based population estimates

Mid-year admin-based population estimates are being produced by the ONS for

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local authorities in Wales and England. These are **official statistics in development (OSR)** while the ONS refines its methods and the data sources used. They do not replace the official mid-year population estimates and should not be used for decision-making. These outputs must not be reproduced without this warning.

The ONS is aiming for their admin-based population estimates (ABPEs) to become official mid-year population estimates in 2025. They will undertake engagement in autumn 2024 to gather feedback on the new approach including with local authorities so they can draw on local insight as they improve the estimates. This user feedback will be used as part of the criteria to support the decision on when the ABPEs will become the official mid-year population estimates. They have also requested an **assessment of the ABPEs (OSR)** and are working to meet the standards expected of **accredited official statistics (OSR)** by summer 2025.

The ABPEs are produced using methods which build on the **cohort component method (as explained in ONS' population estimates methods guide)**, which has been used to produce **ONS' accredited official population estimates** for many years.

Differences between the methods and the data sources used mean it is not expected that the ABPEs will match the accredited official population estimates exactly. The ABPEs use innovative new methods and a wider range of data sources taking account of quality limitations in the data. Population stocks are produced independently for each year, therefore any error in one year is less likely to be rolled forward to the next. Stocks can use admin data sources so that methods are not reliant on census data. The ONS plan to publish case studies in the autumn to demonstrate their confidence in the new approach.

The updated mid-2023 ABPEs include additional data that have become available since the ONS published their **provisional ABPEs for mid-2023 (ONS)** in December 2023. Provisional estimates use early insight data,

alongside some assumptions about migration.

More information on ABPEs is available in the ONS' article understanding mid-year admin-based population estimates for local authorities in Wales and England. A [companion article \(ONS\)](#) sets out the details of the developments in data sources.

Further information on the ABPEs relating to quality assurance, their appropriate usage, and strengths and limitations, is available in the [Mid-year admin-based population estimates in England and Wales Quality and Methodology Information \(ONS\)](#) report.

Population estimates for the UK

Revised UK population estimates, mid-2012 to mid-2022

The [ONS has released a full UK revised series for population estimates](#), now that Scotland has undertaken rebasing following its 2022 census. The revised estimates provide an update to the back series that was published on 23 November for Wales, England and Northern Ireland.

UK population estimates, mid-2023

The ONS aims to release a full set of UK population estimates for mid-2023 in autumn 2024. This will include estimates for Northern Ireland produced by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and estimates for Scotland produced by National Records of Scotland.

Quality and methodology information

Official statistics status

All official statistics should show the standards of the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

These are accredited official statistics, published by the ONS. They were independently reviewed by the OSR in November 2020. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of accreditation. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with OSR promptly. Accreditation can be cancelled or suspended at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

Statement of compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

All of our statistics are produced and published in accordance with a number of statements and protocols to enhance trustworthiness, quality and value. These

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are set out in the Welsh Government's [Statement of Compliance](#).

These [accredited official statistics \(OSR\)](#) demonstrate the standards expected around trustworthiness, quality and public value in the following ways.

For information about how these accredited official statistics, published by the ONS, demonstrate the standards expected around trustworthiness, quality and public value, see the [ONS' quality and methodology report on mid-year estimates of the population](#).

You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the OSR website.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier, and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. Under section 10(8) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, where the Welsh Ministers revise the national indicators, they must as soon as reasonably practicable (a) publish the indicators as revised and (b) lay a copy of them before the Senedd. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. The indicators laid on 14 December 2021 replace the set laid on 16 March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing

goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

As a national indicator under the Act, they must be referred to in the analyses of local well-being produced by public services boards when they are analysing the state of economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being in their areas.

The Act states national milestones must be set that "...the Welsh Ministers consider would assist in measuring whether progress is being made towards the achievement of the well-being goals." In doing so Welsh Ministers must specify how we know that a national milestone has been achieved and the time by which it is to be achieved.

National milestones are not performance targets for any individual organisation but are collective measures of success for Wales.

Some of the national indicators and national milestones use the mid-year estimates of the population as denominators, to calculate rates, for example.

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

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SB 25/2024



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