

Inform Gloucestershire

Current population of Gloucestershire (Mid-2025 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 the other 174 county and unitary authorities (175 in total) in England and Wales as well as between Gloucestershire's districts and all the other 312 district and unitary authorities (318 in total) 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 2026 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.

Executive Summary

Gloucestershire's population continues to grow and age, with the mid-2025 estimate reaching 671,908, a 0.6% increase since mid-2024. Growth was slightly above the South West and England and Wales averages, but varied significantly by district, with Tewkesbury seeing the strongest increase and Cotswold recording a small decline.

The county has a comparatively older age profile, a higher old-age dependency ratio, and lower population density than England and Wales.

Internal migration was the main driver of growth at a county level while natural change was negative.

These trends have strategic implications for service planning, housing, workforce capacity and future demand.

About the data

Mid-year population estimates are produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). They provide an estimate of the resident population of an area including all people who usually live there, whatever their nationality. They are widely used for planning and monitoring service delivery, resource allocation, and managing the economy. They are also used as denominators for rates or ratios.

They are produced using the cohort component method. This is a standard demographic method that estimates the size of the population using the components of population change² to update a population base (in this case, using census estimates).

A major strength of this method is that it is consistent over time and across geographical areas, and the components of population change are consistent with the estimates.

However, a limitation is that they are subject to statistical uncertainty related to:

- the measurement of the census base they are rolled forward from
- the measurement of each component of population change

Statistical uncertainty is lowest immediately following a census, and greatest immediately before the next census. This is because errors accumulate over time as estimates are rolled forward onto the following year. Further information around uncertainty can be found in the [uncertainty section](#) of this report and the [Quality and Methodology Guide](#) produced by the ONS.

Population overview

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates that at mid-year 2025 the population of Gloucestershire was 671,908, as shown in Table 1. This is an increase of 0.6% between mid-2024 and mid-2025, which is higher than the South West and England and Wales population growth, which both saw an increase of 0.4%.

Compared to the 174 other county and unitary authorities in England and Wales, Gloucestershire had the 60th highest population growth between mid-2024 and mid-2025, placing it within the top 40% of authorities across the country. Compared to its geographical and statistical neighbours, Gloucestershire was placed broadly in the middle of both cohorts

² This includes births and deaths (commonly referred to as natural change) and net migration. Migration includes movements of people between England and Wales and the various countries of the world (international migration), and between local authority areas within the UK (internal migration).

Table 1: Mid-population estimates in Gloucestershire, its districts, the South West and national, mid 2024- mid 2025.

Area	Population Mid-2024	Population Mid-2025	Net change 2024-25	% change 2024-25
Gloucestershire	668,109	671,908	3,799	0.6%
Cheltenham	121,461	121,452	-9	0.0%
Cotswold	91,728	91,563	-165	-0.2%
Forest of Dean	89,848	90,157	309	0.3%
Gloucester	137,857	138,565	708	0.5%
Stroud	125,507	126,418	911	0.7%
Tewkesbury	101,708	103,753	2,045	2.0%
South West	5,884,551	5,906,997	22,446	0.4%
England	58,607,170	58,834,812	227,642	0.4%
England and Wales	61,785,119	62,009,993	224,874	0.4%
Great Britain	67,328,419	67,555,493	227,074	0.3%

Gloucester continues to have the largest population with 138,565 people and Forest of Dean the smallest with 90,157. Between mid-2024 and mid-2025, Tewkesbury had the highest population growth at 2.0% followed by Stroud with an increase of 0.7%. Cotswold saw a 0.2% decline in its population while Cheltenham saw almost no change in its population.

Of 318 district and unitary authorities in England and Wales, Tewkesbury, had the third highest population growth in the country between mid-2024 and mid- 2025. In contrast, Cotswold was the only district to be placed in the 20% lowest authorities for population growth during this period.

Figure 1 shows that when compared to the other districts in the county, Gloucester's population growth has fallen the most noticeably in the rankings going from 100th mid-2023-24, which put it in the top 40% of authorities, to 159th mid-2024-25, putting it in the middle 20% of authorities. Forest of Dean and Cheltenham also had lower rankings in mid-2024-25 than mid 2023-2024. Stroud saw the greatest growth in the rankings rising from 177th in mid-2023-24, which put it in the middle 20% of authorities, to 115th mid 2024-25, putting it in the top 40% of authorities. Tewkesbury and Cotswold also had a higher ranking for population growth in mid-2024-25 compared to mid-2023-24.

