

Current UK Population

Be careful when using statistics. Misunderstanding or misusing statistics weakens the quality of your evidence base. We recommend you read our advice page 'How to use statistics' for useful tips on common errors and guidance on when to use and when not to use statistics.

Here you will find key facts on the UK older population. Future projected population data can be found below.

- Over 20 million of the population are aged 50 years and over
- More than a million people are aged 85 or over
- More than 11 million people are over retirement age (65 for men and 60 for women). This is 18.5% of the total UK population.
- Women over 90 outnumber men by about three to one
- There are over 7 million retired women, 63% of all those who are retired.

Table 1: Breakdown of UK Population by Age Group and Gender (individuals and millions, rounded)

Age	50+	60+	65+	70+	75+	80+	85+	90+	100+
Male	9.3m	5.6m	4.1m	2.8m	1.7m	888,900	322,800	98,500	1,900
Female	10.9m	7.0m	5.5m	4.1m	2.8m	1.7m	788,800	310,300	7,500
Total	20.2m	12.6m	9.6m	6.9m	4.5m	2.6m	1.1m	408,800	9,400

Source for UK, Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Office of National Statistics mid-2004 Population Estimates (2005) at

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/explorer.asp?CTG=3&SL=4819&D=4912&DCT=32&DT=32#4912>
and Census 2001 <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Expodata/Spreadsheets/D9042.xls>

- The total population of the UK is 59.8 million (up over 280,000 from 2003). 29.3 million men and over 30.5 million women
- Between 2003 and 2004, the over 80's accounted for over 10% of the increase in the total population
- The biggest contribution to this increase was amongst men in their eighties and women in their nineties.

For regional data please use the ONS Neighbourhood Statistics: <http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>

UK Projected Population

- The number of people aged 65 years and over is expected to rise by nearly 60% in the next 25 years - from 9.6 million in 2005 to over 15 million in 2031
- The percentage of the total population who are over 65 is predicted to rise from 16% to nearly 20% in 2031 and 26.6% in 2071
- The biggest growth in relative terms will be amongst the oldest old
- The number of people over 85 in the UK is predicted to double in the next 20 years and treble in the next 30.
- The total number of centenarians is expected to rise even more sharply, trebling in the next 20 years and quintupling in the next 30 years.
- By 2011, the mean age of the UK population will exceed 40 for the first time
- By about 2017/18, there will be more people over 40 than below 40

Table 2: UK Population Projections (individuals and millions, rounded figures)

Age	2005	2011	2021	2031	2071
65 years and over	9.6m	10.5m	12.7m	15.3m	17.7m
85 years and over	1.1m	1.4m	1.8m	2.5m	4.2m
100 years and over	9,400	14,000	26,000	48,000	228,000
Total Population (all ages)	59.8m	61.4m	63.8m	65.7m	66.4m

- By 2031, the number of pensioners is set to rise by nearly 38%
- The population over 75 is projected to rise by over 70% in the next 15 years, while the under 16 population is set to decline slightly

For more detailed information on population projections please visit the Government Actuary Department's Web Site: <http://www.gad.gov.uk/population/2004/uk/wuk035y.xls>

UK Life Expectancy

Please see the notes below regarding the different measures of life expectancy

- Current life expectancy for women *aged 65* is 84.6, compared to 81.9 for men.
- Projections for 2025 for life expectancy *at 65* are 87.5 for women and 85.1 for men
- Current life expectancy figures *at birth* are 81.1 for women and 76.9 for men.
- Projections for 2025 for life expectancy *at birth* are 84.4 for women and 80.7 for men
- A female born in Glasgow can expect to live 9.5 years less than one born in Kensington and Chelsea. For males, the difference is 11.5 years.
- The chances of dying in a given year are nearly a third greater for those living in a deprived area compared to the most affluent in the UK.

Notes

It is safest to use the *period* life expectancy tables at the Government Actuary Department website for current and projected life expectancy figures (currently based on mid-2004 UK population estimates) at http://www.gad.gov.uk/Life_Tables/eoltable.htm - beware, the tables are separate for males and females. For a more accurate picture of the life expectancy of older people, choose the option of Life Expectancy at age 65, adding the figures given onto 65 to give the total life expectancy.

The Period life expectancy figures do not take into account projected improvements in future health provision, whereas the Cohort figures do. However, as these latter figures are based on unproven assumptions about future health trends, it may be wise to be more cautious and use the lower Period figures.

Require more information?

If you require further guidance on the use of statistics please see the 'Office for National Statistics' web site: www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/joined_data.asp,
For a fuller description of statistics and their uses, see Chapman, M & C. Wykes, 'Plain Figures' Civil Service College Management in Government (ISBN 0-11-702039-7)