



Mid-2022 Population Estimates for Bristol

1.0 The Bristol population at mid-year 2022 was estimated to be 479,000.

Provisional mid-2022¹ and final mid-2021 population estimates were published by the Office for National Statistics on 23 November 2023. Mid-year Population Estimates are produced for all local authorities and updated annually using a combination of registration, survey and administrative data to estimate the different components of population change. 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.

2.0 Population trend

Bristol is one of the 11 UK 'Core Cities' and the 8th largest city in England and Wales outside of London with an estimated population of 479,000 (mid-2022).

Bristol was the second fastest growing of all the Core Cities in England and Wales over the last decade (2012-2022) after Manchester. Bristol's population grew by an estimated 45,800 people over the decade – a 10.6% increase (England and Wales grew by 6.5%).

In the 12 months to mid-2022, the population of Bristol grew by 7,740 (1.6%) up from 471,300 (mid-2021) – this is the largest annual increase in population by far since 2015/16. The main factor behind this growth was a large increase in international migration.

Figure 1 shows how the population of Bristol has changed since 2011. It shows the updated mid-year population estimates for 2011 to 2022 alongside the 2011 and 2021 Census results, together with the 2018-based population projections.

¹ The ONS estimates are provisional and may be revised to incorporate revisions to international migration data as ONS continue their transformation of population and migration statistics.

Figure 1: Bristol Population Estimates 2011 to 2022

Source: Office for National Statistics. ONS licensed under the Open Government Licence.

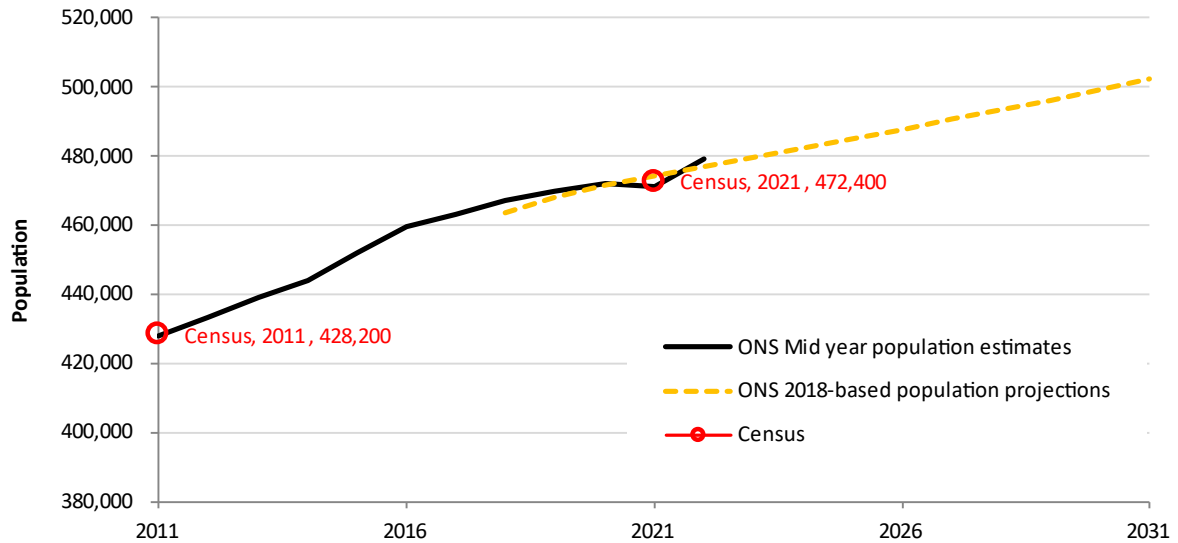
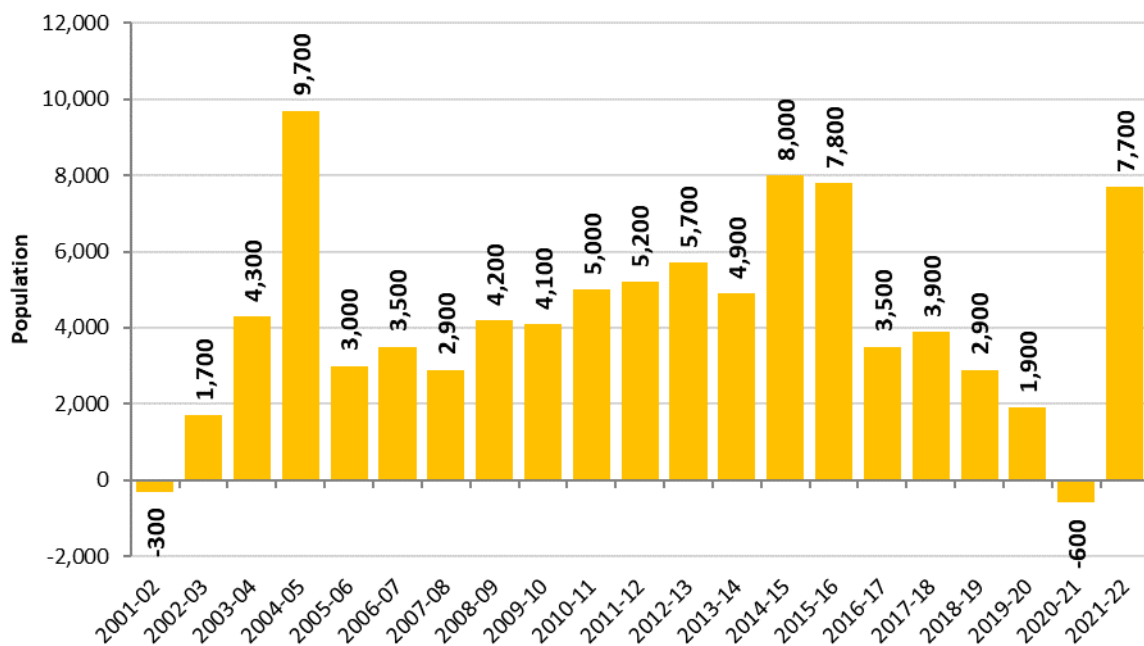


