

JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2024/25

Population

Summary points

- The population of Bristol is estimated to be 483,000 (mid-2023). Over the decade 2013-23, Bristol was the second fastest growing of all the Core Cities in England and Wales after Manchester. Bristol's population grew by an estimated 44,000 people - a 10.0% increase. England and Wales grew by 6.8%.
- Net international migration was the largest component of population growth in Bristol in the 12 months to mid-2023. As seen nationally, there has been a marked change in immigration since 2021. Until 2019 EU nationals were the larger component of total immigration, whereas since 2021 the majority of immigration is now non-EU nationals and include both international students and workers.
- Bristol has seen a significant rise in the number of in-migrants from India in the last 3 years, plus other countries including China, Nigeria, Pakistan and Ukraine.
- Bristol has a relatively young age profile with a median age of 33.7 years compared to 40.5 years nationally.
- The city is increasingly diverse. At the time of the 2021 Census 28.4% of the population were from an ethnic minority group, ranging from 17.8% in South Bristol to 52.6% in the Inner City sub-locality. There are 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.

Population trend

The usually resident population of Bristol local authority is estimated to be 483,000¹, the 8th largest city in England and Wales outside of London.

Following a period of population decline in the post war years, the population of Bristol stabilised in the 1990s (figure 1). 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. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, 2021/22 and 2022/23 saw larger increases in the population, at levels similar to the years before the EU Referendum.

¹ ONS Mid-2023 Population Estimates, published July 2024. A usual resident is anyone who was in the UK and had stayed or intended to stay in the UK for a period of 12 months or more, or had a permanent UK address and was outside the UK and intended to be outside the UK for less than 12 months. Students are counted at their term time address.

In the 12 months to mid-2023, the population of Bristol grew by 4,362 (0.9%) up from 478,600 (mid-2022). The main factor behind this growth was the continuing increase in international migration including students and people coming from abroad to work.

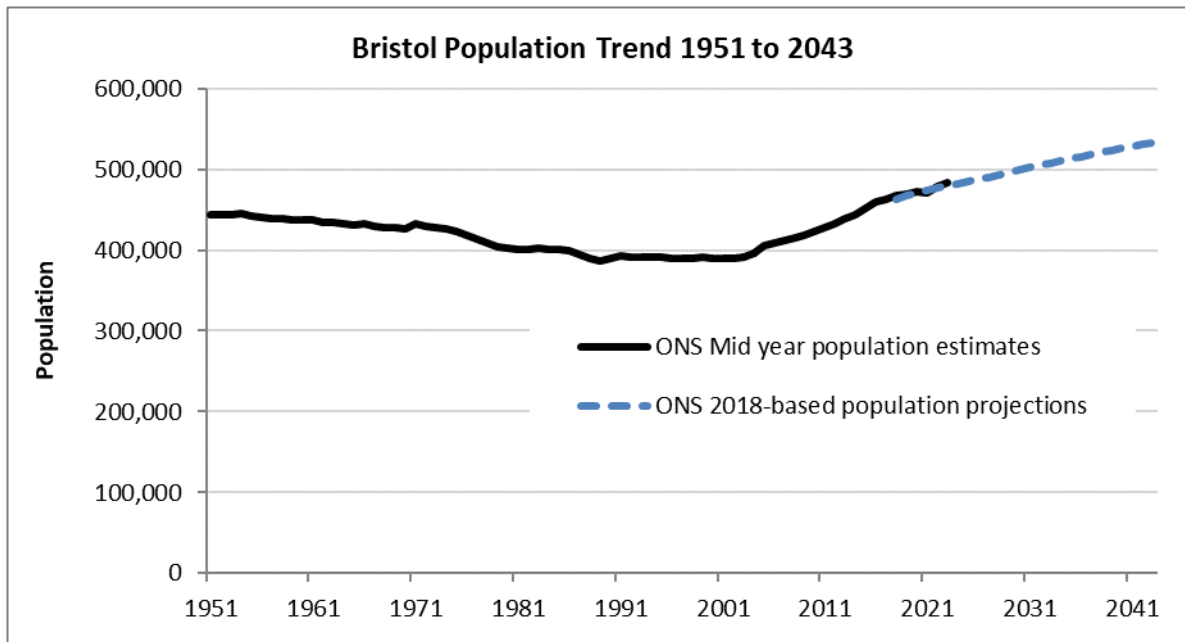


Figure 1 Bristol Population Trend 1951 to 2043

Source: ONS Population Estimates and 2018-based Population Projections. ONS licensed under the Open Government Licence.

Figure 2 shows annual population change in Bristol since 2001.

