



Birth Trends in Gloucestershire

An Overview (2024 Data)

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Inform Gloucestershire

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Number of live births in Gloucestershire in 2024

In 2024 there were 5,826 live births registered in Gloucestershire, representing a 0.2% decrease from the previous year's total of 5,839.¹

Table 1: Live births in Gloucestershire and districts, 2024

	Number of live births
Gloucestershire	5,826
Cheltenham	1,040
Cotswold	637
Forest of Dean	791
Gloucester	1,421
Stroud	939
Tewkesbury	998
South West	47,171
England	567,708
England & Wales	594,540

District focus

- The highest number of live births in Gloucestershire's districts was in Gloucester which registered 1,421 live births in 2024.
- Cotswold district saw the lowest number of live births in 2024, where 637 live births were registered.

Live births from 1993 to 2024

2024 saw one of the lowest levels of live births registered in Gloucestershire since 1993, with the exception of years 2001, 2002, and 2020.

There has been some fluctuation in the number of live births per year in Gloucestershire, although the general trend has been of decreasing numbers since 1993.

¹ Caveat from ONS: Delays in birth registrations because of the coronavirus pandemic affected the cut-off dates for our annual birth registrations datasets for 2020 to 2022. [User guide to birth statistics - Office for National Statistics](#)

More recently, since 2020, live births have remained at a consistently lower level, with the exception of 2021 when there was a small peak of 6,138 live births recorded, one year after the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

