

Current population of Gloucestershire (Mid-2024 population estimates)¹

An overview

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¹ All data in this report is sourced from the Office for National Statistics Population Estimates,
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates>

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Note: Throughout this report a comparison is made between Gloucestershire and all 175 county and unitary authorities in England and Wales as well as between Gloucestershire's districts and all 318 district and unitary authorities in England and Wales. A comparison is also made to Gloucestershire's geographical and statistical neighbours. Geographical neighbours are local authorities which share a boundary with Gloucestershire, there are 12 local authorities, including Gloucestershire, in the geographical neighbour group, these are: Bath and North East Somerset; Bristol; Gloucestershire; Herefordshire; Monmouthshire; North Somerset; Oxfordshire; South Gloucestershire; Swindon; Warwickshire; Wiltshire and Worcestershire. Statistical neighbours are local authorities which share similar characteristics such as, social and economic features, in the case of this report the 2025 CIPFA nearest neighbour model has been used. There are 16 statistical neighbours in the group, including Gloucestershire, these are Cambridgeshire, Derbyshire, Devon, Essex, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Warwickshire, West Sussex, and Worcestershire.

1. Population overview

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates that at mid-year 2024 the population of Gloucestershire was 669,380, as shown in Table 1. This is an increase of 1.16% between mid-2023 and mid-2024, which is higher than the South West population growth of 1.02% and in line with the overall England and Wales population growth of 1.16%.

Gloucester continues to have the largest population with 138,598 people and Forest of Dean the smallest with 89,753. Between mid-2023-24, Tewkesbury had the highest population growth at 2.41% followed by Gloucester with an increase of 1.68%. All districts saw growth in their population sizes.

Table 1: Mid-population estimates in Gloucestershire, its districts, the South West and England and Wales, mid 2023-24.

| Area | Population Mid-2023 | Population Mid-2024 | Net change 2023-24 | % change 2023-24 |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Gloucestershire | 661,724 | 669,380 | 7,656 | 1.16% |
| Cheltenham | 120,859 | 121,739 | 880 | 0.73% |
| Cotswold | 91,511 | 91,661 | 150 | 0.16% |
| Forest of Dean | 89,050 | 89,753 | 703 | 0.79% |
| Gloucester | 136,302 | 138,598 | 2,296 | 1.68% |
| Stroud | 124,456 | 125,680 | 1,224 | 0.98% |
| Tewkesbury | 99,546 | 101,949 | 2,403 | 2.41% |
| South West | 5,830,152 | 5,889,695 | 59,543 | 1.02% |
| England | 57,932,470 | 58,620,101 | 687,631 | 1.19% |
| England and Wales | 61,099,801 | 61,806,682 | 706,881 | 1.16% |

Comparing the 175 county and unitary authorities in England and Wales, Gloucestershire had the 75th highest population growth between mid-2023 and mid-2024, placing it within the middle 20% of authorities across the country. Furthermore, compared to its geographical and statistical neighbours, Gloucestershire was placed in the middle of both cohorts for population growth.

Out of 318 district and unitary authorities, Tewkesbury, and Gloucester both sat within the top 20% nationally for population growth. In contrast, Cotswold was the only district to be placed in the 20% lowest authorities for population growth between mid-2023 and mid-2024. Figure 1 indicates that when compared to all other districts and unitary authorities, Forest of Dean's population growth has fallen the most noticeably in the rankings from 150th mid-2022-2023, which put it in the middle 20% of authorities, to 227th mid-2023-24, putting it in the bottom 40% of authorities. Cheltenham also had a lower ranking in mid-2023-24 than mid 2022-2023. All other

districts had a higher ranking for population growth in mid-2023-24 compared to mid-2022-23, although in many of these areas change was minimal.