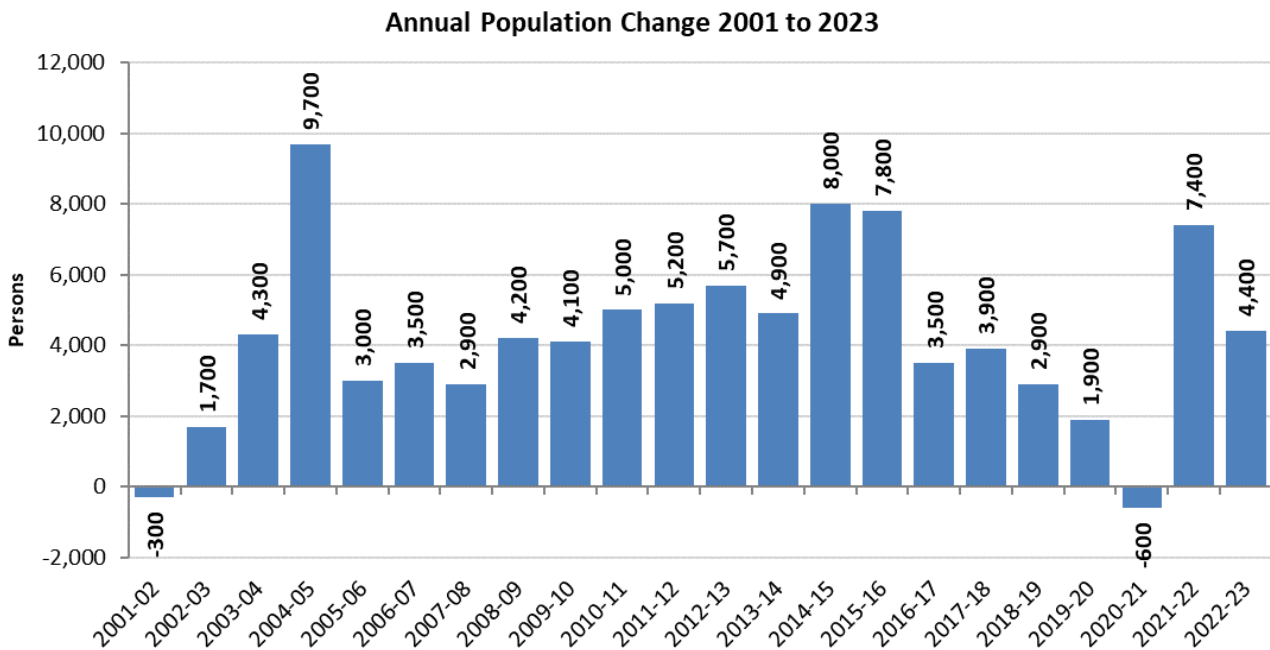


Figure 2 Bristol Population Estimates 2001 to 2023

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

Components of population change

Annual population change is driven by births, deaths and migration. Collectively, these are referred to as ‘components of change’. The difference between the number of live births and the number of deaths is known as ‘natural change’.

Over the last decade (2013-2023), there were a total of 57,800 births and 34,450 deaths, resulting in a population increase of 23,350 due to natural change alone. Natural change accounted for just over half (53%) of the total population change in Bristol over the decade.

In the 12 months to mid-2023 however, natural change accounted for just a third (32%) of the population change in Bristol. The majority of the population change was due to net international migration into the Bristol local authority area from outside of the UK.

International migration

For the second consecutive year since the expansion of the EU in 2004/5, net international migration was almost 5 times higher than natural change (births minus deaths) and the highest net international migration in almost two decades.

In the 12 months to mid-2023, there were 13,100 international in-migrants and 6,300 international out-migrants, a net gain of 6,800 people. The majority of the change was due to people aged 18-39 years, accounting for 70% of the overall net gain due to international migration.

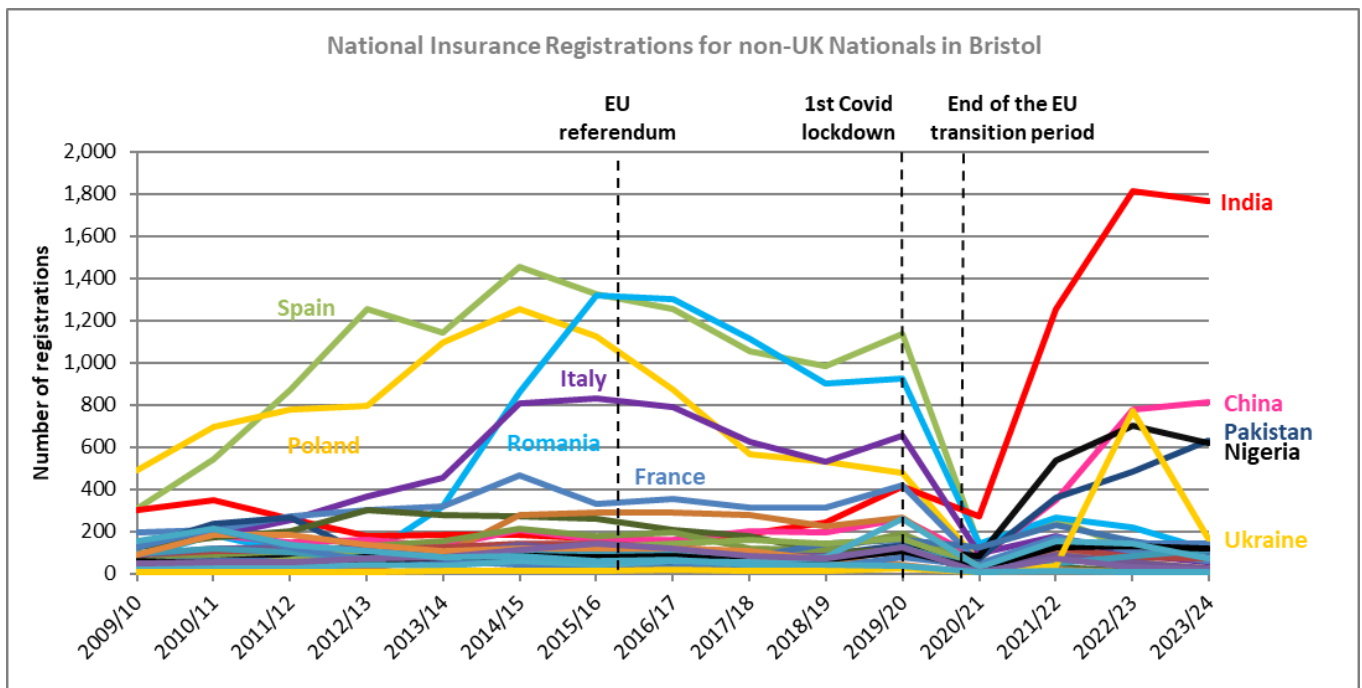


Figure 3 National Insurance Registrations for non-UK Nationals in Bristol

Countries with a total of 1,000 or more NI registrations since 2009/10

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

As seen nationally, there has been a marked change in immigration since 2021. Until 2019 EU nationals were the larger component of total immigration, whereas since 2021 the majority of immigration is now non-EU nationals. Increases in non-EU migration include both international students and workers.

Notably, Bristol has seen a significant rise in the number of in-migrants from India in the last 3 years, plus other countries including China, Nigeria, Pakistan and Ukraine (figure 3).

