



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS, DOCUMENT

National population projections: 2022-based

The 2022-based projections provide statistics on the potential future size and age structure of the population of the UK and its constituent countries.

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Introduction

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published 2022-based national population projections for the UK (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/nationalpopulationprojections/2022based>) as a whole. This bulletin refers specifically to the projections for Wales.

Population projections are subject to uncertainty and are based on assumptions on future trends in fertility, mortality and migration. National population projections are not forecasts and do not attempt to predict potential short-term changes in international migration. Further information is available in the **ONS headline, 'National population projections: 2022-based'** (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/nationalpopulationprojections2021based>) and **methodology documents (ONS)** (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/methodologies/nationalpopulationprojectionsqmi>).

All projections refer to the population on 30 June of the reference year.

Main points

The population of Wales is projected to increase by 5.9% to 3.32 million by mid-2032, and by 10.3% to 3.46 million by 2047. In comparison, Wales's population growth over the previous decade to mid-2022 was 2.0%.

The projected growth in the population between mid-2022 and mid-2032 is driven by migration, with projected total net migration of 271,600 between mid-2022 and mid-2032. Natural change (births minus deaths) is projected to remain negative over the same period.

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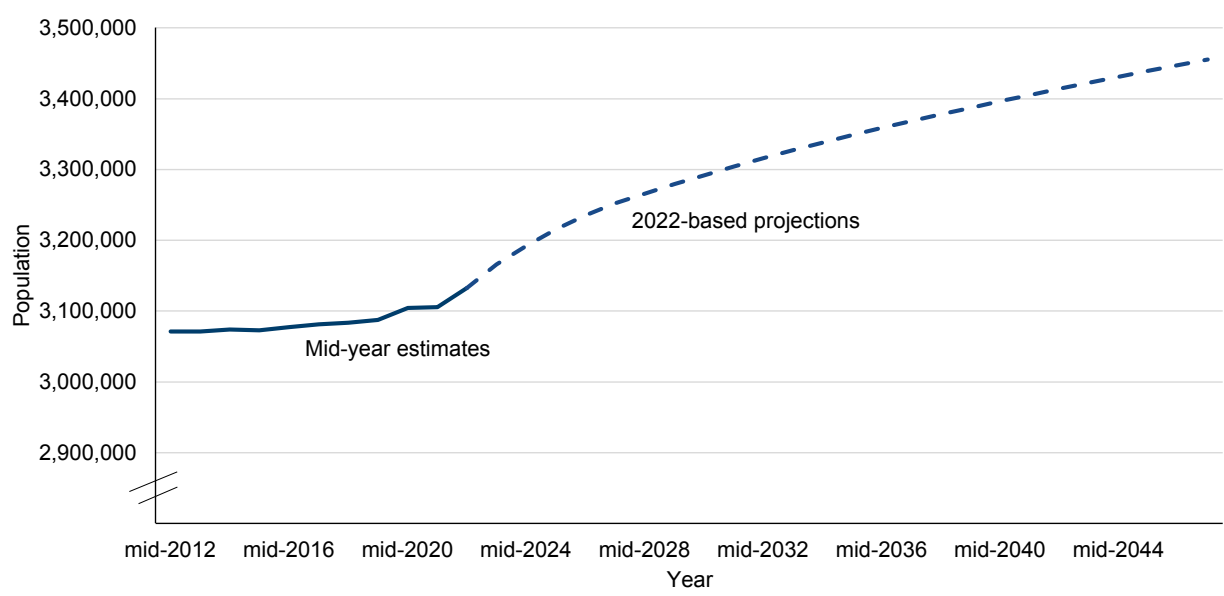
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The projected population increase for Wales between mid-2022 and mid-2032 is lower than for England, which is projected to increase by 7.8%, the most of all UK nations. However, the projected population increase for Wales between mid-2022 and mid-2032 is higher than that for Northern Ireland (2.1%) and Scotland (4.4%).

The number of people in Wales aged 65 years or older is projected to increase by 19.6% to 806,000 between 2022 and 2032 and reach over one million by 2060.

Figure 1: Estimated and projected population, 2012 to 2047 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 1: Line chart showing the population of Wales has increased slowly between mid-2012 and mid-2022 estimates and is projected to continue to rise but at a faster rate by mid-2047, when the population of Wales is projected to be 3.46 million.