Rank of district and unitary authority population growth in England and Wales (1= highest, 318=lowest), 2023-2024 and 2024-2025

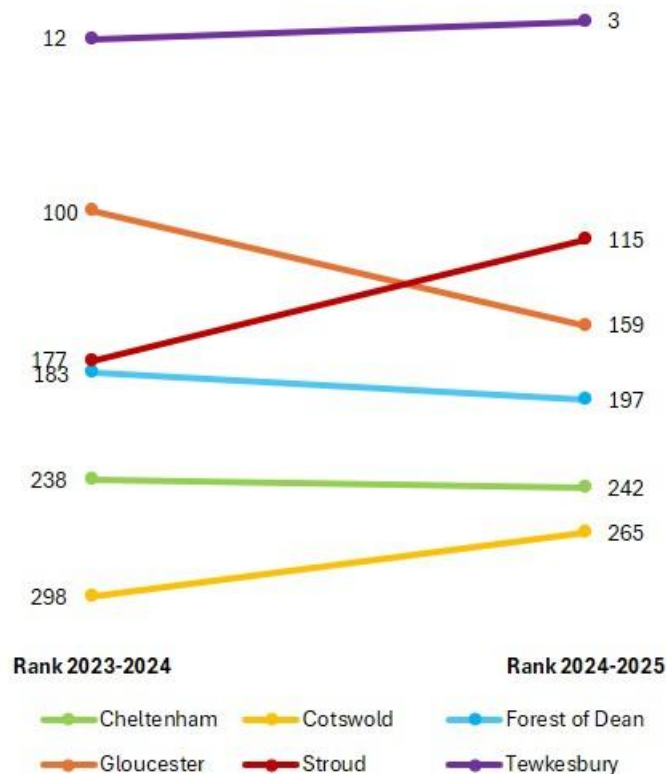


Figure 1: Rank of district and unitary authority population growth in England and Wales, mid 2023-24 and mid 2024-25.

Population composition

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

The sex profile of Gloucestershire is broadly similar to that of the South West and England and Wales. In mid-2025, males accounted for 48.8% of Gloucestershire's population and females 51.2%, compared with a male share of 48.9% in the South West and 49.0% in England and Wales, indicating only minimal differences in the sex composition of these areas.

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. Generally 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.

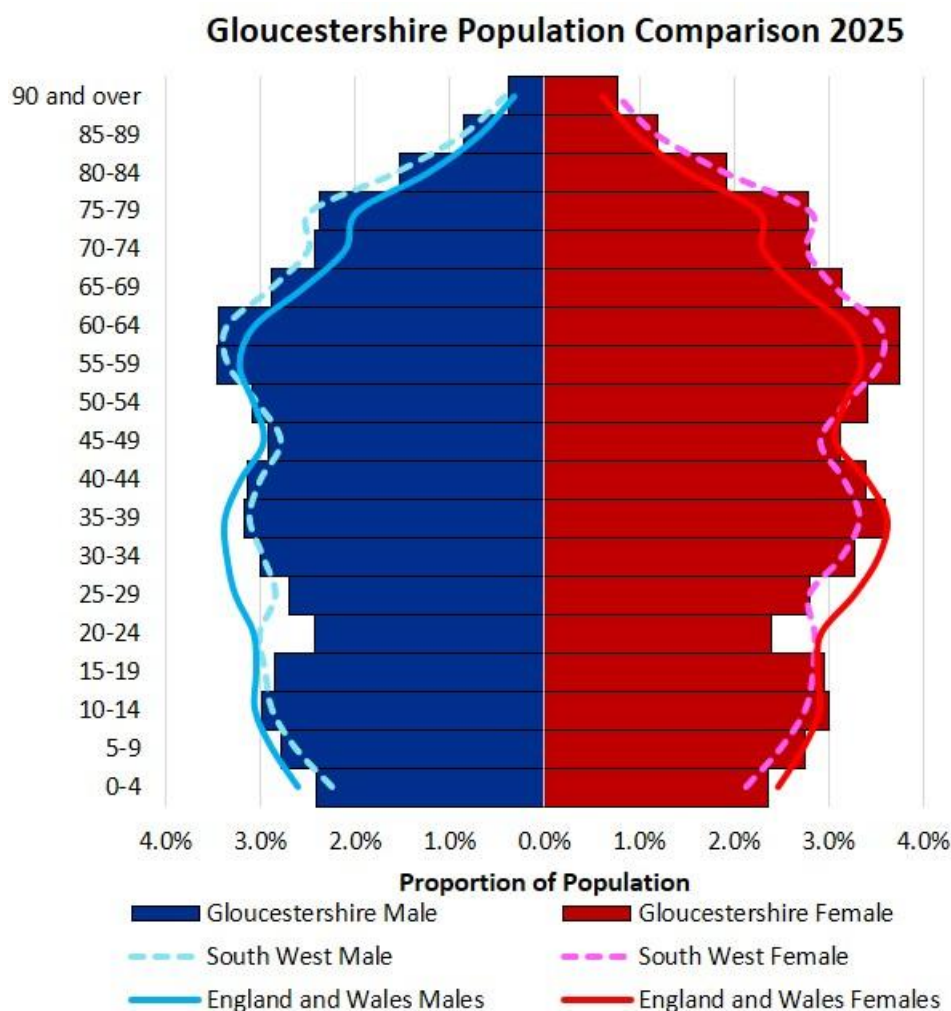


Figure 2: Population pyramid, Gloucestershire, the South West and England and Wales, mid-2025

Population pyramids for each of Gloucestershire's districts are shown 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.