Internal migration

Since 2011, both the number of people moving out of Bristol to other parts of the UK and the number of people moving into Bristol from other parts of the UK have gradually increased resulting in an increasingly transient population.

For the last three years, the long-term trend of little net change annually due to internal migration has altered, with more people now moving out of Bristol than moving into Bristol from other parts of the UK. The 12 months to mid-2023 saw a net loss of 3,800 people.

All age groups saw a net loss except 18-21 year olds, where there was a large net gain, with 10,800 in-migrants aged 18-21 years from other parts of the UK and 5,200 out-migrants aged 18-21 years resulting in a net gain of 5,600 people in this age group alone. The largest losses due to net internal migration were in the 30-44 year age group and babies (under 1 year).

Population age profile

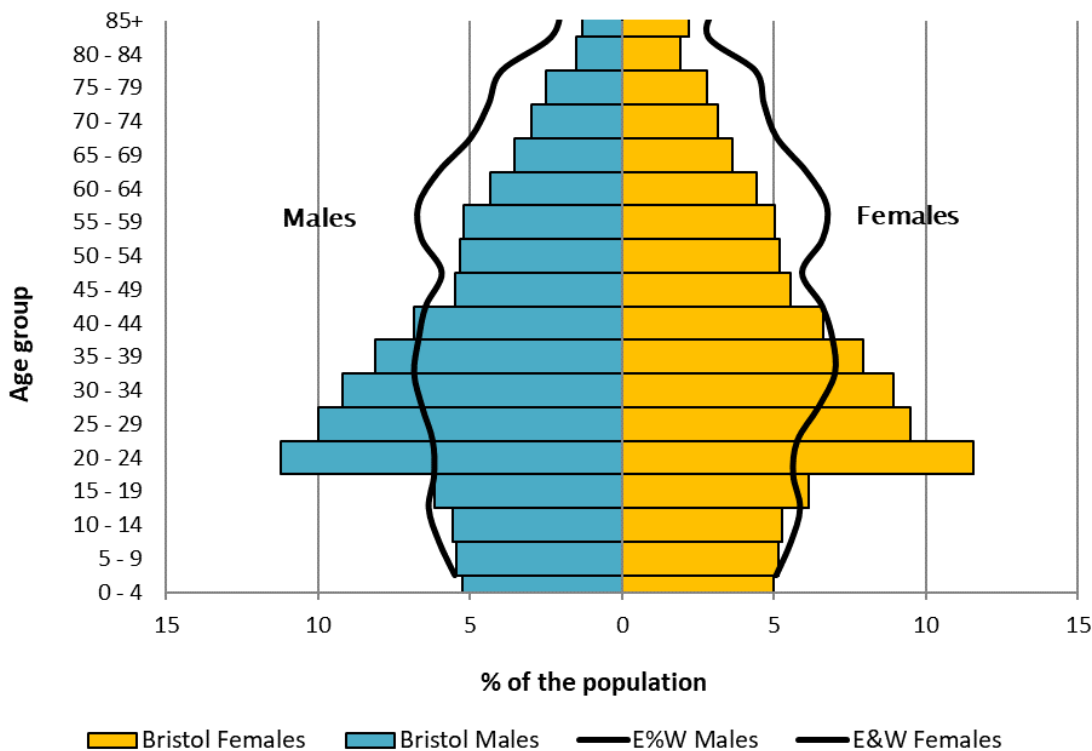


Figure 4 Mid-2023 Population by Five Year Age Band in Bristol and England and Wales
 Source: ONS Population Estimates. ONS licensed under the Open Government Licence.

Bristol has a relatively young age profile. The median age of people living in Bristol in 2023 was 33.7 years old, this compares to the England and Wales median of 40.5 years. Figure 4 and Figure 5 show the age profile of the population.

Age band	Males	%	Females	%	Persons	%
0-15	41,810	17.4	39,949	16.5	81,759	16.9
16-24	39,208	16.3	40,494	16.7	79,702	16.5
25-49	95,118	39.6	93,445	38.5	188,563	39.0
50-64	35,695	14.9	35,601	14.7	71,296	14.8
65 and over	28,462	11.8	33,216	13.7	61,678	12.8
All ages	240,293	100.0	242,705	100.0	482,998	100.0

Figure 5 Mid-2023 Population Estimates by Age and Sex for Bristol

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

Children

Bristol's 81,800 children make up 16.9% of the total population, however this proportion continues to fall due to lower numbers of births. Over the decade (2013-23), the total number of children increased by just 0.1%, much lower than the England and Wales increase of 4.3%. Within this, the number of children aged under 5 years old fell by -20% (6,140). Over the same period, the number of children aged 5-9 years increased by +1.8% and the number of 10-15 years increased by +23%.

Working age

Bristol has a higher proportion of working age (16-64 years) people than nationally – 70.3% of the total population in Bristol is of working age compared to 62.8% in England and Wales. The highest proportions are amongst the 20-34 year olds which make up almost a third (30%) 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.

The working age population has increased by 40,200 people (+13.4%) since 2013 compared to an increase of just 5% in England and Wales as a whole. The greatest increase was in the number of 19-23 year olds, with this age group growing by 12,100 (+28.3%) over the decade; nationally this age group fell by 5.5%. The population increase in this 5 year age band alone accounted for more than a quarter (27%) of the overall population increase in Bristol between 2013 and 2023.

Older people

Bristol's 61,700 older people aged 65 years and over make up 12.8% of the total population. The proportion of older people is much lower than in England and Wales as a whole where 18.8% of the population are aged 65 and over. There are 8,429 people living in Bristol aged 85 years and older.

Although the number of older people has increased year-on-year, Bristol does not have an ageing population according to the official definition² as the median age of the population and the proportion of older people in Bristol has been falling.

