



ONS Mid-2020 Population Estimates (MYEs)

Introduction

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) published their mid-2020 population estimates on 25 June 2021. These continue the series of population estimates based on mid-2011 estimates and the results of the 2011 Census.

Resident population definition

The ONS mid-year estimates represent the **usual resident population** of each local authority area on **30 June** that includes: all those people who usually live there, regardless of nationality. Arriving international migrants are included in the usually resident population if they intend to/remain for at least a year. Emigrants are excluded if they intend to/remain outside the UK for at least a year. This is consistent with the UN long-term migrant definition. Armed forces stationed outside the UK are excluded. Students are usually resident at their term-time address.

The 'official' population

Mid-year estimates are the *official* estimates of population, allowing comparative analysis with other local authority areas in the country. However, despite achieving 'National Statistics' status, there are serious concerns about the accuracy of the Mid-year Estimates for Camden – see p2 'Potential Accuracy Issues'.

Uses

ONS mid-year estimates be used when¹:

- making **statistical returns to central government**;
- calculating **performance indicators**;
- calculating **comparative rates where a usual resident population denominator is required**.

Key Findings

- ONS estimates Camden's usual resident population at **mid-2020** to be **279,500**.
- **Since mid-2011** Camden ranks 3rd largest percentage increase in England & Wales (+27.0%) after the City and Tower Hamlets, and the 4th largest absolute increase (59,400).
- **Mid-2019 to mid-2020** Camden's usual resident population is estimated to have increased by **9,500 (3.5%)**, the largest absolute increase in England & Wales¹.

Components of change

Nine-tenths (89%) of the population change is due to net migration, with the remainder resulting from natural change - the change due to births *minus* deaths.

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Download data for Camden

- [Mid-year Estimates Summary for LB Camden \(Excel\)](#)
- [ONS Mid-year Population Estimates webpage](#)

Further information

For further information email: population@camden.gov.uk.

¹ ONS mid-year estimates are used for these specific purposes but it is recommended that [GLA projections](#)

should be used for underpinning Camden strategies and for service planning.

Potential accuracy issues

The ONS mid-year estimates are the official measure of population, but they are only estimates and should be treated as such.

Between 2001 and 2011, the mid-year estimate over-estimated Camden's population by 18,600 (8.5%)², due to the difficulty in accurately estimating migration. A weak point of the ONS migration estimation method remains the estimation of international out-migration. This may have an effect upon the accuracy of the estimates for Camden due to the volume of the international migration flows, influenced by Camden's central London location and university presence, e.g. there is no specific mechanism to count the number of people or international students returning to their country of origin. It is strongly suspected that, similarly to the 2001-11 period, Camden's overall population estimate has continued to be overstated. This affects other areas with large student populations in a similar way. Despite resetting the population using the results of the 2011 Census, it appears the 2011-based mid-year estimates series is exhibiting the same characteristics of over-estimation, with the effect 'snowballing' over the decade.

Further, GLA's City Intelligence team has identified a further problem with the official estimates of population and migration, particularly affecting child ages. Analysis of the estimates alongside comparator datasets revealed that individual cohorts of children in many boroughs were becoming increasingly inflated over time, indicating an issue with estimated in- migration flows. Through further analysis and discussion with ONS, the primary cause of the issue was identified as a being a mismatch between the age-structures applied to international in- and outflows from 2011 onwards, which in turn led to an exaggerated net international inflow of children.

Despite acknowledging the problem, ONS says it has no plans to make adjustments for this error prior to the wholesale re-basing of population estimates on the results on the 2021 Census, not expected until spring/summer 2022.

It would be wise to be cautious about using the ONS mid-year estimates overall, but with particular concern about using the child ages. If they do need to be used, then a warning should be attached to draw attention about their potential inaccuracy.

Mid-2019 Population Estimates for LB Camden

ONS MYE Mid-2020: Population Age/Sex breakdowns

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Age	Males	Females	Persons	Age	Males	Females	Persons
Total	142,915	136,601	279,516	Total	51.1%	48.9%	100.0%
0-4	7,274	6,900	14,174	0-4	2.6%	2.5%	5.1%
5-9	8,349	7,985	16,334	5-9	3.0%	2.9%	5.8%
10-14	7,888	7,361	15,249	10-14	2.8%	2.6%	5.5%
15-19	7,897	7,777	15,674	15-19	2.8%	2.8%	5.6%
20-24	12,224	11,709	23,933	20-24	4.4%	4.2%	8.6%
25-29	15,940	14,515	30,455	25-29	5.7%	5.2%	10.9%
30-34	15,636	13,174	28,810	30-34	5.6%	4.7%	10.3%
35-39	12,551	10,338	22,889	35-39	4.5%	3.7%	8.2%
40-44	10,136	9,085	19,221	40-44	3.6%	3.3%	6.9%
45-49	8,805	8,750	17,555	45-49	3.2%	3.1%	6.3%
50-54	8,325	8,139	16,464	50-54	3.0%	2.9%	5.9%
55-59	6,872	6,898	13,770	55-59	2.5%	2.5%	4.9%
60-64	5,814	5,575	11,389	60-64	2.1%	2.0%	4.1%
65-69	4,574	4,751	9,325	65-69	1.6%	1.7%	3.3%
70-74	4,054	4,760	8,814	70-74	1.5%	1.7%	3.2%
75-79	2,850	3,459	6,309	75-79	1.0%	1.2%	2.3%
80-84	1,894	2,489	4,383	80-84	0.7%	0.9%	1.6%
85-89	1,087	1,637	2,724	85-89	0.4%	0.6%	1.0%
90+	745	1,299	2,044	90+	0.3%	0.5%	0.7%

² By comparing the rolled forward 2001-based estimate for mid-2011 with the 2011 Census-based estimate for mid-2011.