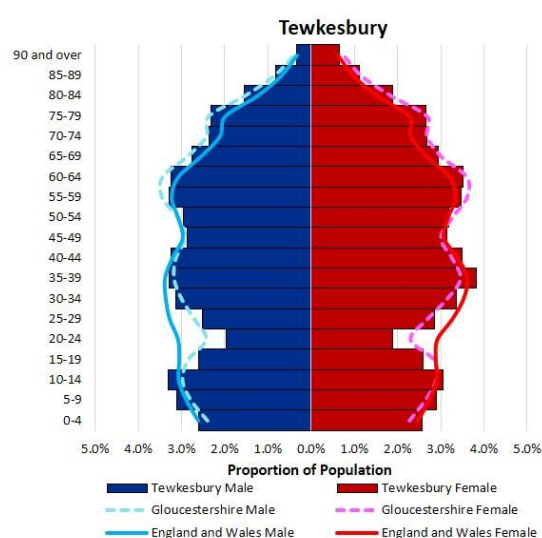
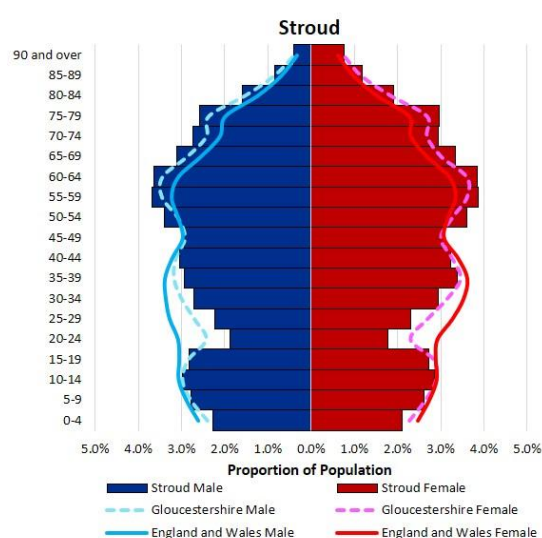
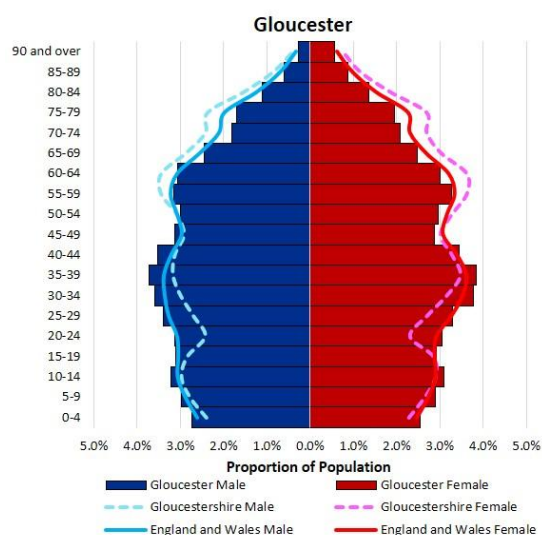
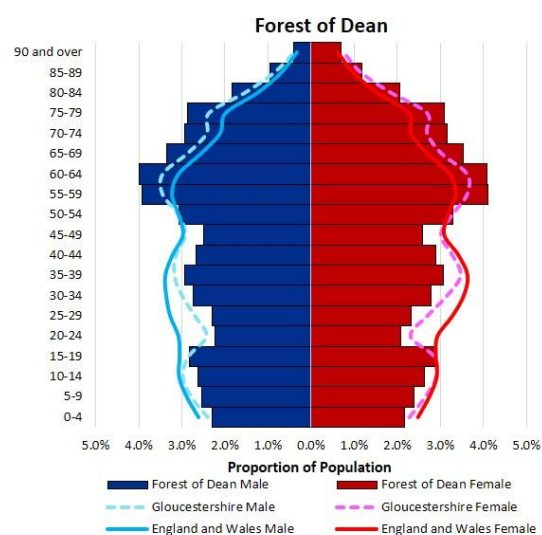
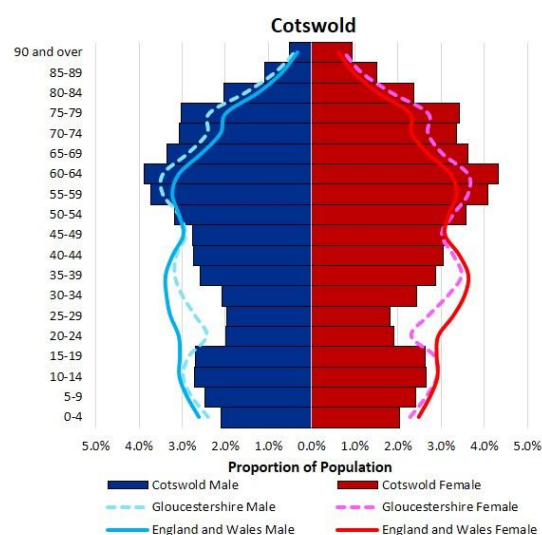
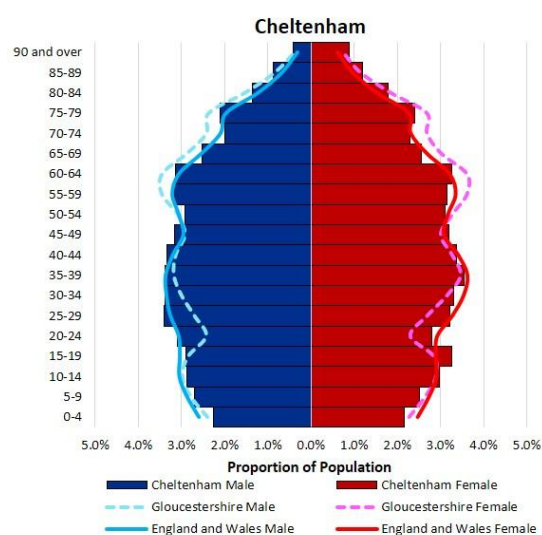


