

Population estimates ...in brief

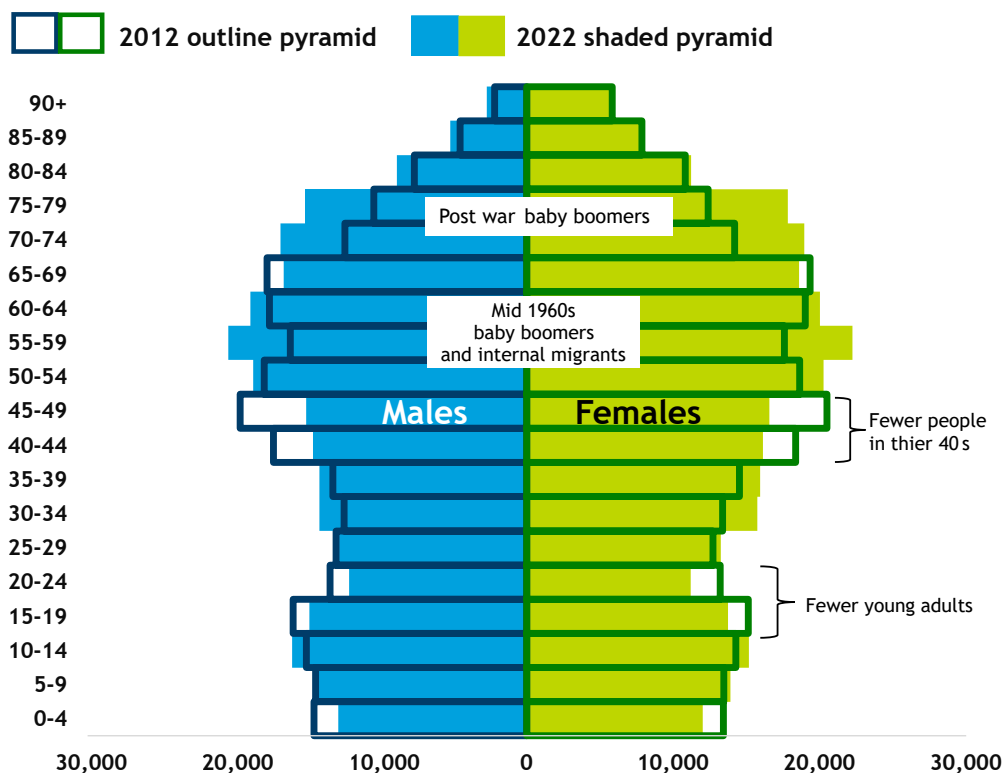
January 2024

- The population of East Sussex was estimated to be 550,720 in mid-2022.
- The number of people has increased by 0.7% since 2021 (England up 1.0%, South East up 0.9%), and by 3.8% since 2012 (England up 6.7%, SE up 7.4%)
- Over half (64%) of the population increase in the county since 2012 has been in Wealden.
- International migration saw numbers rise sharply to June 2022, with the number being 37.9% higher than the average of the previous 10 years.
- East Sussex has a much older population profile than the country as a whole, with more than a quarter of the population over the age of 65, and with Rother seeing the highest rate of over 85s in the country.

530,400
Population in 2012

550,700
Population in 2022

Fig. 1: East Sussex population in 2012 and 2022, by age and sex



Population components of change 2012-2022

Population in 2021	546,700
+ Natural change	-2,350
births	+4,520
deaths	- 6,870
+ Net migration from UK	+4,260
in migration	+24,930
out migration	-20,670
+ Net international migration	+1,920
in migration	+4,010
out migration	-2,090
Population in 2022	550,720

