Mid-year population estimates for Wales, 2015

This bulletin presents an analysis of the mid-2015 population estimates for Wales published on 23 June 2016 by the Office for National Statistics. Birth and death registration data are used along with estimates of international migration (outside UK) and internal migration (within UK) flows to calculate estimates of the usually resident population of each area. The statistics presented in this bulletin have been produced and published by the Office for National Statistics and are classed as National Statistics.

The mid-year estimates refer to the population on 30 June of the reference year and are published annually. They are the official set of population estimates for the UK and its constituent countries, the regions and counties of England, and local authorities and their equivalents. This bulletin is based on the data for Wales in the first release of the mid-2015 estimates of the UK.

The official 2015 mid-year estimates for the UK referred to in this bulletin build on the mid-2014 estimates, which are updated to account for population change during the period between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2015 to give the mid-2015 estimates. A combination of registration, survey, and administrative data are used to estimate the different components of population change and as such there will be a level of uncertainty associated with the estimated population.

Mid-year population estimates relate to the usually resident population. They account for long-term international migrants (people who change their country of usual residence for a period of 12 months or more) but do not account for short-term migrants (people who come to or leave the country for a period of less than 12 months). This approach is consistent with the standard UN definition for population estimates which is based upon the concept of usual residence and includes people who reside, or intend to reside, in the country for at least twelve months, whatever their nationality.

Summary for Wales

- On 30 June 2015 there were estimated to be 3,099,086 people living in Wales.
- The population of Wales increased by 0.23 per cent between mid-2014 and mid-2015.
- In mid-2015 there were estimated to be more people aged 65 and over living in Wales (625,000) than children aged 0 to 15 (555,000).
- In mid-2015 the percentage of the population aged 65 and over living in Wales was 20.2 per cent, while the percentage of the population aged 0 to 15 was 17.9 per cent.
population by age and sex

Table 1 shows that in mid-2015 there were estimated to be more people aged 65 and over living in Wales (625,000) than children (aged 0 to 15, 555,000). The percentage of the population aged 65 and over living in Wales was 20.2 per cent, while the percentage of the population aged 0 to 15 was 17.9 per cent.

18.7 per cent of men were aged 65 or over compared with 21.6 per cent of women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-15 years</td>
<td>284,768</td>
<td>270,521</td>
<td>555,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-64 years</td>
<td>955,405</td>
<td>963,619</td>
<td>1,919,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years and over</td>
<td>285,388</td>
<td>339,385</td>
<td>624,773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>1,525,561</td>
<td>1,573,525</td>
<td>3,099,086</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data the population pyramid (chart 1) is based on shows that below the age of 30 there were more males living in Wales than females. Between the ages of 30 and 38 the differences were small and fluctuated (sometimes more males, sometimes more females). For the age of 39 or over there were more females than males (although the differences were small until around the age of 74 after which they tended to increase).
Quality Information

Relevance
Population and migration statistics are important for policy development, and planning and providing public services. There is a high demand for population and migration statistics for a variety of uses. Some of these include:

- Planning services and estimating future need at national and local level, e.g. schools, health and social services provision.
- As part of the Local Government Finance revenue settlement.
- Policy development,
- Advice to Ministers
- Informing debate in the National Assembly for Wales and beyond.
- For the calculation of further statistics e.g. Spatial Plan Areas, Housing Estimates and (household and population) Projections.
- As denominators in rates (e.g. birth rates).
- For the purposes of weighting surveys.
- Geographic profiling, comparisons and benchmarking.
- Analysis of population cohorts and migration trends.

There is a wide variety of users of population data from national and local government, charities and voluntary sector organisations, other government departments, students, academics and universities, individual citizens and private companies.

Data Source and Definitions
Mid-year population estimates (as at 30 June each year) for Wales and England are produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The National Records of Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics Agency (NISRA) produce comparable population estimates for Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively.

Usual residents away from home temporarily are included, but visitors are excluded. Students are counted at their term time address. It should also be noted that the UN definition of an international migrant is used – those changing country of residence for a period of at least 12 months. Short-term migrants (e.g. migrant workers from Eastern European countries) are not counted in the population estimates.

The UK Statistics Authority assessed population estimates and projections for Wales ([https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/population-estimates-and-projections-for-wales/] in 2015. The underlying statistics presented in the bulletin have been produced and published by the Office for National Statistics and have been assessed as National Statistics.

There were a series of recommendations which we are working to meet across our overall package of population outputs. These include ensuring that we have sufficient resources for population statistics to meet the requirements of the Code and producing a transparent plan. The most recent “Chief Statistician’s update” provided information on how we have responded to those recommendations: [http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/about/user-engagement/chief-statisticians-update] and we have also since consulted on population and household statistical outputs. In response to the recommendations regarding assurance of administrative data we are working with the ONS to publish information at a sufficient level, but we also enhanced the quality information available within our recent [Statistical Release on population projections for National Parks] and associated technical documentation.

