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Coverage  
England and Wales

## 9,000 centenarians in 2006

There were 9,000 centenarians (people aged 100 or more years old) in England and Wales in 2006, according to new experimental population estimates released today by the Office for National Statistics. The number of centenarians has increased 90-fold since 1911 when the estimated number was around 100.

This increase has not been constant across the period. Before 1940, the average annual increase in numbers was 1.9 per cent, but over the next 40 years, the average annual increase was 6.4 per cent, with numbers reaching over 1,000 by the end of the 1960s.

Annual growth rates slowed between 1981 and 2001, reflecting in part a reduction in the pace of births increase a century earlier. These cohorts will also have been affected by deaths caused by the 1918-1919 flu pandemic and the First World War (1914-1918).

Since mid-2002, when the number of centenarians was 7,100, the growth rate has returned to 5.8 per cent, with the number of centenarians increasing by 600 between mid-2005 and mid-2006 (7.5 per cent).

The major contributor to the increasing number of centenarians is increased survival between ages 80 and 100 due to improvements in hygiene and sanitation, improved food, housing and living standards and medical treatment.

There are proportionately more female than male centenarians. In mid-2006 there were 7 women for every man. This ratio has recently began to fall as survival to this age becomes more common and also because recent mortality improvements have been greater for males. In mid-2002 there were 8 women for every man.

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## BACKGROUND NOTES

1. Published tables include data for England and Wales for mid 2002 to mid 2006 by single year of age and sex for ages 90-104 and then grouped for 105 and over.
2. Data referred to prior to 2002 are 1<sup>st</sup> January estimates while data from 2002 are mid-year estimates. This difference in reference date does not affect the overall trends.
3. Data for mid-2002 to mid-2006 are controlled to the mid-year population estimates for the 90+ age group. Therefore estimates are consistent with the 2001 Census at this aggregate level. Estimates by single year of age may not be consistent.
4. The estimates of the very elderly (including centenarians) are available from:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=15003>

5. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
6. These statistics have been assigned an **experimental** status, which should be borne in mind when using the data. They have not yet met the high quality standards required of National Statistics and will undergo further development. They are published to help involve users and other interested parties in their development, as a means to improve their quality at the earliest stage. They are produced free from any political interference. More information on Experimental Statistics and National Statistics is provided in the National Statistics Code of Practice: Protocol on Data Presentation, Dissemination and Pricing available at:

[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/national\\_statistics/cop/protocols\\_published.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/national_statistics/cop/protocols_published.asp).