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Coverage
United Kingdom
Theme
Population

UK population projected to grow by 4 million over the next decade

The population of the United Kingdom is projected to increase by over 4 million to 65.6 million in 2018, according to new population projections released today by the Office for National Statistics. Over the next 25 years, the UK population is projected to rise from an estimated 61.4 million in 2008 to 71.6 million by 2033. It is projected that the population of the UK will exceed 70 million by 2029.

The 2008-based national population projections are based on the estimated population at the middle of 2008 and a set of demographic assumptions about the future. The projections are not forecasts, and do not attempt to predict the impact that future government policies, changing economic circumstances or other factors might have on demographic behaviour. These new projections replace the previous 2006-based projections published by ONS in October 2007.

Of the 10.2 million projected increase in the UK population over the next 25 years, 55 per cent is projected natural increase (more births than deaths) and 45 per cent is projected net migration. However, future numbers of births and deaths are themselves partly dependent on future migration. Taking this into account, just over two-thirds of the projected total increase in the UK population between 2008 and 2033 is expected to be either directly or indirectly due to future migration.

The population is projected to rise most quickly for the oldest age groups. The number of people aged 85 and over is projected to more than double over the next 25 years from 1.3 million in 2008 to 3.3 million by 2033. The number of centenarians is projected to increase more than sevenfold over the same period, from 11,000 in 2008 to 80,000 in 2033.

Despite the forthcoming increases in state pension age, the population of state pensionable age (SPA) is projected to rise by 32

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per cent over the next 25 years from 11.8 million in 2008 to 15.6 million in 2033. In contrast, the population of working age is projected to rise by just 14 per cent, from 38.1 million in 2008 to 43.3 million in 2033. The ratio of working age people to each person of SPA is projected to decline from 3.23 in 2008 to 2.78 in 2033.

A statistical bulletin providing a more detailed summary of the 2008-based national population projections is available at:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/pproj1009.pdf>

Full results of the 2008-based national population projections for the UK and constituent countries are available at:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=8519>

Other related publications today

Period and cohort life expectancy tables – 2008-based

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=15098>

Interim life tables – 2006-2008:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=14459>

Life expectancy at birth and at age 65 by local areas in the United Kingdom – 2006-2008

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=8841>

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. National population projections are prepared by the Office for National Statistics on behalf of the National Statistician and the Registrars General of Scotland and Northern Ireland. The assumptions are agreed in liaison with the devolved administrations, following consultation with key users of projections in each country and advice from an expert academic advisory panel.
2. A new set of projections is normally made every second year, based on a full-scale review of the trends affecting the underlying assumptions about fertility, mortality and migration. The last set of national projections, issued in October 2007, was based on the estimated population at the middle of 2006.
3. The projections for the UK and its constituent countries are based on estimates of the population at the middle of 2008. These estimates for England and for Wales differ slightly from the population estimates published in August 2009 (available at: www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/product.asp?vlnk=15106) as they include an adjustment for the expected national impact of a package of improvements to population and migration estimates due to be implemented in May 2010. Details of the adjustment to the projections base are available at: www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/NPP2008/NatPopProj2008.pdf (see section 1, Base population); further details of the package of improvements are available at: www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/population/future/imps/updates/default.asp.
4. Full details of the results from the 2008-based principal and key variant national population projections are available on the National Statistics website at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=8519>. Details of previously published sets of projections are available on the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) website at www.gad.gov.uk. An article on these projections will be published by ONS in *Population Trends* 139 in March 2010.
5. The main focus of the projections is on the 25 year period to 2033. Longer-term projections up to 75 years ahead (2083) are also published. However, projections become increasingly uncertain the further they are carried forward. To illustrate this uncertainty, variant projections, based on alternative assumptions of future

fertility, mortality and net migration, are also available. Further variant projections, illustrating additional alternative possible scenarios and including selected combinations of the high and low variants, will be published on 18 November 2009.

6. Under the provisions of the Pensions Acts of 1995 and 2007, state pension age will (i) change from 65 years for men and 60 years for women to 65 years for both sexes by 2020 and then (ii) increase in three stages to 68 years for both sexes between 2024 and 2046. Further details are available at:
www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/NPP2008/NatPopProj2008.pdf (see section 6, Changing state pension age).
7. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the media office.
8. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

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