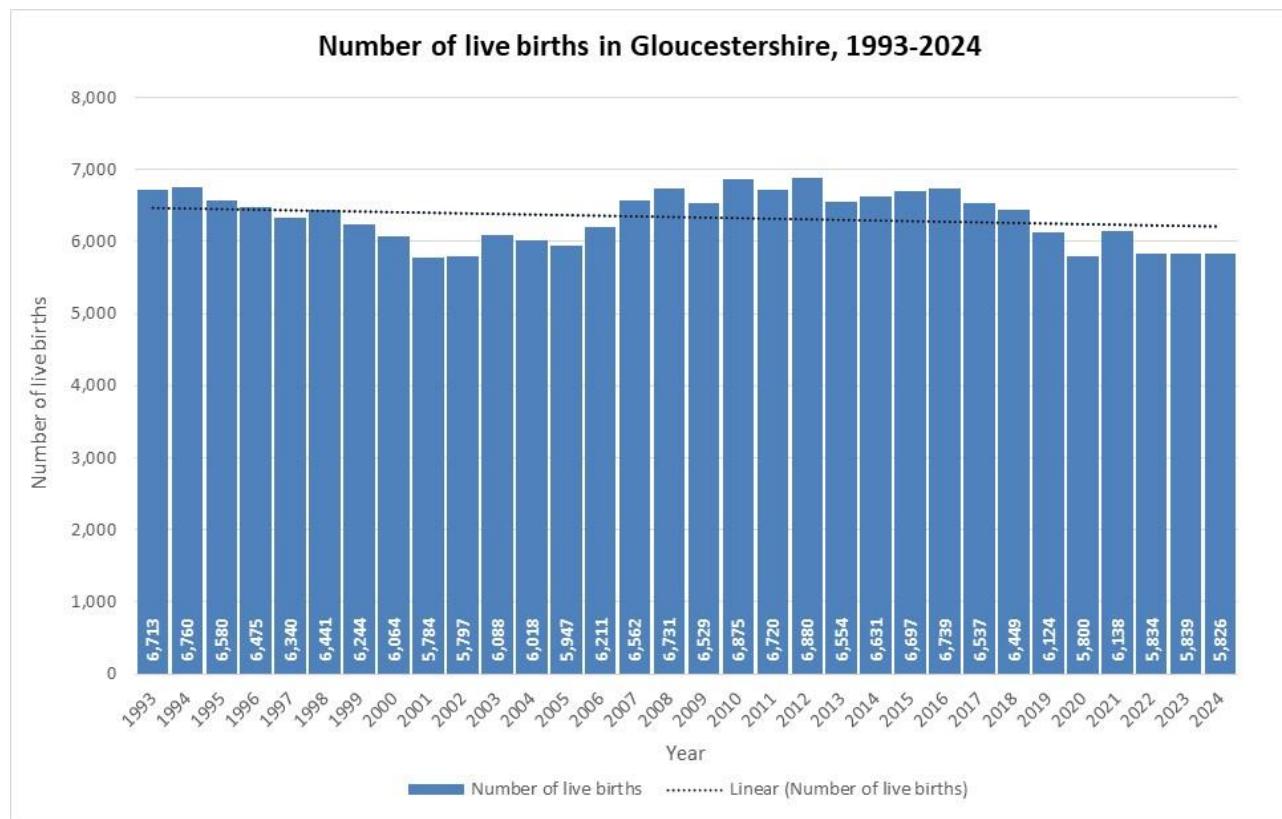


Figure 1: Live birth trends in Gloucestershire, 1993 to 2024

District focus

- Gloucester has registered the largest number of live births every year since 1993.
- Cotswold has registered the lowest number of live births for most years, from 1999 to 2016, in 2018, and from 2020 to 2024.
- During the last year Cheltenham and Forest of Dean have seen an increase in live birth numbers, whilst all other districts have seen a decrease; Forest of Dean saw the largest increase with 82 live births, whilst Stroud saw the largest decrease with 76 fewer live births during the year.

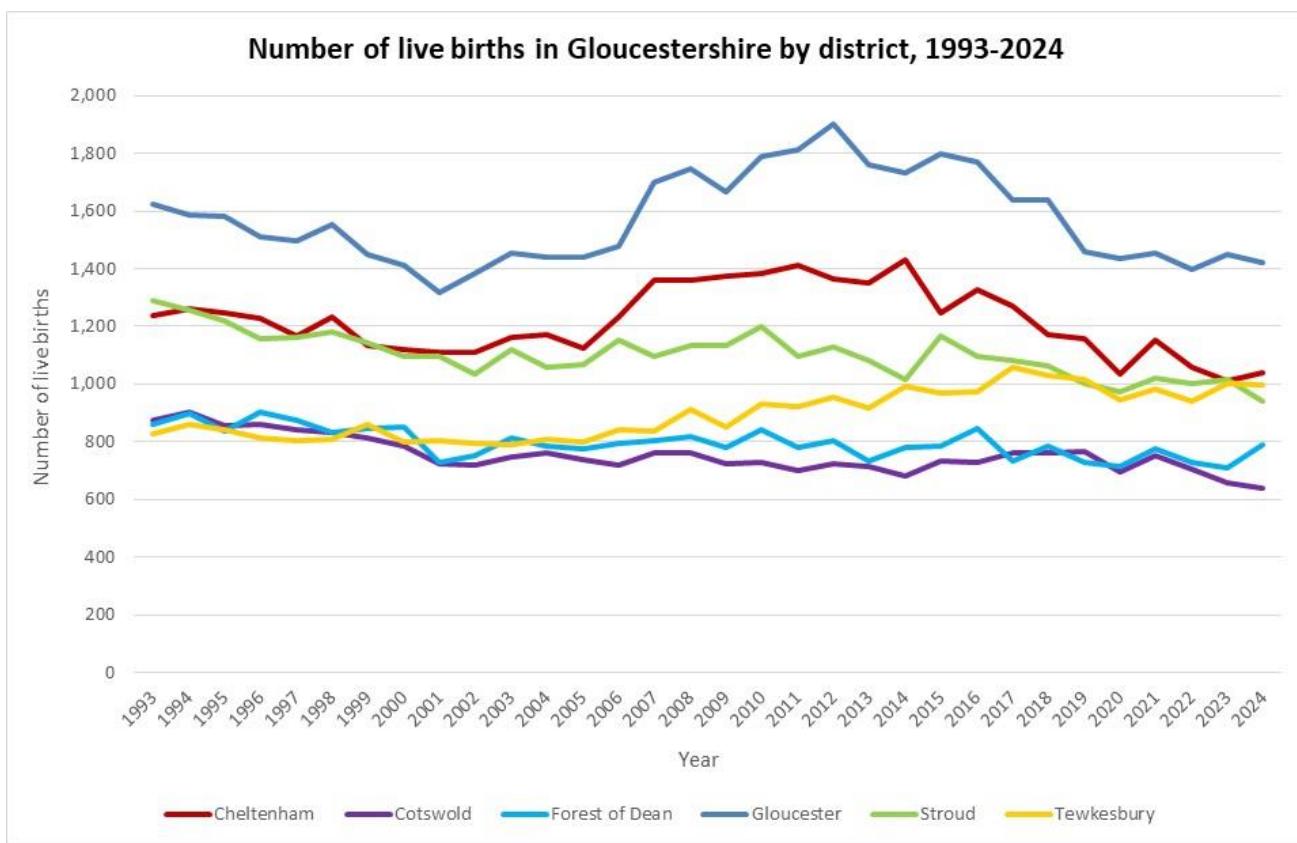


Figure 2: Live births in Gloucestershire by district, 1993 to 2024

General fertility rates

The General Fertility Rate (GFR) is a measure of current fertility levels and relates to the number of live births per 1,000 women aged 15-44.²

In 2024, the GFR in Gloucestershire was 49.0 births per 1,000 women aged 15-44. This was higher than the South West rate of 44.3, and equal to the rate in England of 49.0, but slightly higher than England & Wales which had a rate of 48.9.