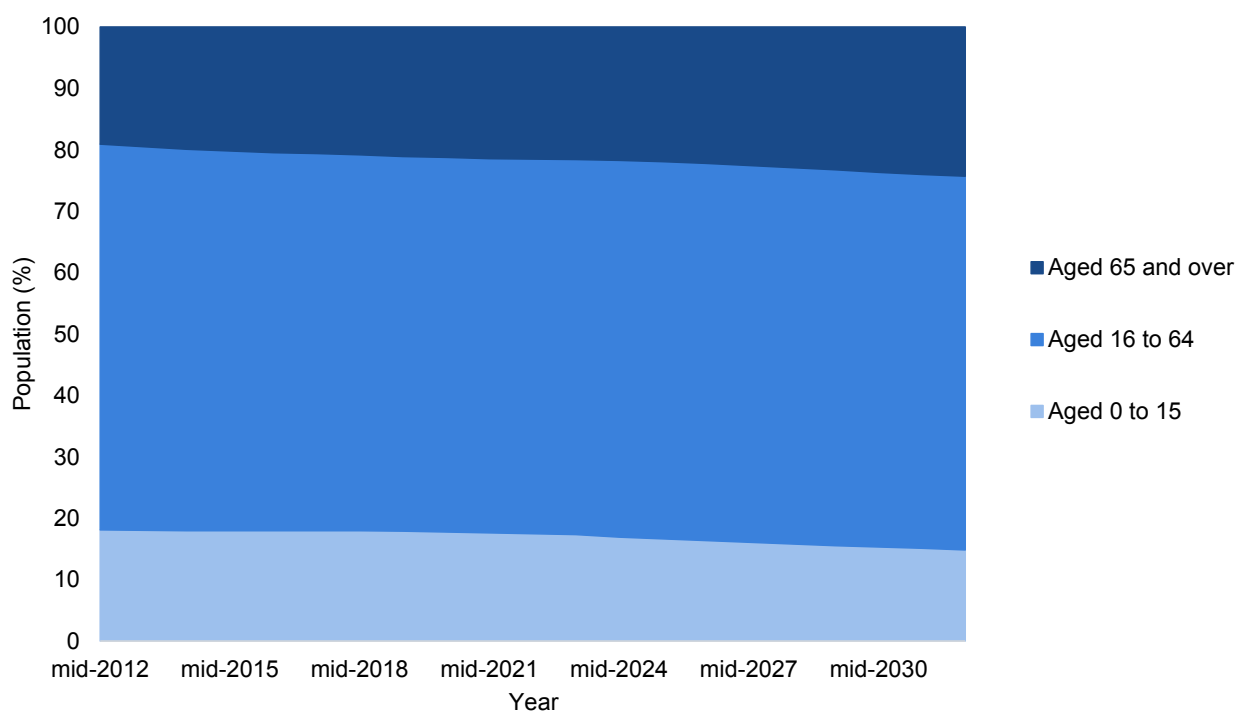
Source: National population projections, ONS; Population estimates, ONS

National population projections for Wales by age and sex, on StatsWales (<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Projections/National/2022-based>)

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

Projected population by age

Figure 2: Population by broad age group, 2012 to 2032



Description of Figure 2: Stacked area chart showing that the percentage aged 65 years or older has been increasing since 2012, and is projected to continue to increase between 2022 and 2032. The percentage aged 0 to 15 years old has been decreasing gradually and that is projected to continue. The percentage aged 16 to 64 is projected to increase slightly over the same period.

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Source: National population projections, ONS; Population estimates, ONS

National population projections for Wales by age and sex, on StatsWales

(<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Projections/National/2022-based>)

People aged 65 years or older are projected to account for nearly a quarter (24.3%, or 806,000 people) of the total population in Wales in mid-2032, compared with 21.5% in mid-2022. By 2060, the population aged 65 years or older in Wales is projected to reach over one million.

The number of people aged 75 years or older is projected to increase by 22.1% over the same period, from around 320,400 people in mid-2022 to around 391,300 people in mid-2032.