Over the decade 2013-23 the number of older people aged 65 and over increased by just 6.4%, a much lower increase than in England and Wales where there was a 16.0% increase. Within this large age group, the number of older people aged 65-79 years grew by 4,390 (+10.8%, England and Wales +16.2%), whilst the number aged 80 years and over fell by 669 (-3.8%, England and Wales +15.4%),

Population within Bristol

New 2012-23 population estimates for small geographies will be published by ONS in November 2024

The total usually resident population based on Census 2021 in each ICS locality and sub-locality is shown in figure 6. Bristol North and West has the largest resident population with a total population of 183,700 (39% of Bristol total), South Bristol has a population of 154,000 (33% of Bristol total) and Inner City and East has a total population of 134,800 (29% of Bristol total).

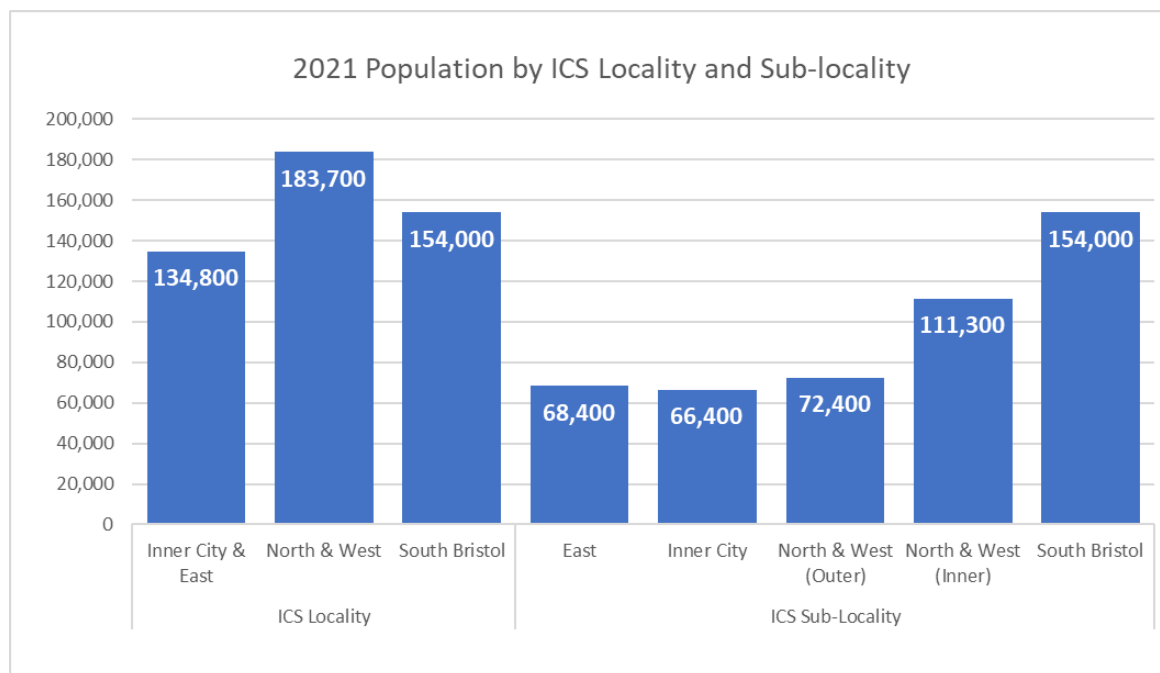


Figure 6 Census 2021 Total Population by ICS Locality and Sub-locality

Source: ONS Census 2021 from NOMIS

The number of people by broad age band in each ICS locality is shown in figure 7.

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.

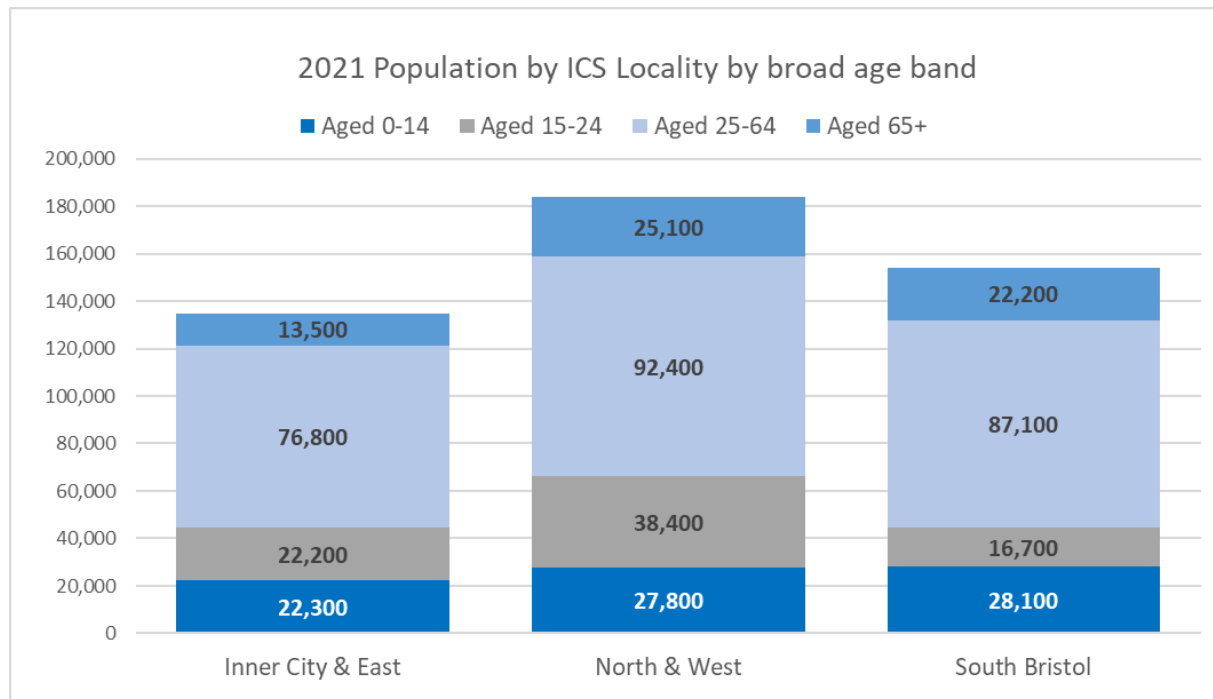


Figure 7 Census 2021 Population Age Profiles by ICS Locality
Source: ONS Census 2021 from NOMIS