The decline in General Fertility Rates in Gloucestershire since 2023 was slightly more pronounced than in England, and in England & Wales; Gloucestershire saw 0.9 fewer births in 2024 per 1,000 women aged 15-44, whilst England, and England & Wales saw 0.4 fewer. The decrease in the South West was greater, with 1.1 fewer births per 1,000 women of child-bearing age in 2024.

² ONS, [User guide to birth statistics - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk)

Table 2: General fertility rates in Gloucestershire and districts, 2024 compared with 2023

	General Fertility Rate 2024	General Fertility Rate 2023	Difference in Rate 2023/2024	Increase/Decrease
Gloucestershire	49.0	49.9	-0.9	
Cheltenham	43.5	42.4	1.1	
Cotswold	46.6	48.1	-1.5	
Forest of Dean	54.9	50.0	4.9	
Gloucester	50.4	52.4	-2.0	
Stroud	46.1	50.8	-4.7	
Tewkesbury	54.4	56.5	-2.1	
South West	44.3	45.4	-1.1	
England	49.0	49.4	-0.4	
England & Wales	48.9	49.3	-0.4	

District focus

- Forest of Dean had the highest GFR of all districts in 2024 with 54.9 births per 1,000 women aged 15-44.
- Cheltenham had the lowest GFR of all districts in 2024 with 43.5 births per 1,000 women aged 15-44.
- All districts experienced a decrease in their GFR between 2023 and 2024, except Cheltenham and Forest of Dean, both of which saw their GFRs increase.

General fertility rate trends

Since 1993, the General Fertility Rate in Gloucestershire has seen some fluctuation, however the overall linear trend has shown a decline. This pattern has broadly mirrored the trend in the number of live births.

The highest GFR seen in Gloucestershire during this period was in 2012 when there was an average of 63.2 births per 1,000 woman aged 15-44. The GFR has been steadily declining since 2016, with the exception of 2021 when there was small peak – one year after the pandemic began. Gloucestershire's rate of 49.0 in 2024 was the lowest since 1993.