By mid-2032, 60.8% of the population are projected to be aged 16 to 64 years old (around 2,017,400 people). This is an increase of 5.6% from mid-2022.

Conversely, the number of children and young people aged 0 to 15 years old is projected to decrease by 10.2% between mid-2022 and mid-2032. In mid-2032, children and young people aged 0 to 15 years old are projected to account for 14.9% of the population (around 492,600 people), compared with 17.5% in mid-2022.

Comparison with other UK nations

The projected population increase for Wales (5.9%) between mid-2022 and mid-2032 is lower than for England, which is projected to increase by 7.8%, the most out of all UK nations. However, the projected population increase for Wales between mid-2022 and mid-2032 is higher than that for Northern Ireland (2.1%) and Scotland (4.4%).

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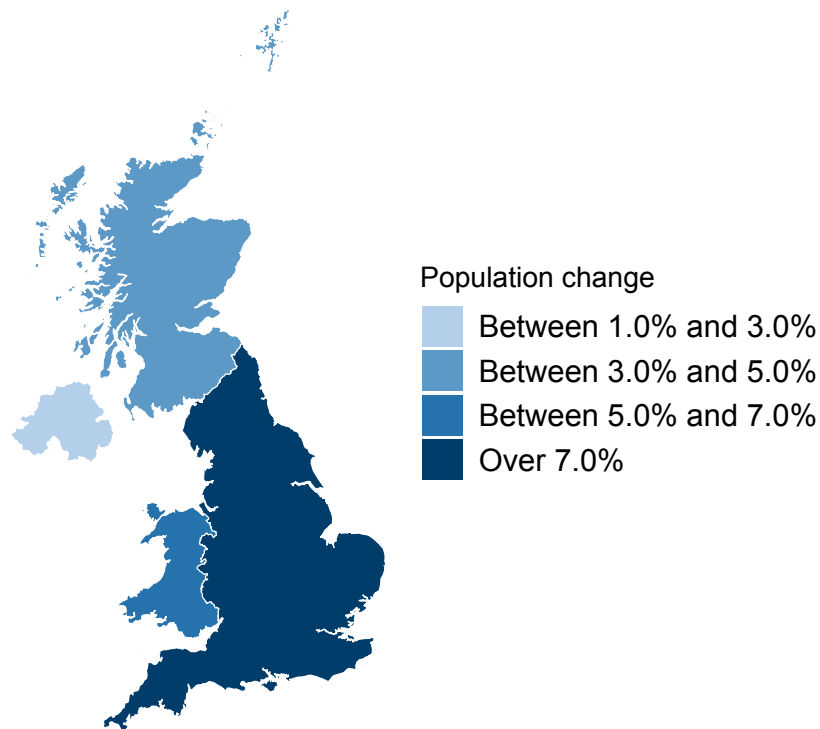
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This remains the case when looking at mid-2047, by which point Wales's population is projected to increase by 10.3% from mid-2022, compared with a 14.5% increase in England, 6.2% increase in Scotland and a 1.1% increase in Northern Ireland.

The projected increase in the number of people aged 65 years or older in Wales (19.6%) between mid-2022 and mid-2032 is the lowest of all the UK nations. This is at least partly due to the fact that Wales currently has the highest percentage of people aged 65 years or older of all the UK nations. During the same period, the number of people aged 65 years or older is projected to increase by 20.9% in England, 22.2% in Scotland, and 26.6% in Northern Ireland.. By mid-2032, the number of people aged 65 years or older is projected to account for 24.3% of the total population in Wales. This is compared with 23.6% in Scotland, 21.8% in Northern Ireland, and 20.9% in England.

As a percentage of the UK population, Wales is projected to account for around 4.6% of the UK's population between mid-2022 and mid-2032. By mid-2047, this is projected to decrease slightly, to 4.5%. England is projected to account for around 84.9% of the UK's population in mid-2032, up from 84.5% in mid-2022. Scotland is projected to account for around 7.8% of the UK's population in mid-2032, down from 8.1% in mid-2022. Northern Ireland is projected to account for around 2.7% of the UK's population in mid-2032, slightly down from 2.8% in mid-2022.