Figure 3: District population pyramids compared to Gloucestershire and England and Wales, mid-2025.

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, 17.2% vs. 17.9%. However, the proportion of 0–15-year-olds in Gloucestershire is higher than the South West (16.3%). 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 109th. However, it was placed in the middle of its geographical and statistical neighbours.

Table 2 also shows 60.2% of Gloucestershire's population is aged 16-64. This is lower than the working-age proportion in England and Wales (62.9%) and marginally lower than the South West (60.5%). 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 135th. However, it was placed broadly in the middle of its statistical and geographical neighbours.

The proportion of the population aged 65+ is higher in Gloucestershire (22.6%) than in England and Wales (19.3%) but lower than the South West region (23.2%). 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 top 40% of authorities for its 65+ population. 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, with many of our statistical neighbours having a larger proportion of residents aged 65+.

Table 2: Broad age group proportions, Gloucestershire, its districts, the South West and national, mid-2025

	0-15	16-64	65+
Gloucestershire	17.2%	60.2%	22.6%
Cheltenham	16.8%	62.8%	20.4%
Cotswold	15.4%	56.3%	28.3%
Forest of Dean	15.7%	58.2%	26.0%
Gloucester	18.7%	64.0%	17.3%
Stroud	16.8%	58.8%	24.3%
Tewkesbury	18.7%	59.2%	22.1%
South West	16.3%	60.5%	23.2%
England	17.9%	63.0%	19.1%
England and Wales	17.9%	62.9%	19.3%
Great Britain	17.7%	62.9%	19.4%

Out of Gloucestershire's districts, Gloucester and Tewkesbury had the highest proportion of 0-15 year olds, with this group accounting for 18.7% of the population in both areas. In contrast, Cotswold had the lowest proportion with 15.4% of the population falling into this age group. Compared to all district and unitary authorities, Tewkesbury and Gloucester are placed in the top 40% with the 98th and 99th largest 0-15 population proportions respectively. Cotswold and the Forest of Dean are placed in the bottom 20% at 272nd and 265th respectively.

Gloucester had the highest proportion of people aged 16-64, with the group accounting for 64.0% of its population, while Cotswold had the lowest proportion at 56.3%. In comparison to the 318 district and unitary authorities in England and Wales, Gloucester and Cheltenham are ranked in the top 40% at 70th and 94th respectively for their 16-64 population proportion size. Cotswold and the Forest of Dean are in the bottom quintile at 298th and 257th respectively.

Cotswold had the highest proportion of the population aged 65+, with this group accounting for 28.3% of the total population. Gloucester had the smallest proportion of 65+ year olds, with the age group accounting for 17.3% of the population. Compared to all authorities in England and Wales, Cotswold and the Forest of Dean sit within the top 20% for the largest proportion of people aged 65+ at 20th and 50th respectively. At the other end of the scale Gloucester is placed at 239th putting it in the bottom 40% of authorities nationally.

Broad age group change between mid-2024 and mid-2025

Between mid-2024 and mid-2025, Gloucestershire, the South West and England and Wales all saw increases in the number of people aged 16–64 and 65+, while the number aged 0–15 declined, as shown in Figure 4. This contrasts with the change between mid-2023 and mid-2024, when all age groups increased. The last time Gloucestershire saw a decline it is 0–15 population was between mid-2019 and mid-2020. In mid-2024 to mid-2025, Gloucestershire's 0–15 population fell by 0.5%, a smaller decrease than in the South West (1.1%) and England and Wales (0.9%).

Between mid-2024 and mid-2025, Gloucestershire's 65+ population increased by 2.1%, outpacing growth in the working-age population (0.3%). A similar pattern was seen regionally and nationally: the number of people aged 65+ rose by 1.9% in both the South West and England and Wales, while the 16–64 population increased by 0.2% in the South West and 0.3% in England and Wales.