Population change within Bristol

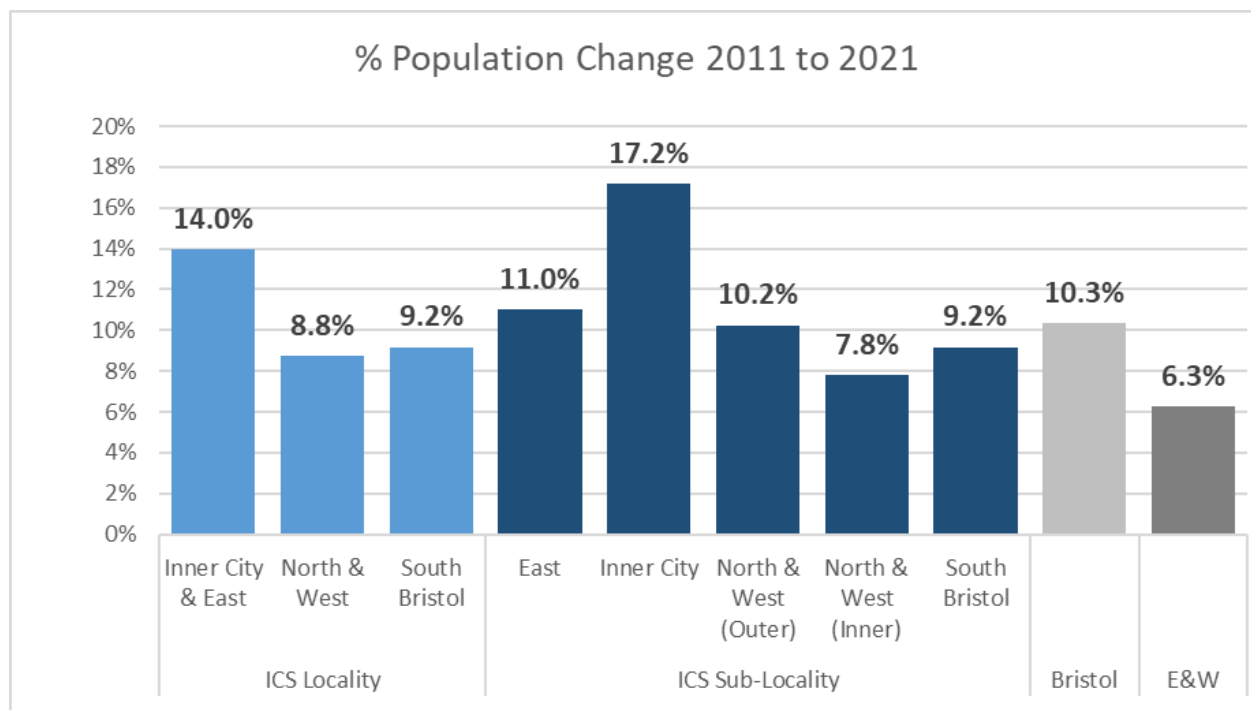


Figure 8 Population Change 2011 to 2021 by ICS Locality and Sub-locality
Source: ONS Census 2011 and Census 2021 from NOMIS

Looking at population change 2011 to 2021 by ICS locality and sub-locality (figure 8), the highest levels of growth were in Inner City sub-locality which increased by 17.2%. Lowest levels of growth were in North and West (Inner) at 7.8%.

Within localities rates of change vary considerably with implications for how services can manage demand and where services should most appropriately be located.

The components of population change vary from area to area across Bristol. Whilst there have been significant levels of births in some areas, the growth in the population of central areas of Bristol, appears to be due to large increases in net-migration, including students.

Population diversity

Ethnic group (Census 2021)

Bristol has seen a significant rise in net international migration since the Census in 2021, in particular from India, China, Ukraine, Nigeria, Pakistan and Hong Kong.

The population of Bristol is increasingly diverse - figure 9 shows the increase in the population belonging to an ethnic minority group (all groups except White British) since 2001.

Figure 9 shows the population in 2021 by 18 ethnic groups (White British not shown). Across the 19 ethnic groups in Bristol, the largest percentage point increase over the last decade was seen in the number of people identifying as ‘Other White’ – 8.3% in 2021 (E&W 6.2%), up from 5.1% (E&W 4.4%) in 2011.