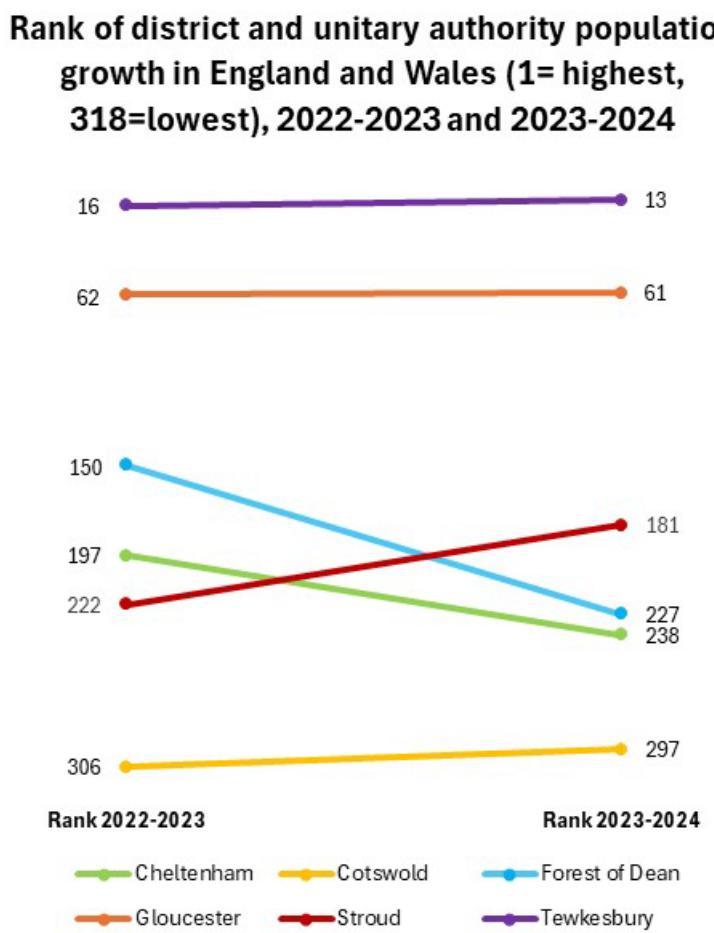


Figure 1: Rank of district and unitary authority population growth in England and Wales, mid 2022-23 and mid 2023-24.

2. Population composition

Population pyramids, shown in Figure 2, illustrate the current age structure of a population as well as the gender balance. Gloucestershire's population pyramid indicates it has an ageing population, indicated by the wider top half of the pyramid and narrowing base.

The overall gender distribution for Gloucestershire is 48.85% males and 51.15% females. In comparison, England and Wales has a 49.00% share of males and the South West has a 48.92% share of males.

Additionally, the Gloucestershire population pyramid indicates that between ages 0-24 there is a slightly higher proportion of males than females which is reversed for 25+ year olds. Whilst the South West population pyramid broadly reflects the Gloucestershire pyramid, there are some noticeable differences to the England and Wales population pyramid. Gloucestershire and the South West have a higher proportion of people in the 55+ age groups and a smaller proportion of the population in the 0-44 age groups. Therefore, indicating that population ageing is at a more advanced stage in Gloucestershire and the South West compared to the overall population in England and Wales.

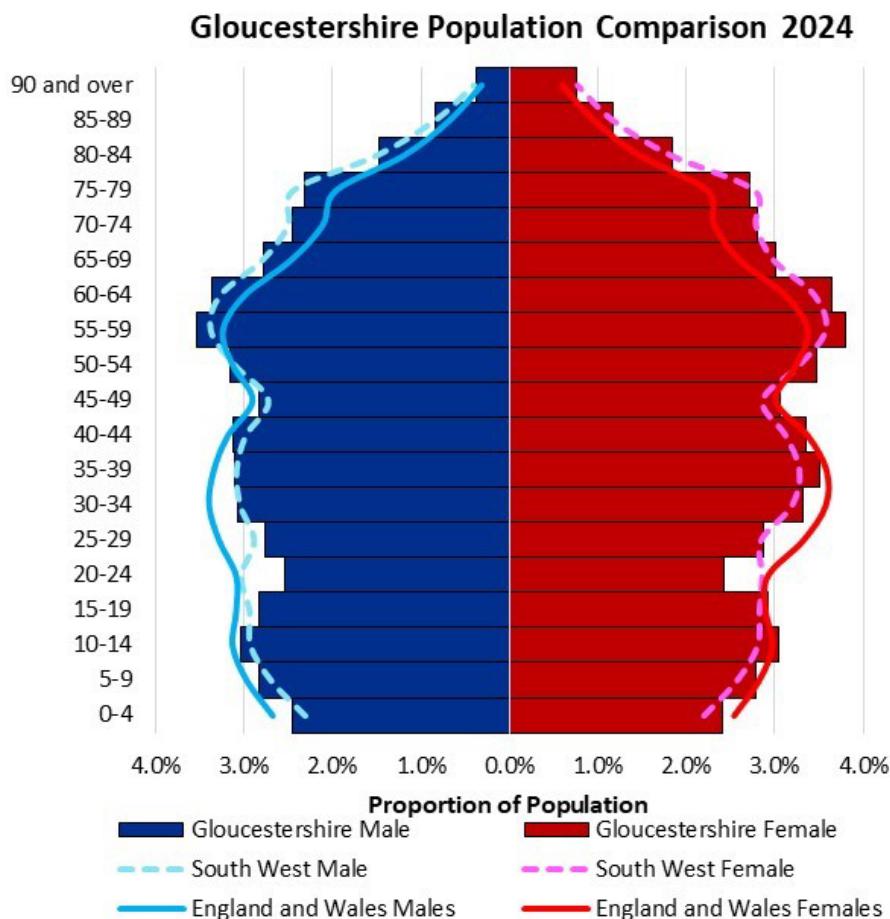


Figure 2: Population pyramid, Gloucestershire, the South West and England and Wales, mid-2024.

At district level, population pyramids for each of Gloucestershire's districts are shown below in Figure 3, with comparison lines for Gloucestershire and England and Wales. All the districts show signs of an ageing population whereby the age groups towards the top half of the pyramid are already wider than the middle and base and are continuing to widen. However, the urban districts Cheltenham and Gloucester show that their population ageing is less advanced as there is a lower proportion of the population in the 65+ age groups than the Gloucestershire average. Furthermore, Cheltenham and Gloucester have a noticeably higher proportion of the population in the 20-24 to 35-39 age groups than Gloucestershire overall whilst the opposite can be said for Cotswold, Forest of Dean and Stroud, and to some extent Tewkesbury.