Figure 2 shows the annual increase/decrease in population over the last two decades. Following the EU Referendum in June 2016, the population of Bristol increased but much more slowly up to 2020/21, then the COVID-19 pandemic saw the population fall. The 12 months to mid-2022 however saw a large population increase, at a level similar to the years before the EU Referendum.

Figure 2: Bristol Annual population change 2001 to 2022

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

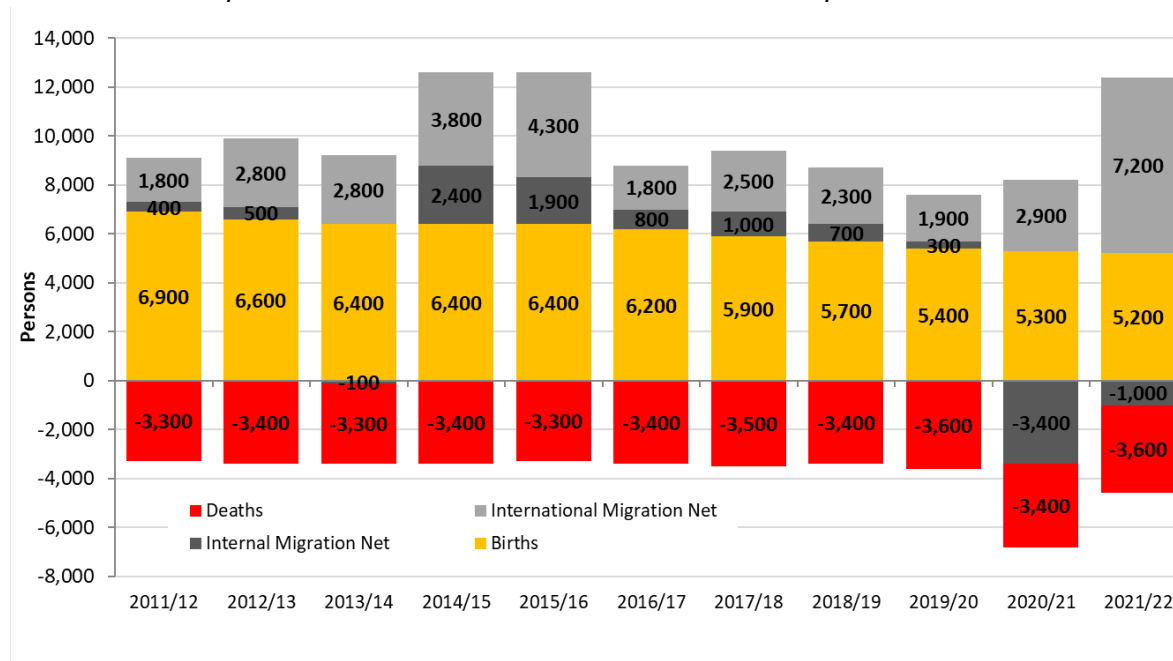


3.0 Components of Population Change

Net international migration was the largest component of population growth in the 12 months to mid-2022. For the first time since the expansion of the EU in 2004/5, net international migration to Bristol was almost 5 times higher than natural change (births minus deaths) and was the highest net international migration in almost two decades.

Figure 3: Components of population change 2011 to 2022

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



Components of population change mid-2021 to mid-2022 include:

- International migration increased the population by +7,243 (12,236 in-migrants and 4,993 out-migrants)
- Natural change saw the population increase by +1,535 people, (5,181 births and 3,646 deaths)
- Internal migration to/from other parts of the UK saw a loss of -1,004 people (41,010 in-migrants and 42,014 out-migrants)

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. This coincides with free movement ending for EU nationals in January 2021, the introduction of the graduate visa route, the easing of travel restrictions following the COVID-19 pandemic in July 2021, and external developments such as the war in Ukraine.

