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Census 2001 results show steady increase in population of London

The population of England and Wales on Census day 2001 was 52,041,916 Registrar General for England and Wales, Len Cook, revealed in a report laid in Parliament this morning.

The report contains population by age and sex nationally and for local authority areas. The population of England was 49,138,831 of which the population of London was 7,172,000.

This shows that in the past 20 years the population of England rose by 2,318,000 and the population of London rose by 366,500 from 6,805,600 in mid-1981. This is a steady gain of 5.4 per cent compared with the rate of growth of England of 5.0 per cent.

There were population rises for most boroughs within the region with Havering, Westminster, Bromley, Wandsworth and Greenwich showing the only losses.

The borough which showed the greatest increase was Tower Hamlets which rose by 50,900 (35.1 per cent). The fastest growing outer London borough is Merton which rose by 20,300 (12.1 per cent).

The biggest proportionate fall in population occurred in Havering which has lost 18,000 to 224,200 (-7.4 per cent).

By comparison the South East region gained 755,100 (10.4 per cent), the South West region added 547,100 (12.5 per cent) and The East 534,100 (11 per cent). There were population losses in the North West and North East Regions.

The authority that has lost proportionately most population across England and Wales is Manchester where there has been a decline of 15.1 per cent since 1981. By contrast the fastest growing authority area in the period is Milton Keynes in England and Wales which went up by 64.4 per cent.

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Len Cook said: "First and foremost I want to thank the people of England and Wales for the terrific way they responded to Census 2001. I can safely say this is the most accurate census result we could possibly achieve and that you all counted!"

He added that the census was able to draw on the most modern methods for verification and validation to make sure the result created the most complete picture possible of the population of England and Wales.

Other important UK findings include:

- there are fewer men than women at all ages over 21;
- for the first time, people 60 and over (21 per cent) form a larger part of the population than children under-16 (20 per cent);
- there has been a big increase in the number of people aged 85 and over - now over 1.1 million (1.9 per cent of the population).

In the past the ratio of men to women showed males outnumbering females at ages up to the late forties after which females became the majority. However, in the last 20 years this cross-over point has become earlier so that by 2001 from all age groups from 22 and upwards women are now in the majority in the UK.

In the past 50 years the population of the UK has aged considerably. While the proportion aged under-16 has decreased from 24 per cent to 20 per cent, the population aged over-60 has increased from 16 per cent to 21 per cent. The ageing of the population reflects longer life expectancy because of improvements to living standards and health care.

In particular, the ageing population can be seen from the increase in people aged 85 and over. In 1951 there were 0.2 million (0.4 per cent of the population), while Census 2001 shows that this has grown more than fivefold to over 1.1 million (1.9 per cent of the population).



"The results show the importance of the ten-yearly census. Without this valuable information it would have been difficult to evaluate this important change in the make up of our population," said Len Cook.

The results of the census in England and Wales form a key part of the new National Statistics website launched today. The website means greater and easier access to the numbers for everyone.

The data are available free on the National Statistics website: www.statistics.gov.uk/census/

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. Census day was on 29 April 2001. All census population numbers refer to that day.
2. Detailed results including a breakdown of each topic-based question to local authority level in England and Wales will be issued on 13 February 2003.
3. Mid-year population estimates for 2001 were issued simultaneously with the census data in Scotland and Northern Ireland and will be published on 10 October 2002 in England and Wales. Revised mid-year population estimates for England and Wales from 1991 to 2000 will be issued on 13 February 2003.
4. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
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