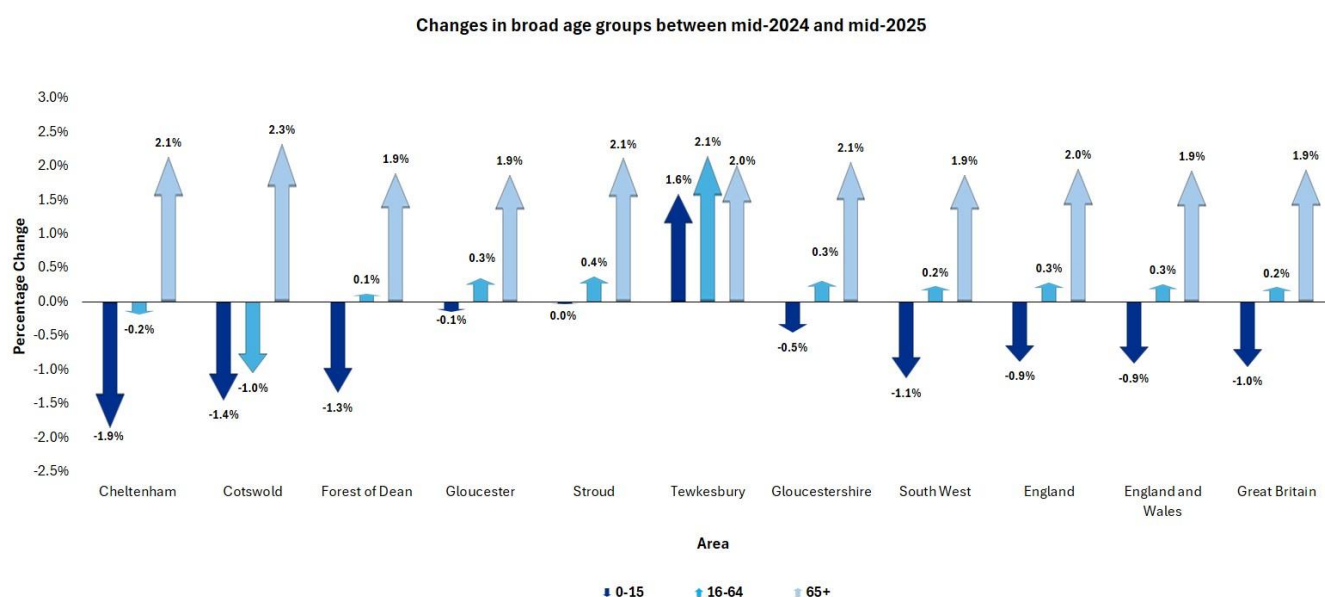


Figure 4: Changes in broad age group between mid 2024- mid 2025, Gloucestershire, its districts, the South West and national

At district level, the pattern was mixed. Tewkesbury recorded growth across all age groups, with the largest increase among people aged 16–64. Cheltenham and Cotswold saw declines in the 0–15 and 16–64 age groups, but growth among those aged 65+. Forest of Dean, Gloucester and Stroud all saw falls in the 0–15 population, although these were minimal in Gloucester and Stroud. In these three districts, the 16–64 and 65+ populations increased, with growth among those aged 65+ outpacing growth in the working-age population.

Focus on 65 + population

As the 65+ population has seen the greatest growth, this section will examine this age group in more detail.

In Gloucestershire, the largest group within the 65+ population was those aged 65–74, accounting for 73,978 people in mid-2025. However, this group saw the smallest increase among older age groups between mid-2024 and mid-2025, rising by 1.3%. This was slightly higher than the South West increase of 1.1%, but lower than the England and Wales increase of 1.5%. The fastest-growing older age group in Gloucestershire was those aged 75–84, which increased by 3.0%, reflecting the regional and national pattern. Overall, the 65+ population is increasing in Gloucestershire, in line with the wider UK trend, which is likely to place additional pressure on services such as healthcare.

Table 3: Age breakdown of the population aged 65+ Gloucestershire, its districts, the South West and national, mid 2024-mid 2025

	65-74			75-84			85+		
	2024	2025	% change	2024	2025	% change	2024	2025	% change
Gloucestershire	73,043	73,978	1.3%	55,065	56,731	3.0%	20,561	21,030	2.3%
Cheltenham	11,259	11,363	0.9%	8,999	9,302	3.4%	4,000	4,112	2.8%
Cotswold	12,096	12,254	1.3%	9,611	9,935	3.4%	3,613	3,720	3.0%
Forest of Dean	11,614	11,685	0.6%	8,648	8,881	2.7%	2,787	2,919	4.7%
Gloucester	11,981	12,218	2.0%	8,328	8,496	2.0%	3,163	3,196	1.0%
Stroud	15,121	15,322	1.3%	10,991	11,409	3.8%	4,018	4,037	0.5%
Tewkesbury	10,972	11,136	1.5%	8,488	8,708	2.6%	2,980	3,046	2.2%
South West	655,561	662,714	1.1%	503,645	517,811	2.8%	187,325	191,170	2.1%
England	5,544,855	5,628,630	1.5%	3,986,902	4,086,518	2.5%	1,486,417	1,519,243	2.2%
England and Wales	5,898,611	5,985,421	1.5%	4,239,721	4,345,556	2.5%	1,574,148	1,608,479	2.2%
Great Britain	6,511,746	6,609,595	1.5%	4,632,151	4,747,595	2.5%	1,709,809	1,747,029	2.2%

All districts recorded growth across each of the 65+ age groups. In Cheltenham (3.4%), Cotswold (3.4%), Stroud (3.8%) and Tewkesbury (2.6%), the largest increases were among people aged 75–84, reflecting the county, regional and national pattern. Stroud had the highest growth in this age group, while Gloucester had the lowest at 2.0%.

