

Mid-2021 population estimates for Herefordshire briefing report

Herefordshire's resident population in mid-2021 was 187,600



This is the first mid-year population estimate (MYE) based on the Census 2021 and accounts for adjustments made for ageing, births, deaths and migration in the 101 days between Census day (30 June 2021) and the mid-year point.

Censuses provide the most accurate estimate of the population and the mid-year estimates are the official source of the population between censuses.

The data is now available to download from the [Population pages](#) of the Understanding Herefordshire website.

The population rose by 500 in the 101 days between Census day and the mid-year point

This was due entirely to a relatively high level of net inward migration from elsewhere in the UK. We will have a better understanding of the reasons behind this elevated influx of people into the county once the Office for National Statistics (ONS) release more information on the components of population change.

The Census 2021 estimates for Herefordshire show a slower growth than the MYEs rolled forward from the previous census

This was down to an over-estimate of net migration into the county that affected most ages under 55, but especially the 25 to 44 group and children. We will get a better idea of why there were around 8K fewer than expected once the ONS publish rebased MYEs from mid-2012 to mid-2020 later in the year. It is likely that the net international migration component of change will see the biggest downward revision.

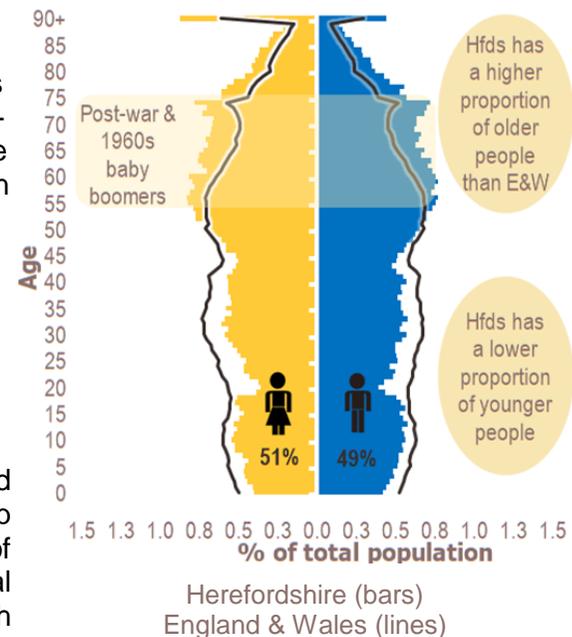
In the meantime, we can only look at how the population has changed since 10 years ago -

Herefordshire's resident population increased by around 4K since 2011

As there have been fewer births than deaths, growth over the last 10 years has been entirely due to net in-migration from elsewhere in the UK and abroad – an overall growth of 2.1%; lower than the 6.2% seen in England and Wales as a whole.

The number of older people continues to grow

Numbers of people aged 65 and over now make up around a quarter (26%) of the county's total population, compared with 19% in England & Wales. This age group will continue to grow at a high rate with numbers aged 85+ rising even more rapidly. A rise in the elderly population with no improvements in healthy life expectancy will lead to an increase in NHS and social care expenditure.



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Numbers of children have fallen

There is a lower proportion of children in Herefordshire (16%) compared with nationally (19%). The number had fallen by -5% over the last decade, compared with a 4% increase nationally. A recent decline in fertility rates, both locally and nationally, will mean that numbers of children are likely to continue declining.

Numbers of working age adults have fallen

The proportion of people aged 16 to 64 is lower in Herefordshire (58%) than nationally (63%).

The county has higher proportions of older working age adults (mid-forties to the age of 64) but lower proportions of younger working age adults (from the age of 16 to mid-forties).

Just after the expansion of the EU Herefordshire saw an increase in the working age population as a result of high levels of immigration; largely young male adults. However, numbers had fallen by -4% over the last decade, compared with a 3% increase nationally. Numbers will continue to fall if migration into the county is not enough to compete with the numbers of 'baby boomers' moving into retirement age and falling numbers of children becoming of working age.

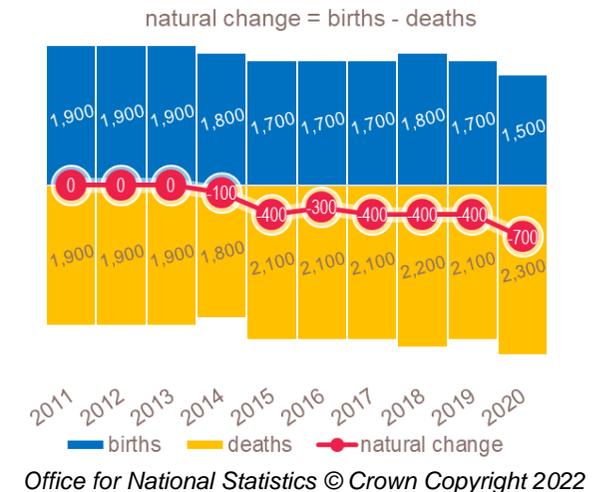
1.5K births in the year to mid-2021

The number of births has been falling since 2018, reflecting the continued decline in fertility rates seen nationally.

2.3K deaths in the year to mid-2021

Five years ago, the number of deaths stepped-up from an average of 1.9K per year to around 2.1K per year over the following four years, likely a result of the post war baby boom cohort shifting into the age groups with higher mortality rates. The number increased to 2.3K, a 7% increase from the previous year, compared with a 13% increase nationally.

While we would expect the numbers of deaths to be increasing in the face of a continually ageing population, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had a large impact on the number of deaths in 2020 and 2021 and was the main reason deaths increased above the average in those years nationally.¹



¹ [Excess mortality and mortality displacement in England and Wales: 2020 to mid-2021](#), Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright October 2021.