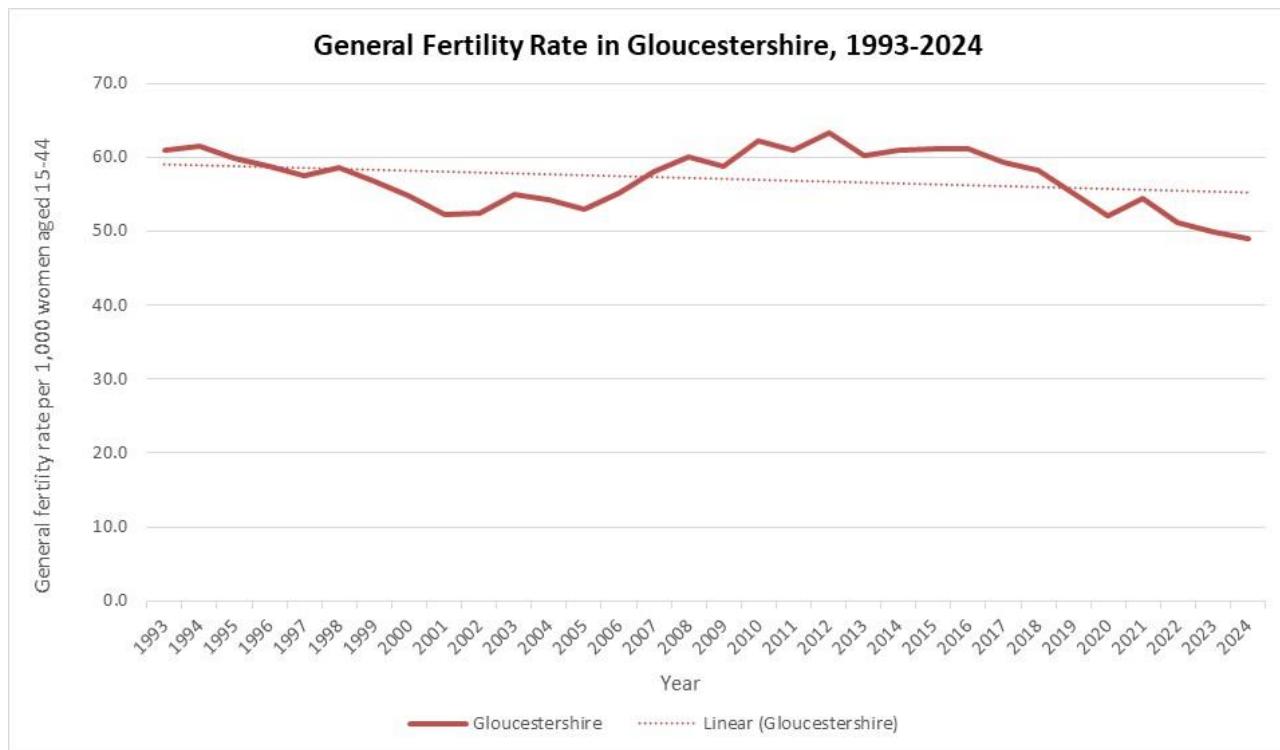


Figure 3: General fertility rate trend in Gloucestershire, 1993-2024

A similar trend can be seen within Gloucestershire's districts. Between 1993 and 2014 Gloucester had the highest GFR of all districts in the county. From 2014 to 2023 the GFR in Tewkesbury then increased to become the highest of all districts. However, by 2024 the GFR in Forest of Dean had risen to the highest in Gloucestershire at 54.9 births per 1,000 women aged 15-44, when most other districts were experiencing a decline in their GFR. Cheltenham was the only other district to see an increase in its GFR in 2024, although this was still the lowest rate of all districts.

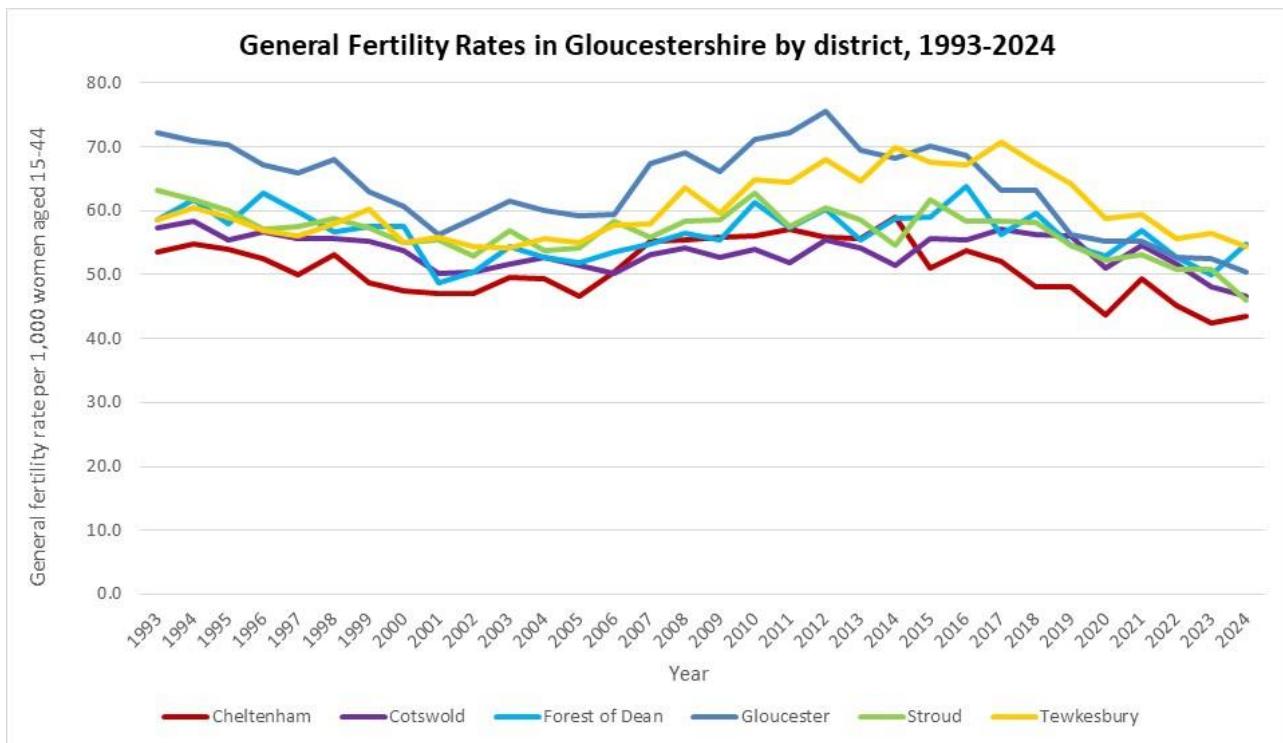


Figure 4: General fertility rate trend by district, 1993-2024

Figure 5 shows the overall decline in General Fertility Rates between 2013 and 2024. All areas have seen a decline over this period. Gloucester is the only district to see a greater decline than the regional and national average.