Increases in non-EU migration include both international students and workers. Bristol has seen a very significant rise in the number of in-migrants from India in the

last 2 years, plus other countries including China, Ukraine, Nigeria, Pakistan and Hong Kong.

4.0 Population by age

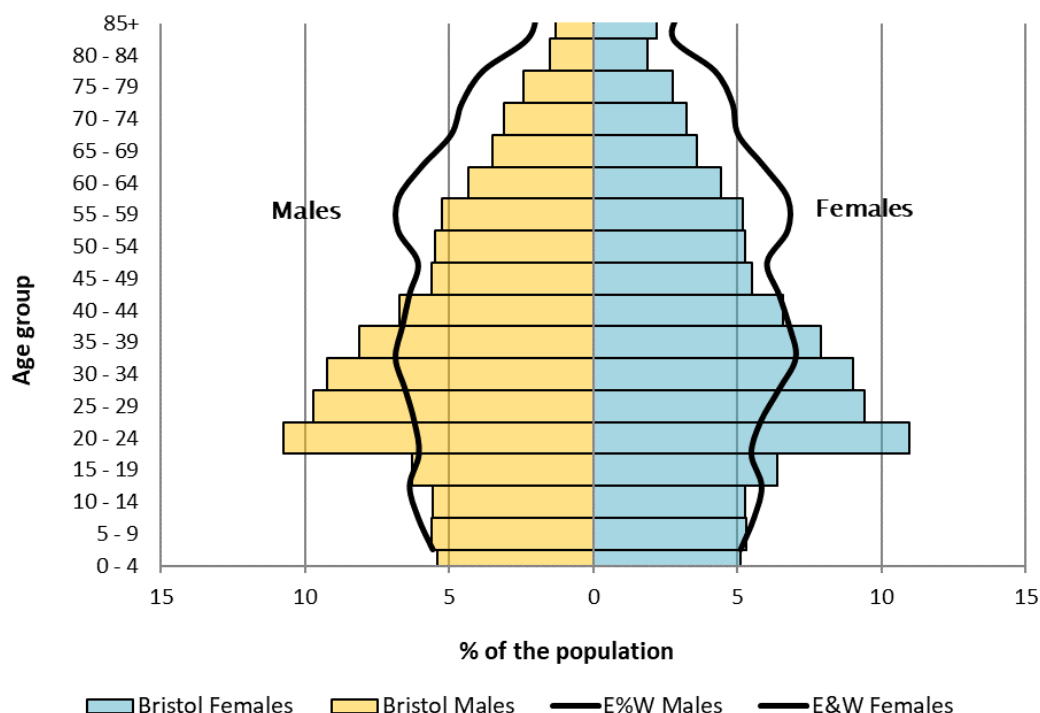
Bristol has a relatively young age profile with more children aged 0-15 than people aged 65 and over. The median age of people living in Bristol is 33.9 years compared to 40.6 years in England and Wales.

In Bristol, the proportion of the population in age groups 19 to 39 is much higher than nationally – 44% of the total population of Bristol compared to 27% in England and Wales - whilst the population in age groups 50 and over is much lower than nationally – 27% of the total population of Bristol compared to 38% in England and Wales.

Figure 4 shows the population profile of Bristol by five year age band and sex compared to the profile of England and Wales.

Figure 4: Mid-2022 Population by age band and sex

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



Between 2012 and 2022, the population in all age groups increased in Bristol except for 0-4 year olds which fell by 5,500 (18%), reflecting falling birth rates since 2012, people aged 80 and over which fell just over 1,000 (6%), opposite to the national trend where the population aged 80 and over increased, and a small drop in the population aged 45-49 (4%).

5.0 Population density

Bristol local authority covers an area of 110 square kilometres – in 2012 there were 3,951 people per sq. km increasing to 4,368 people per sq.km in 2022. Local authorities with similar population density to Bristol include Southend-on-Sea, Liverpool, Reading, Nottingham and Birmingham.

6.0 Uncertain population trends

Future population projections are uncertain. Recent events and their potential impacts on our economy and society, are not reflected in the current 2018-based population projections. ONS will publish 2022-based population projections in early 2025.

6.0 Further information

The Population of Bristol report will be updated in December 2023 to include detailed analysis of population trends.

More information about the population of Bristol can be found on the Bristol City Council [Population web page](#).

For further information please go to the [Office for National Statistics](#) and the ONS blog [Behaviour shifts and the implications for migration statistics | National Statistical](#)

Strategic Intelligence and Performance
Bristol City Council
E: jayne.mills@bristol.gov.uk
27 November 2023