In the Forest of Dean, the largest increase was among people aged 85+, rising by 4.7%. This was the highest 85+ growth of any district, while Stroud recorded the lowest increase in this age group at 0.5%.

Gloucester recorded similar growth in the 65–74 and 75–84 age groups, both increasing by 2.0%. It had the highest growth of any district among people aged 65–74, while the Forest of Dean had the lowest at 0.6%.

The 90+ population

Table 4 shows that Gloucestershire had 7,612 people aged 90+ in 2025, representing 1.1% of the county's population. This age group increased by 2.4% between mid-2024 and mid-2025. The pattern was broadly similar in the South West, where people aged 90+ accounted for 1.2% of the population and increased by 2.3%. In England and Wales, the 90+ population made up a slightly smaller share of the population at 0.9%, but grew more rapidly, increasing by 3.0% over the same period.

Table 4: Population change in the 90+ age group, Gloucestershire, its districts, the South West and national, mid 2024-25

Area	All 90+	90+ as a Percentage of the Population	% Change in Population Size Between 2024-2025
Gloucestershire	7,612	1.1%	2.4%
Cheltenham	1,595	1.3%	6.7%
Cotswold	1,335	1.5%	-1.2%
Forest of Dean	999	1.1%	1.7%
Gloucester	1,160	0.8%	2.9%
Stroud	1,488	1.2%	3.5%
Tewkesbury	1,035	1.0%	-0.2%
South West	70,495	1.2%	2.3%
England	549,750	0.9%	3.1%
England and Wales	581,414	0.9%	3.0%
Great Britain	630,031	0.9%	3.1%

At district level, Cotswold had the highest share of residents aged 90+ at 1.5%, while Gloucester had the lowest at 0.8%. The 90+ population fell in Cotswold (-1.2%) and Tewkesbury (-0.2%) between mid-2024 and mid-2025. In contrast, Cheltenham recorded the largest increase, with 6.7% more residents aged 90+ in mid-2025 than in mid-2024.

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-2025, Gloucestershire had an estimated dependency ratio of 0.66, shown in Table 5, this means that for every 100 people who are of working age (16-64) there are 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.

The overall dependency ratio can be split into youth and old-age dependency ratios. The youth dependency ratio compares the number of people aged 0–15 with the working-age population aged 16–64, while the old-age dependency ratio compares the number of people aged 65+ with the working-age population. In Gloucestershire, there are 29 people aged 0–15 for every 100 people aged 16–64, giving a youth dependency ratio of 0.29. There are 37 people aged 65+ for every 100 people aged 16–64, giving an old-age dependency ratio of 0.37. Gloucestershire's youth dependency ratio is similar to the South West and England and Wales. However, its old-age dependency ratio is notably higher than

England and Wales overall, where the ratio is 0.30, reflecting the comparatively younger age structure nationally.

Looking at all 175 county and unitary authorities in England and Wales, in mid-2025 Gloucestershire's dependency ratio was within the 40% highest authorities at 41st, its youth dependency ratio was in the middle 20% of authorities at 90th and its old-age dependency ratio was ranked in the 40% highest authorities at 42nd.

Table 5: Dependency ratios, Gloucestershire, its districts, the South West and national, mid- 2025

	Dependency Ratio	Youth Dependency Ratio	Old-age Dependency Ratio
Gloucestershire	0.66	0.29	0.37
Cheltenham	0.59	0.27	0.32
Cotswold	0.78	0.27	0.50
Forest of Dean	0.72	0.27	0.45
Gloucester	0.56	0.29	0.27
Stroud	0.70	0.29	0.41
Tewkesbury	0.69	0.32	0.37
South West	0.65	0.27	0.38
England	0.59	0.28	0.30
England and Wales	0.59	0.28	0.31
Great Britain	0.59	0.28	0.31

Comparing Gloucestershire's districts, Cotswold had the highest dependency ratio in mid-2025, with 78 dependents for every 100 people of working age. This is followed by Forest of Dean which had 72 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 27 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 27 people aged 65+ for every 100 people aged 16-64 and Cotswold had the highest old-age dependency ratio with 50 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 ranked within the highest 20% of the 318 district and unitary authorities for both overall and old-age dependency ratios. Tewkesbury ranked in the highest 20% for its youth dependency ratio, placing 46th out of 318 authorities.

Median age

Median age gives an indication of the average age of a population, it is the exact middle age that divides a population into two equally sized groups: exactly half the people are younger than this age, and the other half are older.