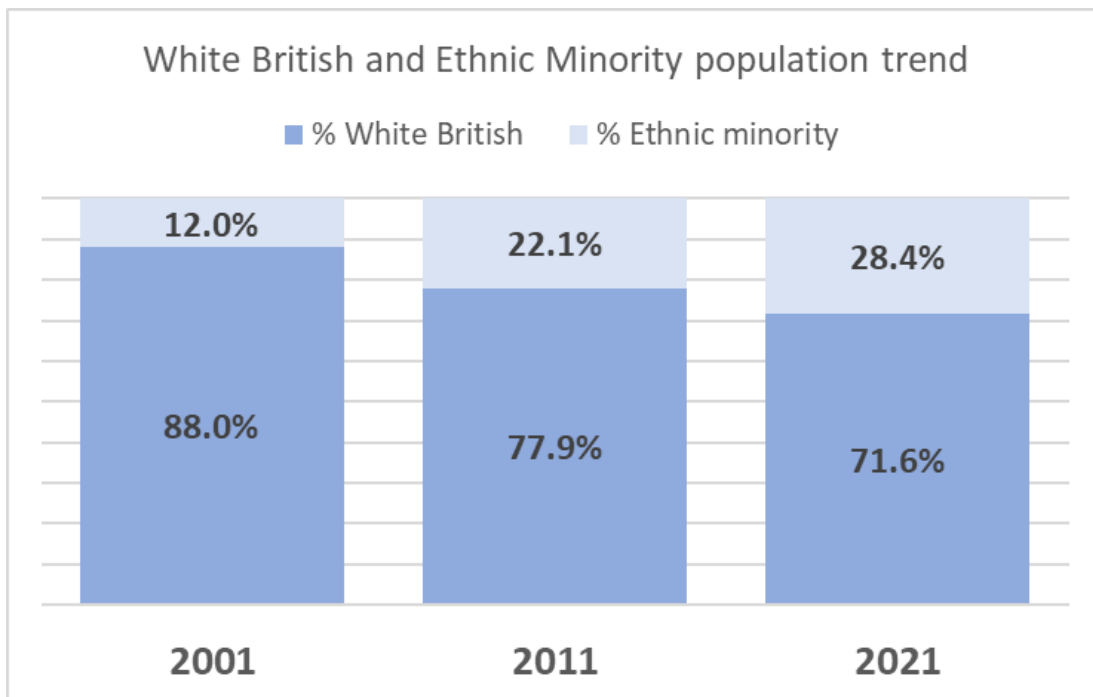


Figure 9 White British and Ethnic Minority Population Trend
 Source: ONS Census 2001, 2011 and 2021 from NOMIS

The write-in functionality has enabled ONS to produce a detailed ethnic group classification providing insight into 287 individual ethnic groups. In Bristol the largest ethnic minority groups in 2021 were Somali 9,167 (1.9%), Pakistani 9,103 (1.9%) and Indian 8,371 (1.8%).

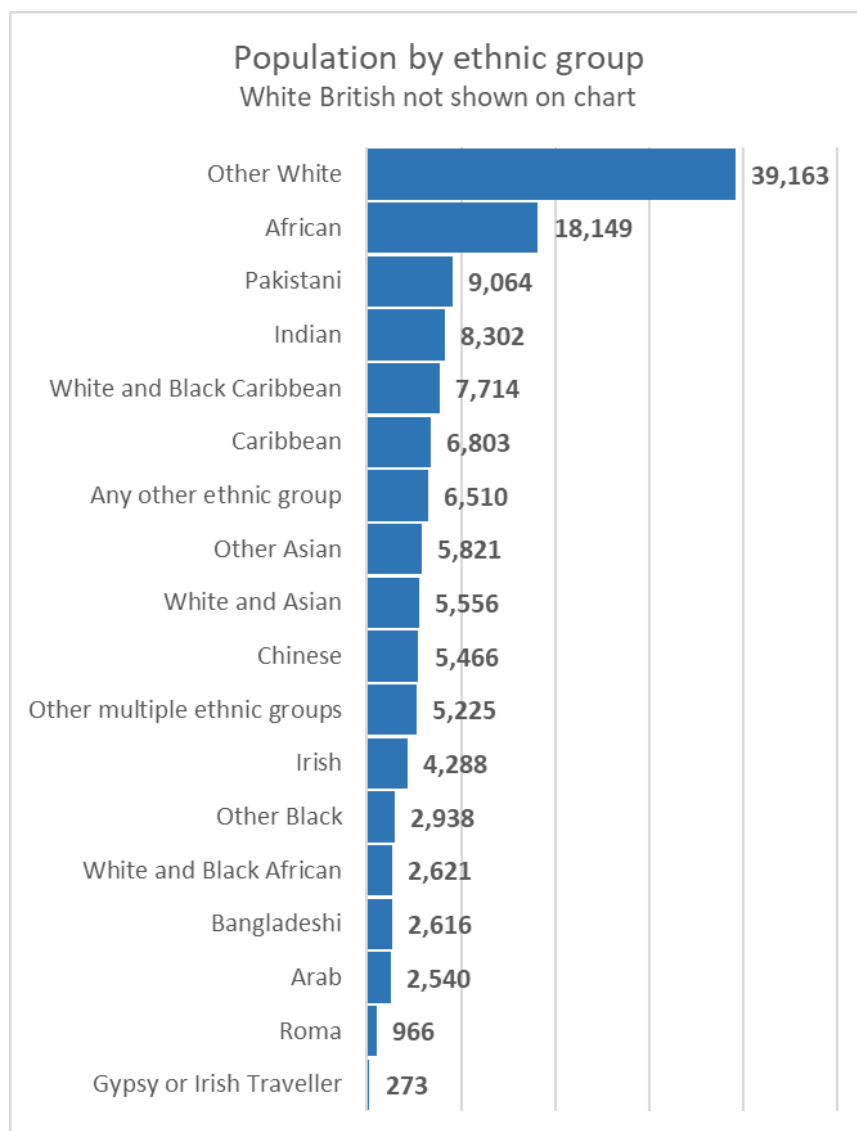


Figure 10 Population by ethnic group (White British not shown)
 Source: ONS Census 2001, 2011 and 2021 from NOMIS

Country of birth (Census 2021)

Bristol has seen a significant rise in net international migration since the Census in 2021, in particular from India, China, Ukraine, Nigeria, Pakistan and Hong Kong.

The non-UK born population in Bristol has more than doubled over the last two decades, increasing from 8.2% in 2001 to 18.8% in 2021, a higher proportion than the England and Wales average where 16.8% of the population were born outside the UK (figure 11). This affects changing health needs of the local community and communicating best routes to access appropriate health services.

In 2021, people born in the European Union (EU) made up 42% (37,251) of the non-UK born Bristol population, the remaining 58% (51,717) were born outside the EU. This continues a longer-term trend of an increasing proportion of non-UK born residents being from within the EU.

Of people born in Europe, the majority 18,316 were born in the original EU14 member states (Western Europe), followed by 13,152 born in EU8 Accession countries (Eastern Europe), 5,055 born in EU2 countries (Romania and Bulgaria), 728 born in other EU countries and 3,294 people born in European countries that are outside of the EU.