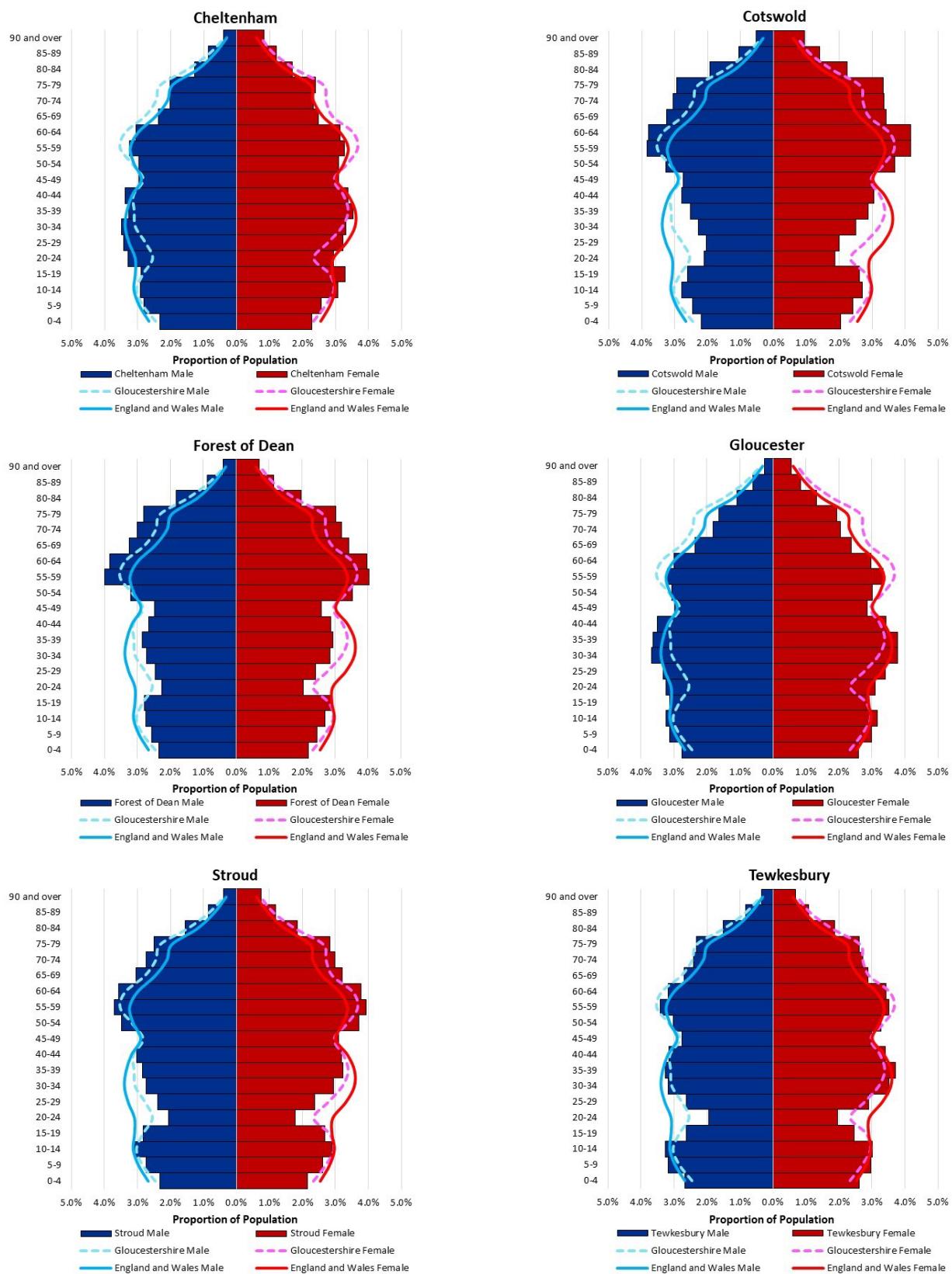


Figure 3: District population pyramids compared to Gloucestershire and England and Wales, mid-2024.

2.1 Broad age groups

The population composition can also be examined by broad age group. Table 2 indicates that Gloucestershire has a smaller proportion of people aged 15 and under compared to England and Wales, 17.49% vs. 18.31%. However, the proportion of 0-15-year-olds in Gloucestershire is higher than the South West (16.34%). Compared to all 175 county and unitary authorities in England and Wales, Gloucestershire is placed within the bottom 40% for its 0-15 population proportion size at 111th. Gloucestershire is also placed broadly in the middle of its geographical and statistical neighbours.

