



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS

Population and household estimates for Wales (Census 2021)

2021 Census rounded population and household estimates for local authorities in Wales, by sex and five-year age group.

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Main points

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) published the first results from the 2021 Census for Wales and England on 28 June. These first results include rounded population and household estimates for local authorities in Wales, by sex and five-year age groups.

The [ONS has published a statistical bulletin](#) summarising the key results for Wales.

Population change

- On Census Day, 21 March 2021, the size of the usual resident population in Wales was estimated to be 3,107,500. This was the largest population ever recorded through a census in Wales.
- The population of Wales has grown by 44,000 (1.4%) since the last census in 2011, when it was 3,063,456.
- The rate of population growth in Wales between 2011 and 2021 (1.4%) was lower than the rate between 2001 and 2011, when the population grew by 5.5%.
- The rate of population growth in Wales was considerably lower than in England, where the population grew by 6.6% (almost 3.5 million).
- There were more deaths than births in Wales between 2011 and 2021. The population growth since 2011 is due to positive net migration into Wales (approximately 55,000 usual residents).

Local authority populations

- The local authorities that had the highest rates of population increase since 2011 were in Newport (9.5%), Cardiff (4.7%), and Bridgend (4.5%).

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- Several local authorities had lower populations in 2021 than in 2011. The greatest rates of population decrease since 2011 were in Ceredigion (5.8%), Blaenau Gwent (4.2%) and Gwynedd (3.7%).

Population by age

- There were more people than ever before in older age groups in Wales. The proportion of the population who were aged 65 years or older was 21.3% (up from 18.4% in 2011).
- Wales had a larger percentage of the population aged 65 years or older than all English regions except South West England, where 22.3% of the population were in this age group.
- The size of the population aged 90 years or older in Wales (29,700, 1.0%) has increased since 2011, when 25,200 (0.8%) were 90 years or older.

Population density

- On average there were 150 residents per square kilometre in Wales in 2021, considerably lower than the population density in England (434 residents per square kilometre).
- The most densely populated local authority in Wales was Cardiff (2,572 residents per square kilometre), while Powys was the least densely populated (26 residents per square kilometre).

Number of households

- There were 1,347,100 households with at least one usual resident in Wales on Census Day. This is an increase of 44,400 (3.4%) since 2011, when there were 1,302,676 households.

Quality and methodology information

Population change in certain areas may reflect how the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic affected people's choice of usual residence on Census Day. These changes might have been temporary for some and more long-lasting for others. Further information can be found in the [ONS' quality and methodology information report](#).

Unrounded population and household estimates are due to be published from October 2022. This will also include a breakdown of the population by single year of age, rather than broad age groups.

There will be further releases of 2021 Census data from October, including information about topics such as the Welsh language. For further information about the data and analysis that will be available, see the [ONS' release plans](#).

Reports comparing the 2021 Census population estimates with the [latest mid-year estimates](#) and the [ONS' admin-based population estimates](#), including explanations for any differences, are planned for publication later this year by the ONS.

National Statistics status

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for

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Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

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

The designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed to the ONS in June 2022 following a **full** assessment against the Code of Practice by the Office for Statistics Regulation.

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.

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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](#).

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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