Forest of Dean saw the smallest decline with a GFR of 0.5 births lower than 2013.

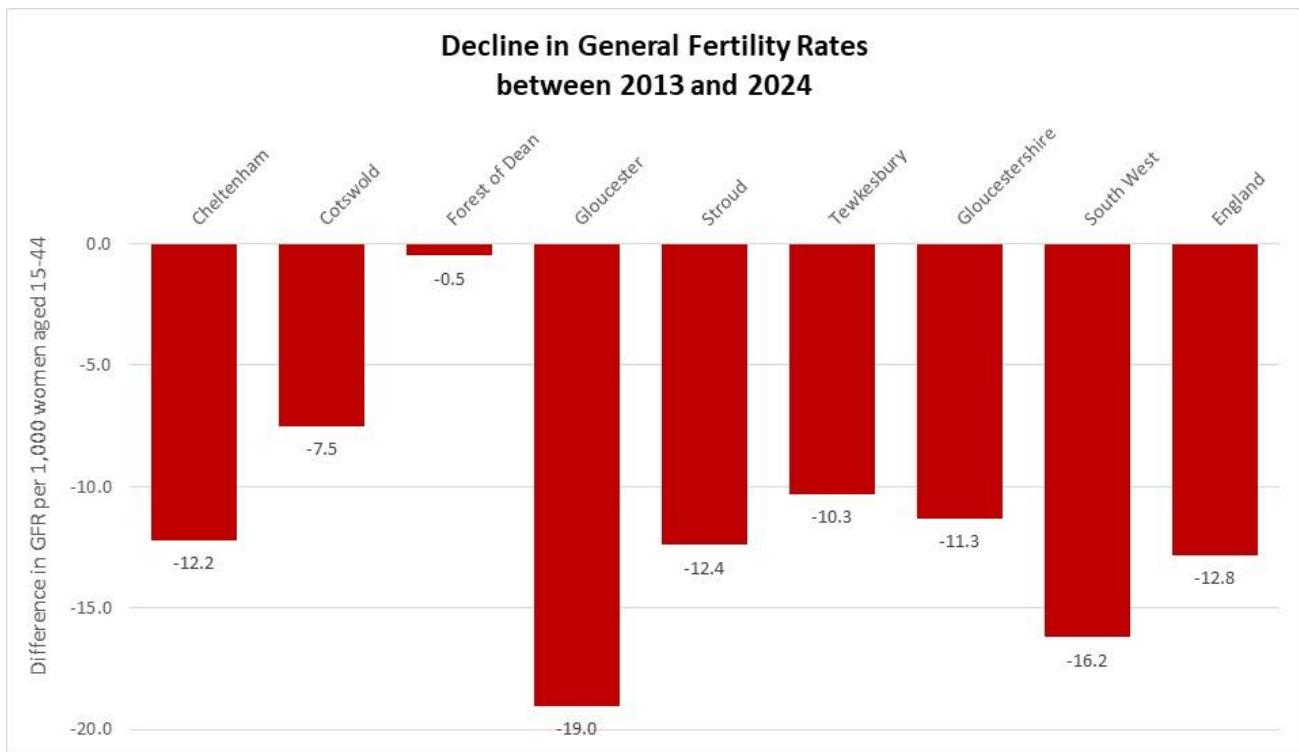


Figure 5: Decline in General Fertility Rates by district, compared with county, regional and national averages, between years 2013 and 2024

Total fertility rates

The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is used to estimate the average number of children that a woman would have over her childbearing years. It is defined more specifically by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as follows:

The total fertility rate in a specific year is defined as the total number of children that would be born to each woman if she were to live to the end of her childbearing years and give birth to children in alignment with the prevailing age-specific fertility rates. It is calculated by totalling the age-specific fertility rates as defined over five-year intervals. Assuming no net migration and unchanged mortality, a total fertility rate of 2.1 children per woman ensures a broadly stable population. Together with mortality and migration, fertility is an element of population growth, reflecting both the causes and effects of economic and social developments. The reasons for the dramatic decline in birth rates during the past few decades include postponed family formation and child-bearing and a decrease in desired family sizes. This indicator is measured in children per woman.³

³ [Fertility rates | OECD](#)

Gloucestershire's TFR in 2024 was 1.44 children per woman. This rate was very slightly higher than the both the England, and England and Wales averages of 1.42 and 1.41 respectively, and also exceeded the regional average which saw an average TFR of 1.31 children per woman in the South West.