Table 2: Broad age group proportions, Gloucestershire, its districts, the South West and England and Wales, mid-2024

| | 0-15 | 16-64 | 65+ |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Gloucestershire | 17.49% | 60.39% | 22.12% |
| Cheltenham | 17.36% | 62.82% | 19.82% |
| Cotswold | 15.73% | 56.80% | 27.46% |
| Forest of Dean | 16.07% | 58.34% | 25.59% |
| Gloucester | 19.09% | 64.03% | 16.88% |
| Stroud | 17.02% | 59.11% | 23.87% |
| Tewkesbury | 18.89% | 59.15% | 21.95% |
| South West | 16.64% | 60.58% | 22.77% |
| England | 18.37% | 62.90% | 18.73% |
| England and Wales | 18.31% | 62.81% | 18.89% |

Table 2 also shows 60.39% of Gloucestershire's population is aged 16-64. This is lower than the working-age proportion in England and Wales (62.81%) and marginally lower than the South West (60.58%). Noticeably there is a smaller proportion of 20-39 year olds in Gloucestershire than in England and Wales as a whole. Out of 175 county and unitary authorities in England and Wales, Gloucestershire was placed in the bottom 40% for its working-age population size at 134th. However, it was placed in the middle of its statistical and geographical neighbours.

In contrast, the proportion of the population over the age of 65 is higher in Gloucestershire (22.12%) than in England and Wales (18.89%) but lower than the South West region (22.77%). Comparing the 175 county and unitary authorities in England and Wales, Gloucestershire had the 42nd largest proportion of its population accounted for by 65+ year olds, placing it within the 40% largest proportion sizes. Out of 12 geographical neighbours, Gloucestershire's 65+ proportion size was placed in the middle of the group however, it was placed in the bottom half of the 16 statistical neighbours group at 10th.

Out of Gloucestershire's districts, Gloucester had the highest proportion of 0-15 year olds accounting for 19.09% of its population. In contrast, Cotswold had the lowest proportion with 15.73% of the population falling into this age group. Compared to all district and unitary authorities, Gloucester is placed in the top 40% with the 95th largest 0-15 population proportion. The Forest of Dean and Cotswold are placed in the lowest 20% at 261st and 273rd respectively.

For the 16–64-year age group, Gloucester also had the highest proportion, accounting for 64.03% of its population, while Cotswold had the lowest proportion at 56.80%. In comparison to the 318 district and unitary authorities in England and Wales, Gloucester and Cheltenham are ranked in the top 40% at 66th and 92nd respectively for their 16-64 population proportion size. Cotswold and the Forest of Dean are in the bottom quintile at 293rd and 257th respectively.

Furthermore, Cotswold had the highest proportion of the population aged 65+ accounting for 27.46% of the total population and Gloucester had the smallest proportion accounting for 16.88% of the population. Compared to all authorities in England and Wales, Cotswold and the Forest of Dean sit within the top 20% for largest proportion size at 22nd and 51st respectively. At the other end of the scale Gloucester is placed at 241st putting it in the bottom 40% of authorities nationally.

2.2 Broad age group change between mid-2023 and mid-2024

Between 2023 and 2024, there was an increase in the number of people in all three broad age groups in Gloucestershire, as shown in Figure 4. The largest increase was in the 65+ age group, which increased by 1.92%, followed by the 0-15 year olds, by 10.01% and the 16–64 year olds, which increased by 0.92%. Increases were also seen at a regional and national level, however, the increases in England and Wales were smaller for the 0-15 and 65+ year olds, and larger for the 16-64 year olds when compared to Gloucestershire.

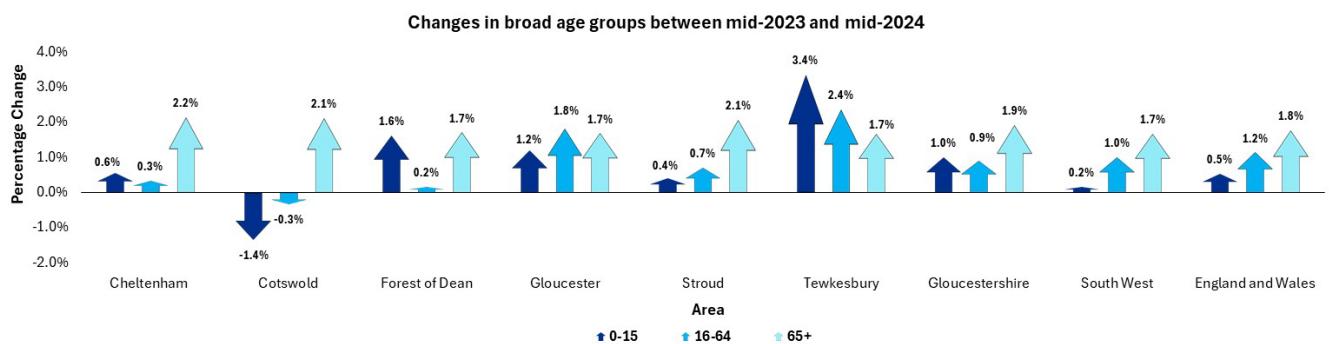


Figure 4: Changes in broad age group between mid 2023-24, Gloucestershire, its districts, the South West and England and Wales

All districts saw an increase in the number of people in the 65+ year age group. The biggest increase was in Cheltenham, with a 2.16% increase, and the smallest was in Tewkesbury, with a 1.69% increase. The picture is more mixed when looking at the

0-15 year old population and the working-age population, 16-64. Cotswold saw a decrease in the number of people in both age groups, while all other districts saw increases. When looking at the 0-15 year old age group, Cotswold saw a 1.35% decline, while the largest increase was in Tewkesbury where the number of 0-15 year olds increased by 3.36%. Tewkesbury also saw the largest increase in the 16-64 year old population, with a growth of 2.39%, conversely in Cotswold this age group declined by 0.34%.