In mid-2025, Gloucestershire's median age was 44.2 years, broadly in line with the South West average of 44.1 years but higher than the England and Wales average of 40.7 years. Between mid-2024 and mid-2025, the county's median age increased by 0.1 years, marginally below the regional and national increases of 0.2 years.

Compared with other county and unitary authorities in England and Wales, Gloucestershire had the 42nd highest median age, placing it in the top 40% of authorities. It also sat around the middle of both its geographical and statistical neighbour groups.

Table 6: Median age, Gloucestershire, its districts, the South West and national, mid-2024-25.

Area	2024	2025	Change in Median Age Between 2024-2025
Gloucestershire	44.1	44.2	0.1
Cheltenham	41.3	41.7	0.4
Cotswold	50.5	50.9	0.4
Forest of Dean	48.4	48.5	0.1
Gloucester	39.0	39.1	0.1
Stroud	46.9	46.9	0.0
Tewkesbury	43.3	43.2	-0.1
South West	43.9	44.1	0.2
England	40.4	40.6	0.2
England and Wales	40.5	40.7	0.2
Great Britain	N/A	N/A	N/A

In mid-2025, Cotswold had the highest median age in the county at 50.9 years, followed by Forest of Dean at 48.5 years. By contrast, the urban districts of Gloucester and Cheltenham had the lowest median ages, at 39.1 and 41.7 years respectively, around 10 years lower than Cotswold. Compared with other district and unitary authorities in England and Wales, Cotswold had the 18th highest median age, placing it in the top 10%, while Forest of Dean ranked 40th, placing it in the top 20%. Gloucester ranked 239th, placing it within the bottom 40% of authorities nationally.

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 0.6% between mid-2024-25, this figure was calculated from component percentage changes as shown in Table 7 .

Gloucestershire had more deaths than births, leading to a -0.1% reduction in natural population change. The main driver of population growth in the county was internal migration, people moving to Gloucestershire from other parts of the UK increased the county's population by 0.5%. International migration increased the county's population by 0.2% 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. Special adjustments had a negligible impact on the population.

When compared to the South West there were some minor differences, the South West experienced a slightly bigger decrease as a result of natural change (-0.2%), a slightly smaller increase as a result of internal migration (0.4%) and a similar increase as a result of international migration (0.2%). In contrast, England and Wales saw a similar number of births and deaths, meaning natural change had a negligible impact on the population. England and Wales's population growth is largely attributed to international migration which saw the population grow by 0.3%. In contrast, there was minimal population change attributed by internal migration from England and Wales to the other parts of the UK.

Table 7: Components of population change between mid 2024-25, Gloucestershire, its districts, the South West and national

Components of Population Change 2024-2025					
Area	% Population Change	% Natural Change (Births minus Deaths)	% Internal Migration	% International Migration	% Special and Other Adjustments
Gloucestershire	0.6%	-0.1%	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%
Cheltenham	0.0%	-0.1%	-0.3%	0.4%	0.0%
Cotswold	-0.2%	-0.5%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%
Forest of Dean	0.3%	-0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%
Gloucester	0.5%	0.1%	-0.4%	0.7%	0.0%
Stroud	0.7%	-0.3%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Tewkesbury	2.0%	0.0%	2.1%	0.0%	-0.1%
South West	0.4%	-0.2%	0.4%	0.2%	0.0%
England	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%
England and Wales	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%
Great Britain	0.3%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

In one of Gloucestershire's districts, there was a positive natural change, Gloucester's population naturally increased by 0.1%, in the remaining districts deaths out-numbered births, resulting in negative natural change or no change in the case of Tewkesbury.

In Cheltenham, the Forest of Dean and Gloucester more people immigrated to the county from abroad than emigrated to another country, while in Cotswold, Stroud and Tewkesbury the differences between immigration and emigration were negligible, meaning it had no impact on overall population change. In Cheltenham (0.4%) and Gloucester (0.7%), international migration was the largest contributor to population growth.

The picture when looking at internal migration was mixed. In Cotswold, the Forest of Dean, Stroud and Tewkesbury internal migration was the largest contributor to population growth. Levels of internal migration were highest in Tewkesbury (2.1%) and Stroud 1.0%). However, the two urban districts of Cheltenham (-0.3%) and Gloucester (-0.4%), saw more people leave the district than moving to it, resulting in negative net internal migration figures.

Cotswold saw its population increase marginally as a result of special adjustments, while Tewkesbury lost people classed as a special population or received other adjustments which caused a decrease in the population.

Population density

Population density measures the concentration of people living in a specific area, calculated as the number of usual residents per square kilometre.

In mid-2025, Gloucestershire had a population density of 253 people per km². This was 5 people per km² higher than the South West, but 158 people per km² lower than England and Wales. Gloucestershire's population density increased by 0.4% between mid-2024 and mid-2025 which was in line with the increase seen at a regional and national level.

Gloucestershire ranks among the 20% least densely populated county and unitary authorities in England and Wales, at 145th out of 175. It also falls in the lower half of both its geographical neighbours, ranking 9th out of 12, and its statistical neighbours, ranking 11th out of 16.