Gloucestershire's TFR of 1.44 lies below the measure of 2.1 which is the rate stated by the OECD that would ensure a broadly stable population if mortality remained unchanged and if there were no net migration. This suggests that without the impact of positive net migration, the population of the county would be declining.

Table 3: Total fertility rates in Gloucestershire and districts, 2024

Total fertility rate	
Gloucestershire	1.44
Cheltenham	1.29
Cotswold	1.43
Forest of Dean	1.68
Gloucester	1.45
Stroud	1.36
Tewkesbury	1.55
South West	1.31
England	1.42
England & Wales	1.41

District focus

- The highest total fertility rate was seen in Forest of Dean with an average of 1.68 children per woman.
- The lowest total fertility rate of all districts was in Cheltenham with an average of 1.29 children per woman.

Proportion of live births by age of mother

In 2024, the highest proportion of live births in Gloucestershire was to women aged 30 to 34, continuing the trend of later motherhood. In general, the proportion of live births in each age band in Gloucestershire is broadly in line with that seen both regionally and nationally. However, births to mothers above the age of 30 account for a slightly higher proportion of

total births in Gloucestershire than they do nationally, whilst those to mothers aged under 30 account for a lower proportion.

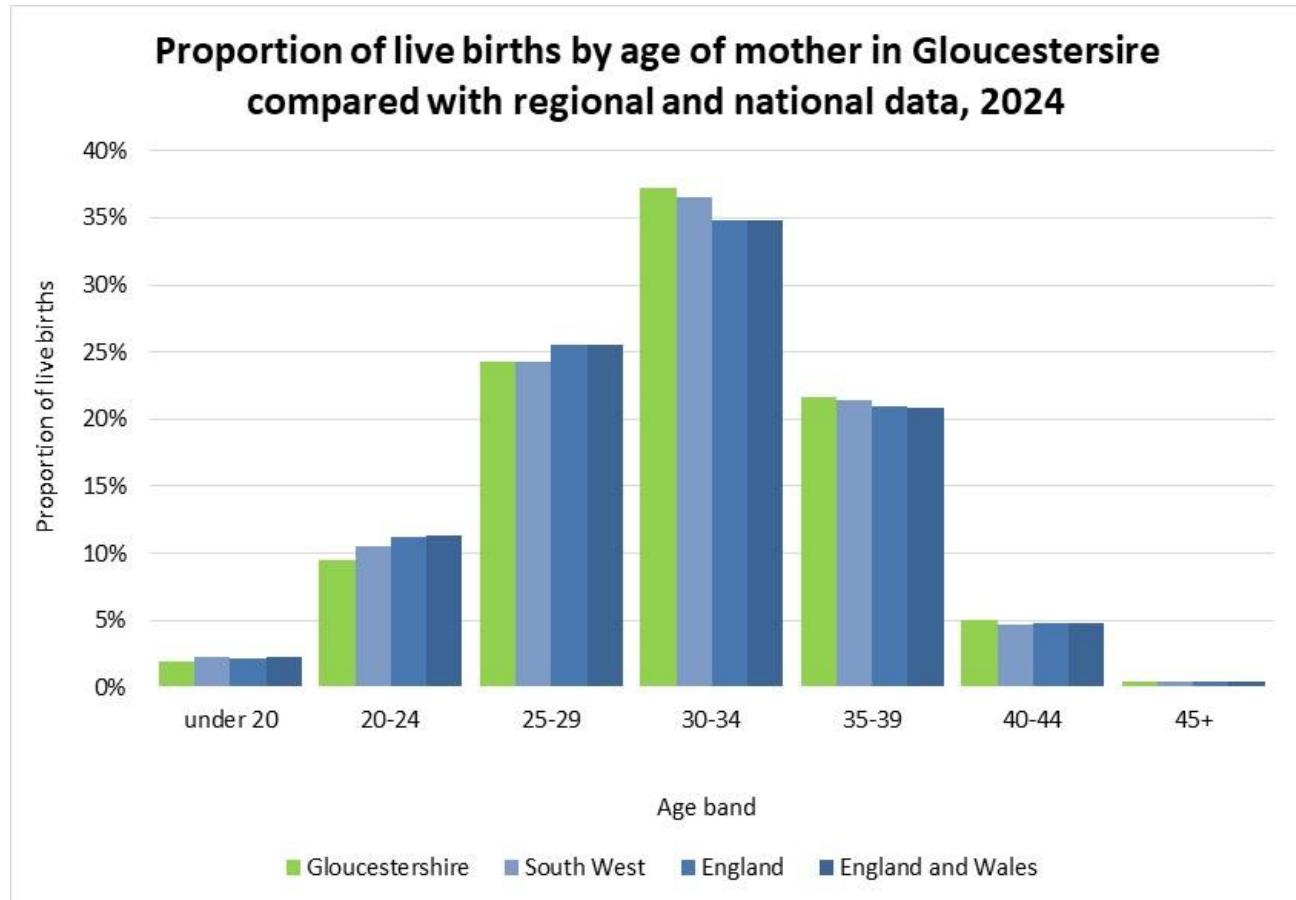


Figure 6: Proportion of live births by age of mother in Gloucestershire compared with regional and national data, 2024