3. Components of population change

The change in population size between two years is calculated by adding the number of births and deaths, net internal migration, net international migration and any special adjustments to the previous year's population figure.

Overall, Gloucestershire's population size increased by 1.16% between mid-2023-24, this figure was calculated from component percentage changes as shown in Table 3. Gloucestershire had more deaths than births, leading to a -0.15% reduction in natural population change. The main driver of population growth in the county was international migration, with more people immigrating, moving from countries outside of the UK to Gloucestershire than emigrating, leaving Gloucestershire and moving to a country outside of the UK, which increased the population by 0.80%². Internal migration, people moving to Gloucestershire from other parts of the UK increased Gloucestershire's population by 0.56%. Special adjustments³ accounted for -0.05% of Gloucestershire's population growth.

When compared to the South West there were some noticeable differences, the South West experienced a bigger decrease as a result of natural change (-0.23%), a smaller increase as a result of internal migration (0.49%) and a similar increase as a result of international migration (0.79%). In contrast, England and Wales saw a greater number of births and deaths, meaning natural change increased the population by 0.05%. England and Wales's population growth is largely attributed to international migration which saw the population grow by 1.13%. In contrast, there was negative population growth attributed by internal migration from England and Wales to the other parts of the UK.

² Net international migration across the country is currently high compared with historical levels.

³ Adjustments to the population estimates are made for some special population groups that are not captured by the usual internal or international migration estimates: members of the armed forces and prisoners. These populations have specific age structures, which remain fairly constant over time so are not aged-on with the rest of the population.

Table 3: Components of population change between mid 2023-24, Gloucestershire, its districts, the South West and England and Wales⁴

| Components of Population Change 2023-2024 | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|--|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Area | % Population Change | % Natural Change (Births minus Deaths) | % Internal Migration | % International Migration | % Special and Other Adjustments |
| Gloucestershire | 1.16% | -0.15% | 0.56% | 0.80% | -0.05% |
| Cheltenham | 0.73% | -0.16% | -0.29% | 1.11% | 0.06% |
| Cotswold | 0.16% | -0.43% | 0.24% | 0.36% | 0.00% |
| Forest of Dean | 0.79% | -0.30% | 0.96% | 0.55% | -0.42% |
| Gloucester | 1.68% | 0.11% | -0.25% | 1.85% | -0.04% |
| Stroud | 0.98% | -0.28% | 0.97% | 0.30% | 0.00% |
| Tewkesbury | 2.41% | 0.05% | 2.10% | 0.26% | 0.01% |
| South West | 1.02% | -0.23% | 0.49% | 0.79% | -0.02% |
| England | 1.19% | 0.07% | -0.03% | 1.15% | 0.00% |
| England and Wales | 1.16% | 0.05% | -0.02% | 1.13% | 0.00% |

In one of Gloucestershire's districts, there was a positive natural change, Gloucester's population naturally increased by 0.11%, in the remaining districts deaths out-numbered births, resulting in negative natural change.

All districts saw more people immigrate to the county from abroad than emigrate to another country. In Cheltenham (1.11%), Cotswold (0.36%) and Gloucester (1.85%), international migration was the largest contributor to population growth. International migration had the smallest impact in Stroud (0.30%) and Tewkesbury (0.26%).

The picture when looking at internal migration was mixed, the two urban districts of Cheltenham (-0.29%) and Gloucester (-0.25%), saw more people leave the district than moving to it, resulting in negative net internal migration figures. The Forest of Dean (0.96%), Stroud (0.97%) and Tewkesbury (2.10%) saw high levels of internal migration.

The Forest of Dean and Gloucester lost people classed as a special population or received other adjustments which caused a decrease in the population. Conversely, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury saw their population increase as a result of special adjustments.

⁴ Special populations refer to static populations who are not captured by the internal and international migration estimates, for example, prisons and the armed forces; the adjustments account for movement between these areas.

4. Dependency ratios

Dependency ratios are a measure that indicate the level of support that needs to be provided by the working age (16-64) population to the younger and older population, people aged 0-15 or 65+. A low dependency ratio indicates that there is a sufficient ratio of the working-age population to the dependent population. In contrast, a high dependency ratio indicates there may be more financial burden on the working population to support the dependent population.

In mid-2024, Gloucestershire had an estimated dependency ratio of 0.66, shown in Table 4, this means that for every 100 people who are of working age (16-64) there is 66 people who are dependent on them. The dependency ratio for the South West is similar at 0.65 however, England and Wales has a lower dependency ratio of 0.59 i.e., 59 dependents for every 100 people who are of working age.