Figure 3: Projected population change by UK nation, mid-2022 to mid-2032



Description of Figure 3: Map showing that, in the period from mid-2022 to mid-2032, population growth in Wales is projected to be lower than for England, but higher than for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Source: National population projections, ONS

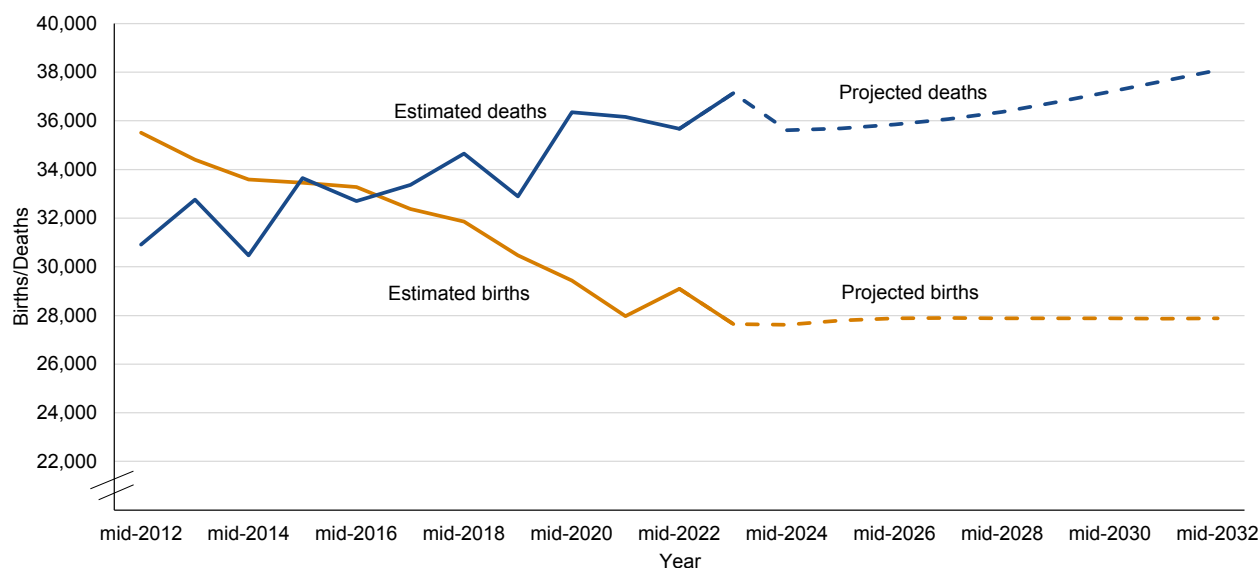
National population projections for Wales by age and sex, on StatsWales

(<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Projections/National/2022-based>)

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 countries in the UK) and international migration (movements between Wales and the other countries outside the UK).

Figure 4: Estimated and projected births and deaths, mid-2012 to mid-2032 [Note 1]