However the UK Statistics Authority concluded that the commentary and analysis for this Bulletin are not considered detailed enough to comply fully with the requirements of the Code of Practice for Official
Statistics. To retain National Statistics status for this bulletin in the future, one of the recommendations set out that to comply with the Code of Practice further commentary and analyses would be required for this bulletin.


Within that consultation we set out:

'In line with our previous consultation, where we sought to prioritise outputs that added value by removing duplication with other statistical producers, we intend in future to only update the StatsWales tables when ONS publish new data and ensure users are made aware that ONS have published the latest data. This would not result in a delay to the Welsh data being available on the Welsh Government website.'

The consultation has closed and responses to the consultation will be published in the coming months. The consultation was supportive of this move and therefore this is the final bulletin which will be produced.

**Methodology**

Full guidance on the methodology used by ONS to produce the population estimates can be accessed at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/population/PEMethodology/

**Revisions and changes**

There have been changes to the data which are used to calculate the mid-year population estimates. For both these reasons it is not possible to compare the figures in this bulletin with current estimates for 2002-2010. These changes are explained below.

From mid-2011 onwards, prisoners are regarded as usually resident at an institution if they are serving a custodial sentence of six months or more. Previously, prisoners were considered usually resident if they were serving a custodial sentence and had already been in prison for six months or more. This definition was changed in order to be more consistent with the 2011 Census definition of usual residence for prisoners.

Prior to mid-2011, school boarders were also treated as a special population as it was believed their movements were not captured in the data sources used to estimate internal migration. However, further research has shown that school boarder moves are measured in the internal migration estimates and therefore this component will no longer be included in the mid-year estimates.

Prior to mid-2011, the method for calculating international in-migrants at local authority level has used a regression model based approach, introduced in May 2010 as part of the Migration Statistics Improvement Programme. For future years, an improved method for estimating in-migrants at local authority level will be introduced. This method splits the England and Wales immigration total from the International Passenger Survey (IPS) into different ‘streams’ based on reason for migration. A range of administrative sources are then used to directly distribute the national total down to local authority level. Further information on this new method is provided at: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/imps/improvements-to-local-authority-immigration-estimates/overview-of-improved-methodology.pdf

The population estimates made between census years are revised following a subsequent census in order to provide a consistent series of population estimates over time. This avoids a step change in the estimates when they are rebased using new census counts. The mid-year population estimates for 2002-2010 have not yet been revised to take into account the results of the 2011 Census. The change in how
school boarder moves are taken account of in the mid-year estimates will also be applied when the revised estimates for mid-2002 to mid-2010 are produced.

Comparability
At local authority level armed forces are included in the mid-year population estimates at their location of usual residence, which may be either their ‘permanent or family home’ or the armed forces base, depending on individual circumstances. However, in order to ensure that the members of the armed forces were enumerated consistently, the 2011 Census was designed so that members of the armed forces were enumerated at their ‘permanent or family home’, even if they were living at the base for the majority of their time.

To account for this definitional difference, the 2011 Census data on which the mid-year population estimates are based has been specified to include home armed forces at place of usual residence - an armed forces base if applicable, rather than their permanent or family home, where these locations are different. This is in line with the European regulation for population data which states that members of the armed forces who live in a military barracks or camp should be estimated at the residence where they spend most of their daily period of rest. Therefore, the 2011 Census data underlying the mid-year population estimates will not exactly match the published 2011 Census data due to the definitional differences in the location of home armed forces.

Due to the definitional differences outlined above, the figures from the 2011 Census in this bulletin have been adjusted to reallocate members of the home armed forces from their ‘permanent or family home’ to their place of residence at the armed forces base, where these are different. As a result they are comparable with the mid-year population estimates but may differ from 2011 Census figures already published for Wales.

Frequency
Following publication of the initial results from the 2011 Census, these mid-year estimates for 2011 were first published in September 2012. Population estimates for subsequent years are expected to be published annually in June.

Related Outputs
Further population data for Wales including population projections can be accessed via the Welsh Government website at:

Population estimates for England and Wales are published by the Office for National Statistics and can be found at:

Population estimates for Northern Ireland are published by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and can be found at:
[www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp17.htm](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp17.htm)

Population estimates for Scotland are published by National Records of Scotland and can be found at:

Further Information
Detailed population statistics by local authority, gender and age can be found on StatsWales:
We actively encourage feedback from our users. If you have any comments please contact us using the details below.

For queries on mid year population estimates for Wales, or for general queries on demographic data, please contact:

Population, Census, and Demography Statistics
Knowledge & Analytical Services
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ
e-mail: stats.popcensus@wales.gsi.gov.uk
phone: 029 2082 5058


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 Official 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 Official 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.