The dependency ratio can be further broken down into a youth dependency ratio and an old-age dependency ratio. Youth dependency ratios refer to the number of people aged 0-15 compared to the number of people aged 16-64, and old-age dependency ratios calculate the number of people aged 65+ per 100 people aged 16-64.

Gloucestershire has a lower number of youthful dependents for every 100 people of working age than the number of older people per 100 people of working age. For every 100 people aged 16-64, there are 29 people aged 0-15 dependent on them, a 0.29 youth dependency ratio, and there are 37 people aged 65+ dependent on the 16-64 population, a 0.37 old-age dependency ratio. Gloucestershire has a similar youth dependency ratio as the South West and England and Wales. However, there is a noticeably lower old-age dependency ratio in England and Wales overall, 0.30, than the South West (0.38) and Gloucestershire (0.37) which reflects the population's more youthful age structure.

Looking at all 175 county and unitary authorities in England and Wales, in mid-2024 Gloucestershire's dependency ratio was within the 40% highest authorities at 42nd, its youth dependency ratio was in the middle 20% of authorities at 93rd and its old-age dependency ratio was ranked in the 40% highest authorities at 42nd.

Table 4: Dependency ratios, Gloucestershire, its districts, the South West and England and Wales, mid- 2024

| | Dependency Ratio | Youth Dependency Ratio | Old-age Dependency Ratio |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Gloucestershire | 0.66 | 0.29 | 0.37 |
| Cheltenham | 0.59 | 0.28 | 0.32 |
| Cotswold | 0.76 | 0.28 | 0.48 |
| Forest of Dean | 0.71 | 0.28 | 0.44 |
| Gloucester | 0.56 | 0.30 | 0.26 |
| Stroud | 0.69 | 0.29 | 0.40 |
| Tewkesbury | 0.69 | 0.32 | 0.37 |
| South West | 0.65 | 0.27 | 0.38 |
| England | 0.59 | 0.29 | 0.30 |
| England and Wales | 0.59 | 0.29 | 0.30 |

Comparing Gloucestershire's districts, Cotswold had the highest dependency ratio in mid-2024, with 76 dependents for every 100 people of working age. This is followed by Forest of Dean which had 71 dependents for every 100 people of working age. The urban districts of Cheltenham and Gloucester had the lowest dependency ratios, with 59 and 56 dependents for every 100 people aged 16-64, respectively.

Cheltenham, Cotswold and the Forest of Dean had the lowest youth dependency ratio, with 28 people aged 0-15 for every 100 people of working age, and Tewkesbury had the highest youth dependency ratio with 32 young people aged 0-15 per 100 people of working age. In contrast, Gloucester had the lowest old-age dependency ratio with 26 people aged 65+ for every 100 people aged 16-64 and Cotswold had the highest old-age dependency ratio with 48 older people per 100 people aged 16-64. Interestingly, Gloucester is the only district where the youth dependency ratio is higher than the old age dependency ratio, this reflects the younger age structure of the urban district.

Cotswold and the Forest of Dean's overall and old age dependency ratios are both ranked in the highest 20% of 318 district and unitary authorities. In addition, the highest youth dependency out of Gloucestershire's districts was in Tewkesbury, which was ranked within the top 20% of local authorities at 62nd.

5. Focus on the 65+ population

In Gloucestershire, the largest age group within those aged 65+ was the 65-74 year olds with 72,118 people. The 65-74 age group was age group over 65 that experienced the smallest increase between mid-2023 and mid-2024, with an increase of 0.69% compared to 2023. The South West saw a smaller increase of

0.39%, while England and Wales saw a greater increase of 0.78%. The age group with the largest percentage increase in Gloucestershire was 85+ year olds (3.39%), at a regional and national level the greatest increase was seen amongst those aged 75-84. Overall, the 65+ age group is increasing in Gloucestershire, a trend being experienced all over the UK, this will pose resource challenges as an ageing population will have a greater reliance on services for example, healthcare.

Table 5: Age breakdown of the population aged 65+ between mid 2023-24, Gloucestershire, its districts, the South West and England and Wales,

| | 65-74 | | | 75-84 | | | 85+ | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| | 2023 | 2024 | % change | 2023 | 2024 | % change | 2023 | 2024 | % change |
| Gloucestershire | 72,118 | 72,615 | 0.69% | 53,276 | 54,898 | 3.04% | 19,850 | 20,523 | 3.39% |
| Cheltenham | 11,137 | 11,176 | 0.35% | 8,707 | 8,964 | 2.95% | 3,770 | 3,984 | 5.68% |
| Cotswold | 11,992 | 12,001 | 0.08% | 9,273 | 9,566 | 3.16% | 3,385 | 3,607 | 6.56% |
| Forest of Dean | 11,533 | 11,554 | 0.18% | 8,323 | 8,633 | 3.72% | 2,725 | 2,782 | 2.09% |
| Gloucester | 11,734 | 11,927 | 1.64% | 8,156 | 8,304 | 1.81% | 3,111 | 3,160 | 1.58% |
| Stroud | 14,896 | 15,032 | 0.91% | 10,576 | 10,954 | 3.57% | 3,915 | 4,010 | 2.43% |
| Tewkesbury | 10,826 | 10,925 | 0.91% | 8,241 | 8,477 | 2.86% | 2,944 | 2,980 | 1.22% |
| South West | 649,636 | 652,158 | 0.39% | 486,303 | 502,112 | 3.25% | 183,180 | 187,087 | 2.13% |
| England | 5,475,635 | 5,519,950 | 0.81% | 3,864,914 | 3,977,130 | 2.90% | 1,446,930 | 1,484,012 | 2.56% |
| England and Wales | 5,826,983 | 5,872,489 | 0.78% | 4,109,817 | 4,229,502 | 2.91% | 1,533,028 | 1,571,605 | 2.52% |

