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Coverage

United Kingdom

Theme

Population and Migration

Both UK and foreign-born women contribute to rise in fertility

Both UK born and non-UK born women have contributed to the consistent rise in fertility rates in the UK between 2001 and 2006, according to the National Statistician's first annual report on the UK population published today.

The Total Fertility Rate for the UK has increased from 1.6 children per woman in 2001 to 1.8 children per woman in 2006, the highest level since 1980. In England and Wales, the estimated total fertility rate for UK born women has risen from 1.5 to 1.7 since 2002, while for women born outside of the UK the estimated rate rose from 2.3 to 2.5.

Analyses based upon birth registration data and the Labour Force Survey indicate that both UK born and non-UK born women have contributed to the overall increases in the fertility of women in their late twenties and thirties. However, the recent small rise in the fertility of women in their early twenties appears to have been driven by UK born women only.

Women born outside the UK have higher intended family sizes at each age than UK born women. For example, 18 per cent of women aged 30-34 born overseas stated that they intended to have four or more children, compared with 11 per cent of UK born women.

In 2006, there were 154,000 births to non-UK born women, almost 21 per cent of total births in the UK. The number of births to mothers born in EU countries other than the UK and Republic of Ireland increased by 87 per cent between 2001 and 2006 to 27,000, almost 4 per cent of all UK births in 2006.

The National Statistician's report also finds that the UK population has recently grown at its fastest rate since the 1960s. It increased by one and a half million to over 60 million between mid-2001 and

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mid-2006 and is projected to rise to 65 million by 2016.

In addition to increases in size, the demographic structure of the UK population is changing. In particular:

- The UK population is ageing. In the year to mid-2006, the estimated population aged 85 and over increased by six per cent to 1.2 million. By 2031 it is projected that this number will more than double to 2.9 million, having major implications for future service provision in the UK;
- While the average age of those in White ethnic groups was 40 years in 2001, the corresponding ages of those in Black, Asian and Mixed ethnic groups were 31, 29 and 21 years respectively;
- In 2006, almost 10 per cent of the UK population had been born overseas (compared with 6 per cent in 1981). Despite recent increases in the number of people resident in the UK who were born in the eight Eastern and Central European countries that joined the EU in May 2004, this group still only accounts for seven per cent of the total overseas-born population of the UK;
- Some areas of the UK, in particular London boroughs, have experienced high levels of population turnover in the last five years as a result of large numbers of moves into and out of those areas. For some areas, this high population turnover has led to high levels of population growth - these include Westminster, Camden, Oxford, Kensington & Chelsea and Cambridge. Other areas have experienced high population turnover but little population change due to moves into the area being offset by moves out of the area.

The National Statistician's report describes how ONS and the devolved administrations are responding to the challenge to improve further the quality and coherence of population statistics across the UK.

Much of the future work programme will focus on taking forward the recommendations of the inter-departmental Task Force into improving international migration statistics. In particular, how more comprehensive coverage of migrants can be achieved in household and port surveys and how administrative data sources can be used to identify better the numbers and locations of people in the UK at any point in time will be investigated.

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. The article *The Changing Demographic Picture of the UK – National Statistician's Annual Article on the Population* is available on the National Statistics website at:
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?ID=1911>
2. The Total Fertility Rate is defined as the number of children a group of women would have if they experienced the age-specific fertility rates for a particular year throughout their child-bearing life. The Age-Specific Fertility Rate is the number of live births in a year to women aged x, per thousand women aged x in the mid-year population.
3. Information about the latest work programme to improve the quality of population and migration statistics is available at:
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/population/default.asp>
4. The report of the inter-departmental Task Force into international migration statistics, issued December 2006, is available at:
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=14731>
5. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
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