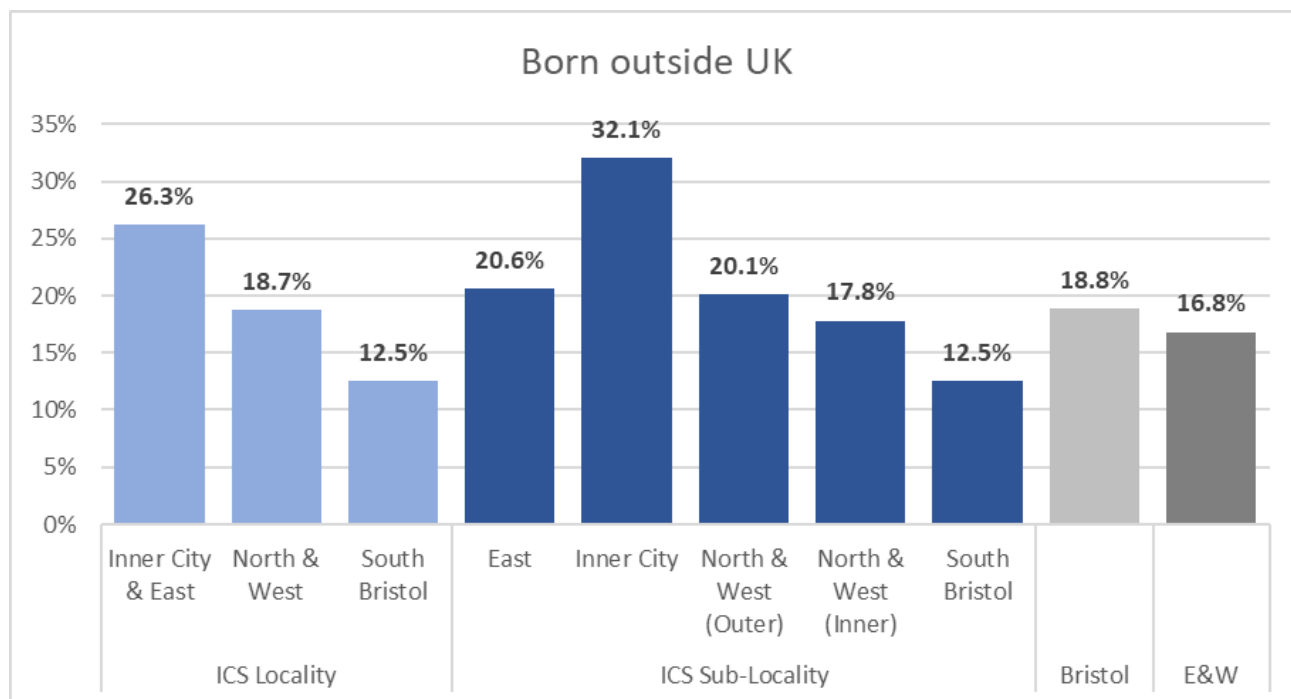


Figure 11 Population Born Outside the UK by ICS Locality and Sub-locality

Source: ONS Census 2021 from NOMIS

Of people born in Africa, by far the largest number were born in Somalia (4,654). This number includes only a proportion of the total Somali population living in Bristol, as many Somalis were born in the UK or other European countries.

Of people born in Asia, the highest numbers were born in India (4,381), Pakistan (3,586) and China (2,638). For the Americas and Caribbean region, the largest populations were born in Jamaica (2,594), South America (2,468) and the United States (2,422).

In Bristol, the 3 most common non-UK countries of birth in 2021 were the same as in 2011:

- Poland, which increased from 6,415 in 2011 to 8,770 in 2021
- Somalia, which fell from 4,947 in 2011 to 4,654 in 2021
- India, which increased from 3,809 in 2011 to 4,381 in 2021

Spain, Italy, Romania and China all entered the top 10 non-UK countries of birth in Bristol. Those who listed Romania as their country of birth increased from 587 in 2011 to 3,782 in 2021, an increase over the decade of 3,195 (544%). This increase is driven by working restrictions for Romanian citizens being lifted in 2014.

Diversity across the city (Census 2021)

Inner City and East has the largest ethnic minority population of the three ICS localities with 43.5% of the total resident population belonging to an ethnic minority group, this is higher than the Bristol average 28.4%. In Inner City sub-locality more than half (52.6%) of the usual residents belong to an ethnic minority group. Lower ethnic minority populations are in North and West 26.1% and South Bristol 17.8%.

The distribution of the ethnic minority population across Bristol is shown in figure 13 and summary data by ICS Localities and Sub-localities is shown in figure 12.