All districts saw an increase in all of the age groups over 65. Cheltenham (5.68%) and Cotswold (6.56%) reflected the trend seen at a county level, with the greatest increase being seen amongst those aged 85+, with the increase in these areas far exceeding the growth seen in other districts. Gloucester (1.8%) and Tewkesbury (1.22%) saw the lowest growth in those aged 85+.

Forest of Dean, Gloucester, Stroud and Tewkesbury saw a greater increase in those aged 75-84, than those aged 85+. The Forest of Dean (3.72%) saw the greatest increase in those aged 75-84, followed by Stroud (3.57%), while the smallest increase was seen in Gloucester (1.81%) and Tewkesbury (2.86%).

All districts saw the lowest growth in the 65-74 age group. Growth in this age group was highest in Gloucester (1.64%) and lowest in Cotswold (0.08%).

6. The 90+ age group

Looking at the oldest old age group in Table 6, Gloucestershire had 7,415 people aged 90+ in 2024, accounting for 1.11% of its population. Between mid-2023 and mid-2024 the 90+ age group increased by 1.87%. In comparison, the 90+ age group made up 1.17% of the population in the South West and increased by 1.00%. England and Wales had a lower proportion of its population accounted for by 90+

year olds (0.91%), it saw a noticeable rise in the number of 90+ year olds between 2023 and 2024 with an increase of 2.13%.

Table 6: Population change in the 90+ age group, Gloucestershire, its districts, the South West and England and Wales, mid 2023-24

| Area | All 90+ | 90+ as a Percentage of the Population | % Change in Population Size Between 2023-2024 |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Gloucestershire | 7,415 | 1.11% | 1.87% |
| Cheltenham | 1,490 | 1.22% | 1.57% |
| Cotswold | 1,351 | 1.47% | 6.38% |
| Forest of Dean | 978 | 1.09% | 1.35% |
| Gloucester | 1,125 | 0.81% | 0.72% |
| Stroud | 1,434 | 1.14% | 2.50% |
| Tewkesbury | 1,037 | 1.02% | -2.26% |
| South West | 68,853 | 1.17% | 1.00% |
| England | 532,643 | 0.91% | 2.17% |
| England and Wales | 563,609 | 0.91% | 2.13% |

Out of the districts, Cotswold had the largest proportion of its population accounted for by 90+ year olds with 1.47% and Gloucester had the smallest proportion with a 0.81% share. Tewkesbury saw a 2.26% decrease in its 90+ population size between mid-2023 and mid-2024. In contrast, Cotswold had the largest increase in the 90+ population with 6.38% more people in mid-2024 than mid 2023.

7. Median age

The average median age in Gloucestershire increased year-on-year between mid-2011 and mid-2019, from 42.6 years to 44.1 years, an increase of 1.5 years.

Between mid 2019 and mid 2022 the average median age plateaued, since 2022 it has declined, falling from 44.2 years to 43.8 years in 2024, a fall of 0.4 years. In comparison, the average age of a person living in the South West in mid-2024 was 43.7 years and 40.3 years in England and Wales, both lower than Gloucestershire. Furthermore, the South West and England and Wales has followed a similar trend as Gloucestershire with a drop in median age in the most recent years.

Out of 175 county and unitary authorities in England and Wales, the mid-2024 median age in Gloucestershire was ranked in the top 40% highest authorities at 43rd. Furthermore, Gloucestershire is placed in the middle of its geographical neighbours, furthermore, compared to its 15 statistical neighbours it has the 10th highest median age.