District focus

- For mothers aged under 20, Gloucester and Tewkesbury have a higher proportion of births (2.6% and 2.2% respectively) than Gloucestershire (1.9%), and are also higher than both the regional and national averages.
- For mothers aged over 35, Cheltenham, Cotswold and Stroud (32.4%, 29.5% and 31.9% respectively) have a higher proportion of births than Gloucestershire (27.1%), and the regional and national averages.

Table 4: Proportion of Live Births by Age of Mother in Gloucestershire and Districts, 2024

	Total Number of Live Births	under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45+
Gloucestershire	5,826	1.9	9.5	24.3	37.2	21.7	5.0	0.4
Cheltenham	1,040	1.5	8.7	19.7	37.7	25.5	5.9	1.1
Cotswold	637	1.1	7.4	20.7	41.3	23.9	5.7	0.0
Forest of Dean	791	1.9	11.9	26.0	33.9	18.7	7.2	0.4
Gloucester	1,421	2.6	12.5	29.6	34.6	17.2	3.4	0.3
Stroud	939	1.3	7.5	22.0	37.3	26.1	5.3	0.5
Tewkesbury	998	2.2	7.7	24.8	40.4	20.8	3.8	0.2
South West	47,171	2.2	10.5	24.3	36.5	21.4	4.7	0.4
England	567,708	2.2	11.2	25.5	34.8	21.0	4.8	0.5
England & Wales	594,540	2.2	11.3	25.6	34.8	20.9	4.8	0.4

Live births by age of mother from 2013 to 2024

Between 2013 and 2024, the distribution of live births by age of mother in Gloucestershire has seen a slight degree of change. Figure 7 shows that, since 2013, there has been a general decreasing trend in the proportion of births to mothers aged up to 29 years, for each age band. The reverse is apparent for mothers aged 30 and above, where the overall trend is of an increase in the proportion of births each year since 2013.