Table 8: Population density, Gloucestershire, its districts, the South West and national, mid 2024-25

	Land Area (sq./km)	Population density 2024	Population density 2025	% Increase 2024-2025
Gloucestershire	2,652	252	253	0.4%
Cheltenham	47	2,607	2,607	0.0%
Cotswold	1,164	79	79	0.0%
Forest of Dean	526	171	171	0.0%
Gloucester	41	3,399	3,417	0.5%
Stroud	461	273	274	0.4%
Tewkesbury	414	245	250	2.0%
South West	23,836	247	248	0.4%
England	130,310	450	451	0.2%
England and Wales	151,047	409	411	0.5%
Great Britain	208,936	322	323	0.4%

The urban districts of Cheltenham and Gloucester have much higher population densities than the other districts, at 2,607 and 3,417 people per square kilometre respectively. Density remained unchanged in Cheltenham, Cotswold and the Forest of Dean between mid-2024 and mid-2025. Gloucester, Stroud and Tewkesbury all recorded increases, with Tewkesbury seeing the largest rise at 2.0%.

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.

Uncertainty

Population estimates are not exact counts. They are the best available estimates, but there is always some uncertainty around them. This is especially important for smaller areas or when looking at detailed age and sex groups.

The ONS produces these estimates by starting with the previous year's population and then adding births and people moving into an area, and subtracting deaths and people moving out.

Because the estimates build on the previous year's figures, any small errors can build up over time. Estimates are usually most reliable soon after a census, when the population base has recently been updated. They become less certain as time passes before the next census.

Uncertainty also comes from the different data sources used to produce the estimates, including census information and administrative records. These sources are high quality, but they still involve some assumptions and measurement limitations.

The ONS now publishes information to help users understand how much uncertainty there may be in the estimates. However, these measures are still being developed and are not available for every type of geography. At present, they are only available for district and unitary authorities and for England and Wales.

Uncertainty varies between districts. In Cotswold, Stroud and Tewkesbury, the uncertainty range is equivalent to 2–5% of the mid-year population estimate. In Cheltenham, Forest of Dean and Gloucester, it is higher, at 5–10%. This higher level of uncertainty likely to reflect the greater influence of international migration in these districts, which is one of the harder parts of population change to estimate. These levels of uncertainty are not unusual: across England and Wales, around half of local authorities had population estimates with uncertainty ranges below 5%.

Figure 5 shows the population estimates for Gloucestershire's districts, alongside the level of uncertainty around them. The error bars show the range within which the true population value is likely to fall 95% of the time.

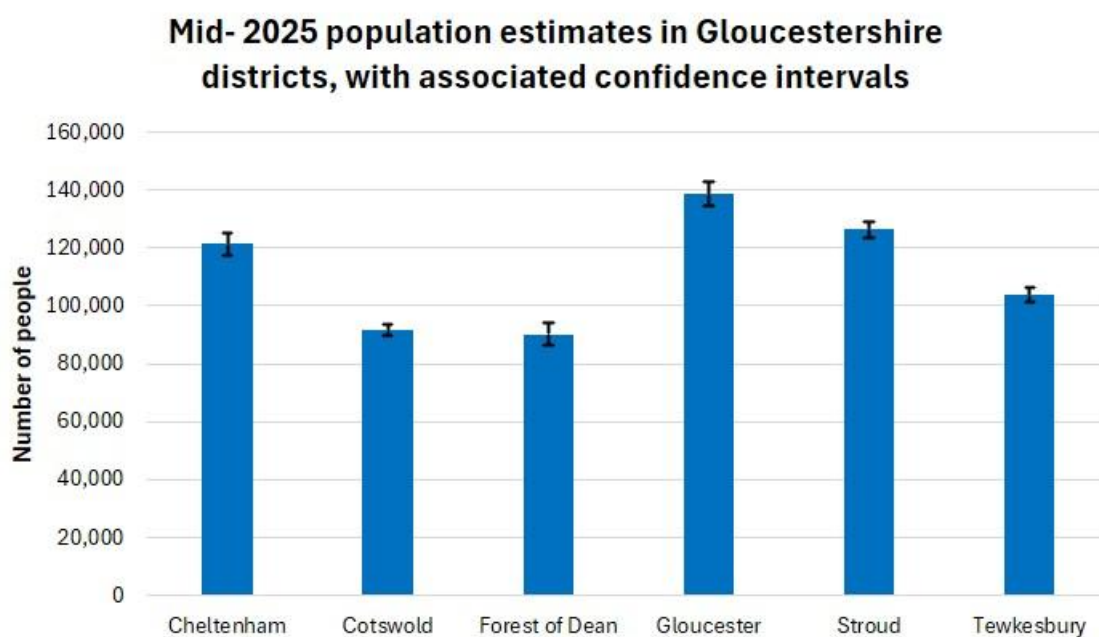


Figure 5: Mid-2025 population estimates in Gloucestershire districts, with associated confidence intervals