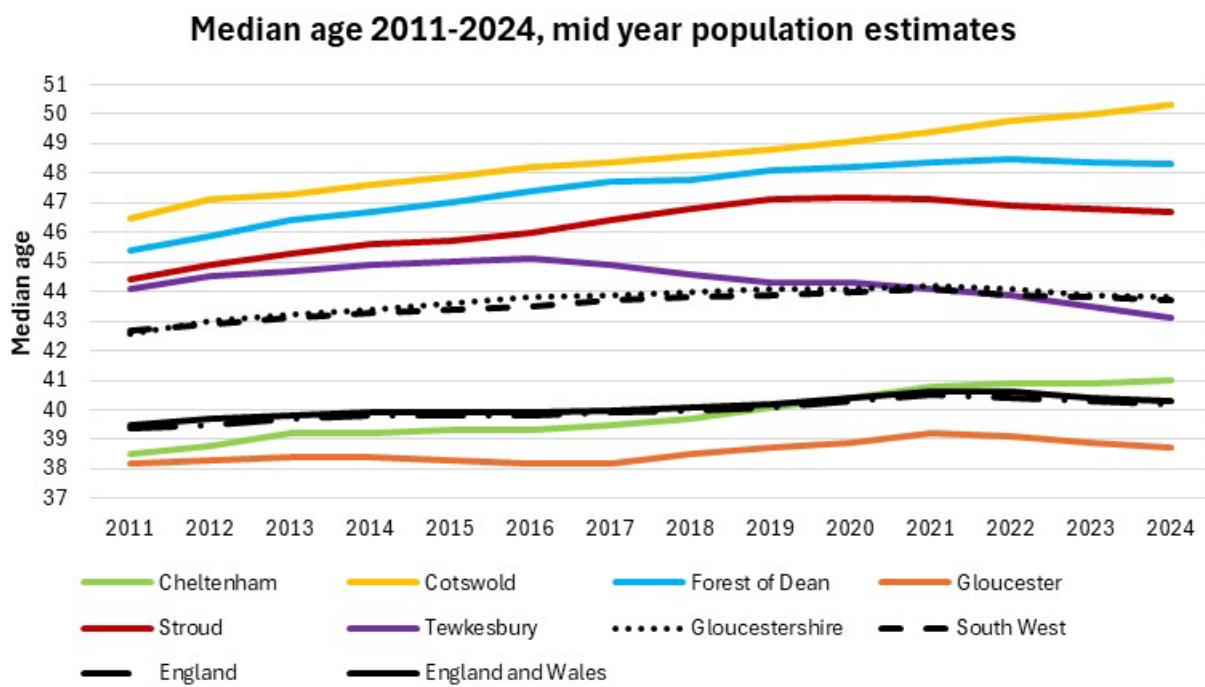


Figure 5: Median age, Gloucestershire, its districts, the South West and England and Wales, mid-2011-24.

In mid-2024 Cotswold had the highest median age at 50.3 years followed by Forest of Dean at 48.3 years. In contrast, Gloucester and Cheltenham had the lowest median ages with 38.7 years and 41.0 years respectively, this is a difference of around 10 years when compared to Cotswold. The median age for Cotswold saw it placed in the top 10% highest out of 318 district and unitary authorities at 19th whilst Forest of Dean and Stroud were placed in the top 20% at 40th 63rd respectively. Cheltenham and Gloucester were placed at 194th and 242nd, putting them within the 40% lowest district and unitary authorities in England and Wales.

Figure 5 demonstrates that most of the districts have had an increasing trend in the median age overall since 2011. However, the picture in more recent years is mixed. Cheltenham and Cotswold saw an increase in median age between mid-2022 and mid-2024 of 0.1 years and 0.5 years, respectively. Stroud and the Forest of Dean saw a moderate decline of 0.2 years in the median age between mid 2022 and mid 2024, while Gloucester and Tewkesbury saw a greater decline of 0.4 years and 0.8 years respectively during the period.

8. Population density

The number of people living in a square kilometer in Gloucestershire has risen. In mid-2024 there was 252 people per km², an increase of 3 people between mid-2023 and mid-2024 (+1.20%), Gloucestershire has a higher population density than the

South West by 5 people but a lower population density than England and Wales by 157 people.

Gloucestershire is ranked in the 20% least densely populated county and unitary authorities in England and Wales at 145th highest out of 175. It is also placed within the bottom half of its geographical (9th out of 12) and statistical neighbours (11th out of 16).

Table 7: Population density, Gloucestershire, its districts, the South West and England and Wales, mid 2023-24

| | Land Area (sq./km) | Population density 2023 | Population density 2024 | % Increase 2023-2024 |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Gloucestershire | 2,652 | 249 | 252 | 1.20% |
| Cheltenham | 47 | 2,594 | 2,613 | 0.73% |
| Cotswold | 1,164 | 79 | 79 | 0.00% |
| Forest of Dean | 526 | 169 | 171 | 1.18% |
| Gloucester | 41 | 3,361 | 3,418 | 1.70% |
| Stroud | 461 | 270 | 273 | 1.11% |
| Tewkesbury | 414 | 240 | 246 | 2.50% |
| South West | 23,836 | 245 | 247 | 0.82% |
| England | 130,310 | 445 | 450 | 1.12% |
| England and Wales | 151,047 | 405 | 409 | 0.99% |

Cheltenham and Gloucester have a much higher population density than the rural districts with 2,613 and 3,418 people per square kilometre respectively. The population density of all the districts increased between mid-2023 and mid-2024. Tewkesbury saw the biggest increase with an increase of 2.50%.

Gloucester is the only district to be ranked within the top 20% most densely populated district and unitary authorities across England and Wales, at 57th. In contrast, Forest of Dean and Cotswold are placed within the 20% least densely populated authorities across the country at 268th and 309th respectively.