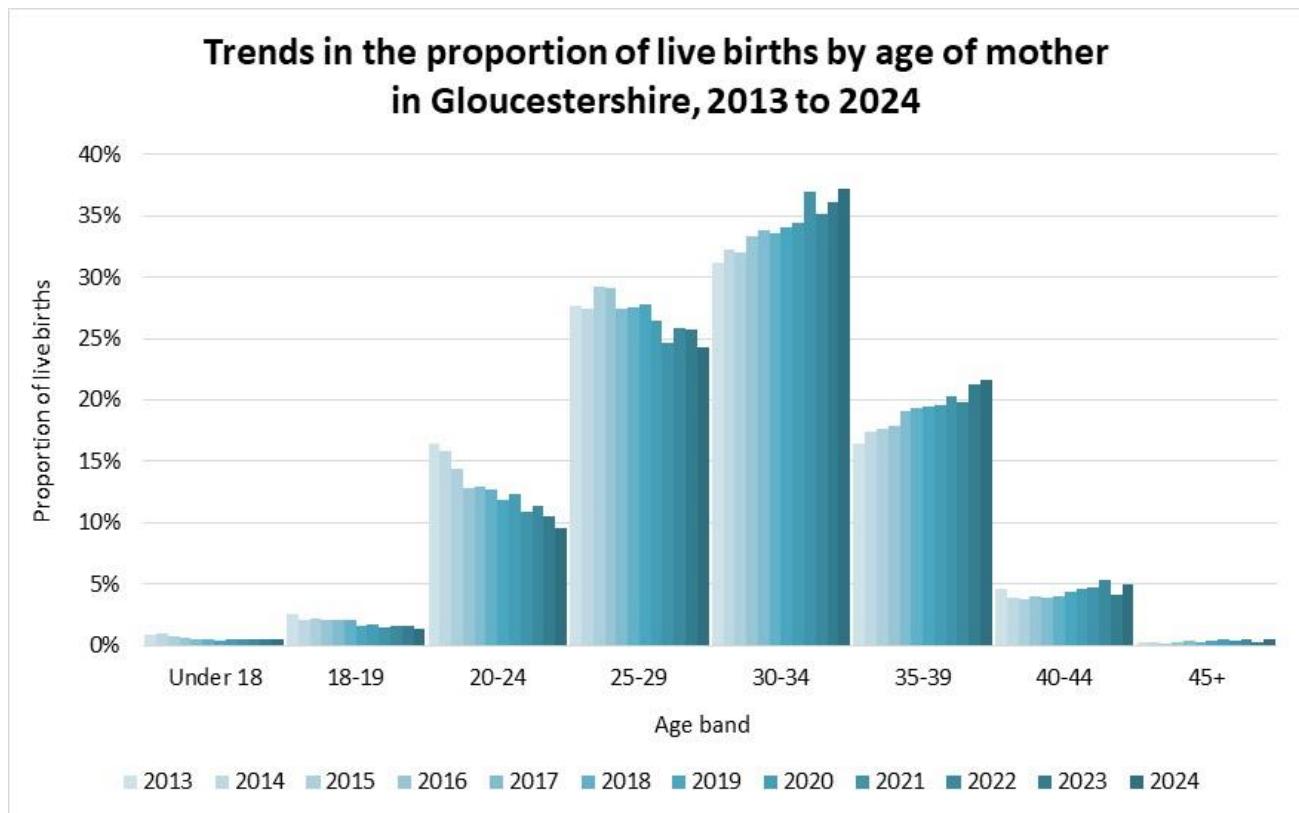


Figure 7: Trends in the proportion of live births by age of mother in Gloucestershire, 2013 to 2024

District focus

- Since 2013, all districts in Gloucestershire have seen a marked increase in the proportion of live births to mothers over the age of 30.
- Cheltenham has seen the largest proportional rise in the 30+ age group, with an increase of almost 13 percentage points since 2013.
- The smallest proportional increase in the 30+ age group was in Cotswold, which rose by 9 percentage points over the same period.

**The proportion of live births by age group per district,
2013 compared with 2024**

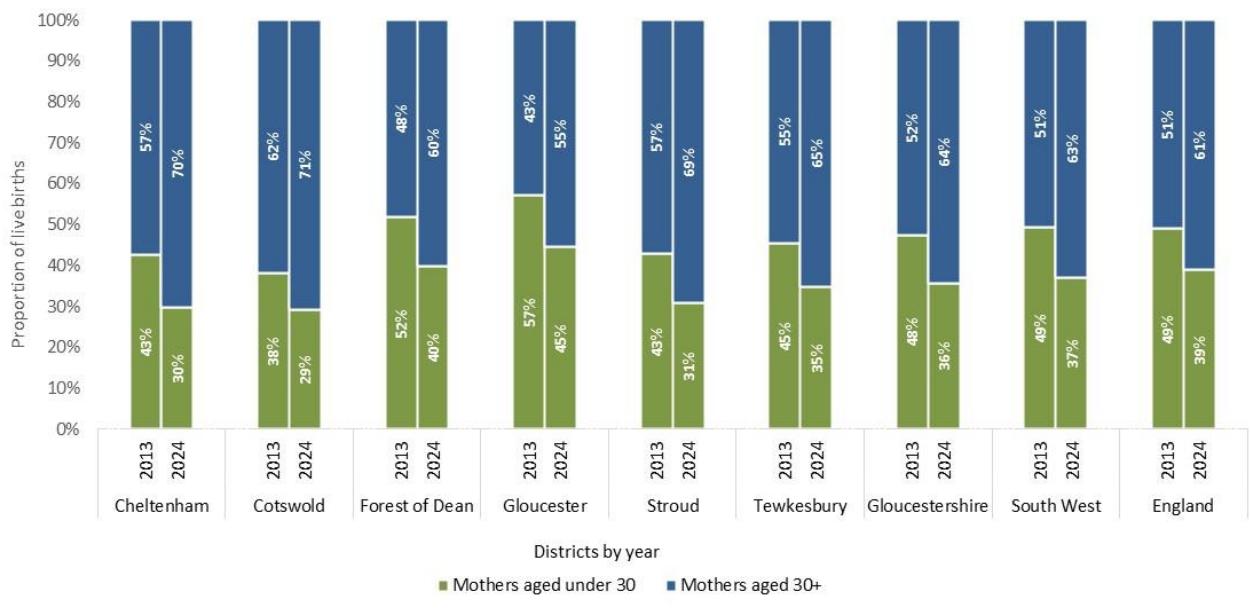


Figure 8: The proportion of live births by age group of mother, per district - 2013 compared with 2024