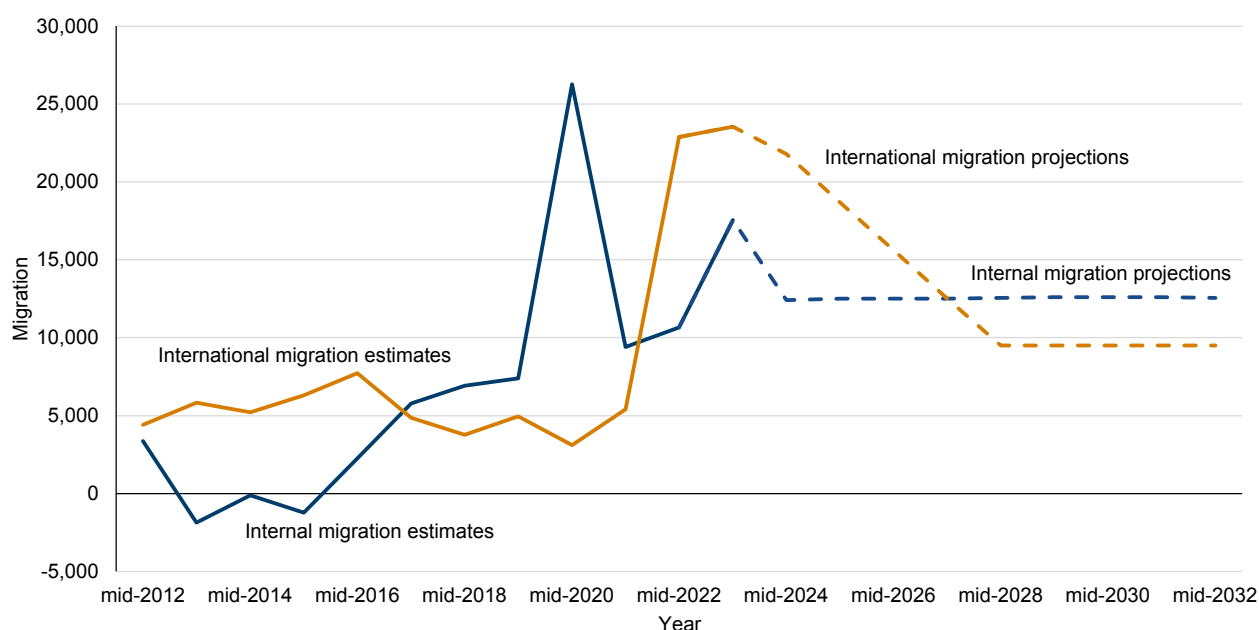
Description of Figure 4: Line chart showing that the number of deaths has been higher than the number of births since mid-2017. After a projected fall in the number of deaths in mid-2023, the number of deaths is projected to increase and remain higher than the number of births in Wales. The number of births has been falling since mid-2012 and is projected to fall again in mid-2023 before remaining at a similar level over the decade.

Source: National population projections, ONS; Population estimates, ONS

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

It is projected that there will continue to be more deaths than births in Wales. The number of deaths is projected to increase by 6.8%, from 35,700 in year ending mid-2022 to 38,100 in year ending mid-2032. This reflects the trend of an increasing older population in Wales. Meanwhile, in the same period, the number of births is projected to decrease by 4.2%, from 29,100 in year ending mid-2022 to 27,900 in year ending mid-2032.

Figure 5: Estimated and projected net internal and international migration, mid-2012 to mid-2032 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 5: Line chart showing that net international migration increased significantly in mid-2021 and mid-2022. In the period from mid-2022 to mid-2028, international migration in Wales is projected to decrease to lower than levels of internal migration. Between mid-2023 and mid-2024, internal migration

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is projected to decrease.

Source: National population projections, ONS; Population estimates, ONS

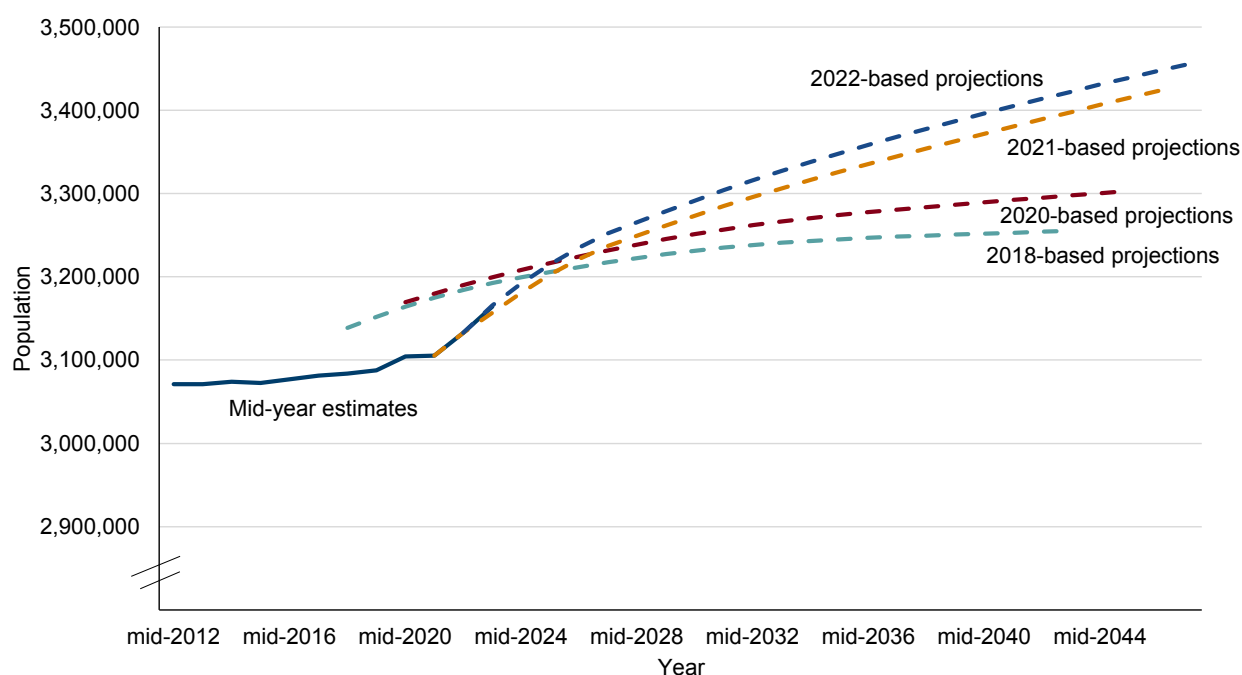
[Note 1] The Y axis on this chart does not start at zero.