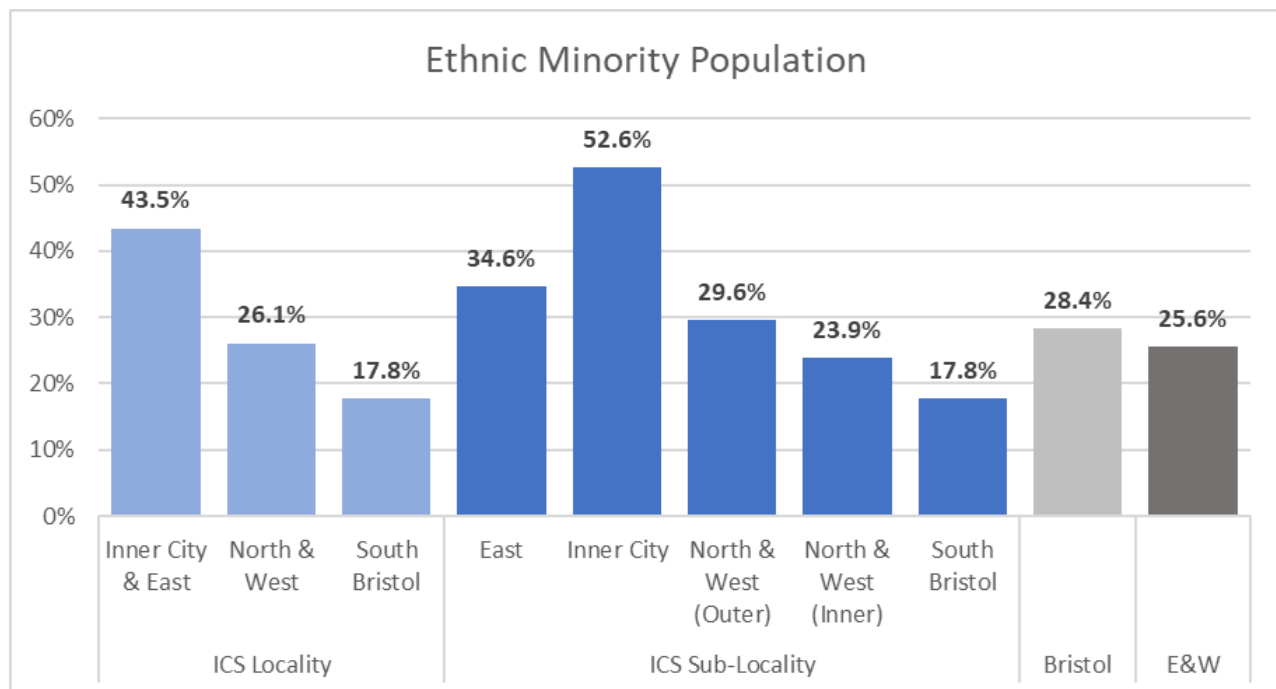


Figure 12 Ethnic Minority Population by ICS Locality and Sub-locality
Source: ONS Census 2021 from NOMIS

Uncertain population trends

New 2022-based population projections will be published by ONS in Spring 2025

Future population projections are uncertain. Recent events – including the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving the EU, the new Hong Kong British National Overseas visa and the global climate emergency – and their potential impacts on our economy and society, are not reflected in the current 2018-based population projections.

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.

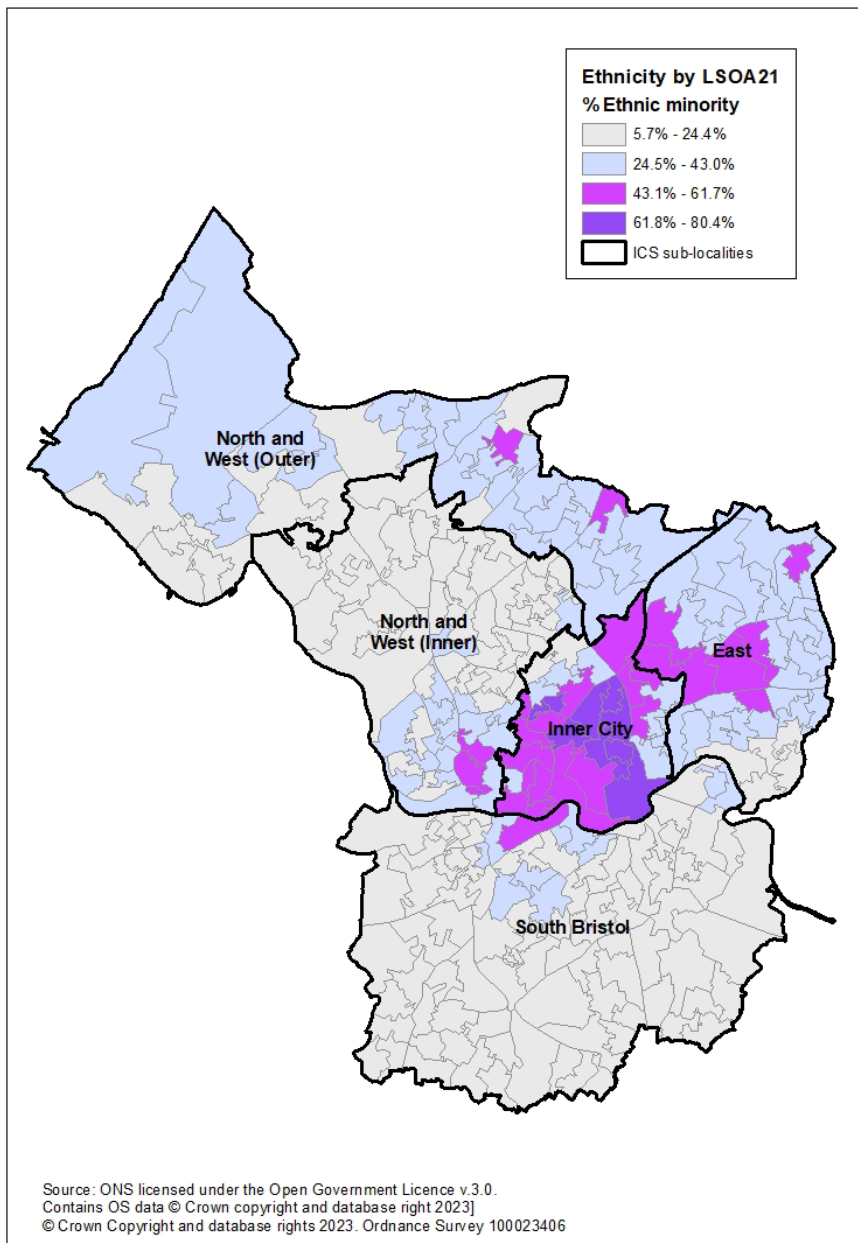


Figure 13 Ethnic Minority Population by Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA21) and ICS Sub-locality
 Source: ONS Census 2021 from NOMIS

Further data / links:

The Population of Bristol report <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/population>

Population profiles for equalities groups are also available on the [BCC population web page](#) including ethnic group, religion, Disabled, sexual orientation, Trans, older people and Somali population.

Bristol Census 2021 results are presented via two new dashboards:

- Headline Census 2021 results for Bristol overall are presented in the [Census 2021 Dashboard](#).

- Detailed data for areas within Bristol are in the [Bristol Census Data Profiles dashboard](#). The new Census Data Profiles dashboard include: Area Profiles (all census indicators for a selected geographic area) and Topic Profiles (an individual indicator mapped across the city)

Links to ONS tools are available from the [Bristol City Council Census web page](#)

Date updated: September 2024

Date of next update: December 2025