Between the year ending mid-2022 and mid-2032, it is projected that net international migration to Wales will decrease by around 58.5% (13,400), from 22,900 in year ending mid-2022 to 9,500 in year ending mid-2032. This marks a return to levels similar to the period from mid-2011 to mid-2021, when average annual net international migration was around 5,200.

Net internal migration to Wales (from other UK nations) is projected to remain similar to current levels for the period to mid-2032. In year ending mid-2022, internal migration is estimated to be around 10,700, and is then projected to increase slightly to around 12,600 in year ending mid-2032.

Comparisons with previous national population projections

Figure 6: Estimated and projected population, mid-2012 to mid-2047 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 6: Line chart showing that the 2022-based population projections for Wales are higher than the previous national population projections from mid-2026 onwards. All versions of national population projections show that Wales's population is projected to increase.

Source: National population projections, ONS; Population estimates, ONS

National population projections for Wales by age and sex, on StatsWales
(<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Projections/National>)

[Note1] The Y axis on this chart does not start at zero.

Previous national population projections can also be found on StatsWales (<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Projections/National>). The above chart shows the differences between previous projections. From mid-2026 onwards, the 2022-based principal population projection for Wales is higher than any of the previous principal national population projections for Wales.

Quality and methodology information

2022-based national population projections, UK

The ONS has released a full set of projections for the UK (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/nationalpopulationprojections2021based>). This includes principal and variant projections for the UK, Great Britain, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Variant projections for Wales

In addition to the principal projections analysed above, a full set of **variant projections have also been published for Wales (ONS)** (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/nationalpopulationprojections2021based>). This includes a variety of projections incorporating differences to migration, fertility, life expectancy and age structure.

Mid-2023 population figures

The projected population of Wales for mid-2023 in these projections does not

match the **official mid-2023 population estimates (StatsWales)**

(<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Estimates/Local-Authority/populationestimates-by-localauthority-region-age>) which were published in 2024. This is because, in these projections, figures for 2023 use the most up-to-date migration statistics from the release '**Long-term international migration, provisional: year ending June 2024**' (ONS) (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/longterminternationalmigrationprovisional/yearendingjune2024>) and other data which were not part of the population estimates when they were last published for mid-2023.

We recommend the continued use of **population estimates (StatsWales)**

(<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Estimates/Local-Authority/populationestimates-by-localauthority-region-age>) for years up to and including mid-2023, for Wales and the UK, until the estimates are revised as part of the mid-year population estimates publication for mid-2024, due later in the year.

Official statistics status

All official statistics should show the standards of the **Code of Practice for Statistics (UK Statistics Authority)** (<https://code.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>).

These are accredited official statistics, published by the ONS. They were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) in April 2019. 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

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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 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 are set out in the Welsh Government's **Statement of Compliance** (<https://www.gov.wales/about-statistics-and-research#Statementofcompliance>).

These **accredited official statistics (OSR)** (<https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/policies/official-statistics-policies/accredited-official-statistics-policy/>) 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** (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/methodologies/nationalpopulationprojectionsqmi>) on national population projections.

You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing

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