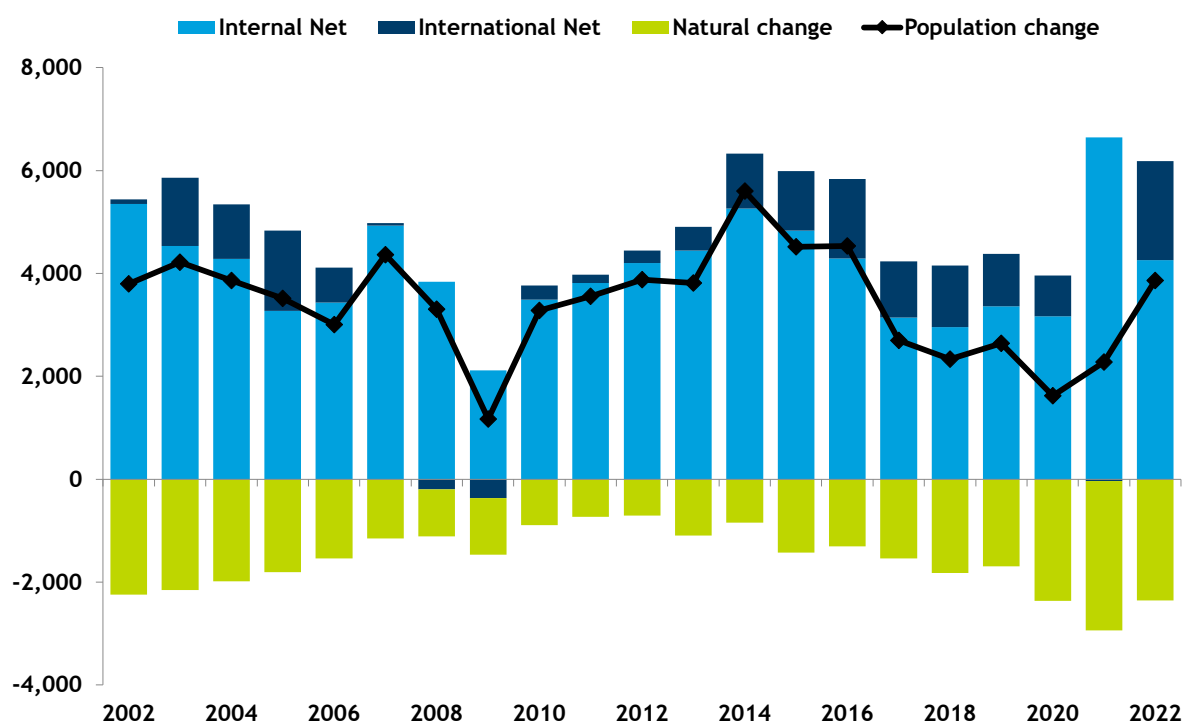
This table does not account for unattributable change that the ONS included in their rebased mid-year estimates, [see further information for more detail on this](#).

Age Structure

- East Sussex has a much older age profile compared to England and the South East. A quarter (26.4%) of the county's population is aged 65 or over (joint ninth highest of all counties/UAs in the country), compared to 18.6% in England and 19.7% regionally. On the other hand, only 16.5% of the county is under 16, compared to 18.5% nationally and 18.6% in the South East.
- At 4.9%, Rother now has the highest proportion of over 85s of all districts/UAs in the country - just marginally higher than North Norfolk and New Forest (both 4.8%). Rother still has the highest proportion of the very old (90 and over) at 1.9%, joint top with Isles of Scilly, New Forest and East Devon. It has the second highest proportion of people aged 65 and over (32.6% - behind North Norfolk at 33.8%).
- Overall, the East Sussex population has grown by 3.8% since 2012. While the population aged 65 and over has increased by 15.9%, older people aged 45-64 have risen by 3.4%, and people aged 30-44 have risen by 1.6%, there have been declines among the 16-29 age group (down 6.9%) and children aged 0-15 (down 0.8%).
- There were two 'baby booms' in the 20th century, one just after World War II and another in the mid-1960s, which can be seen as 'bulges' in the population pyramid on page 1. However, population growth in those age groups has been augmented by migration, mainly by people moving to East Sussex from within the UK.
- The overall number of children under 18 has decreased marginally since 2012 (by 2.2%), and there are considerably fewer young people aged 16-19 in 2022 than there were in 2012 (down 9.5%), with young people aged 16-17 down 5.9% and those aged 18-19 down by 13.4%. Other groups seeing significant falls in numbers include those in their late 40s (aged 45-50, down 18.0% since 2012), partly as a consequence of the population 'bulge' in those age groups ageing on ten years and the next age group being far less numerous.

Population changes

Fig. 2: Components of population change in East Sussex, 2002-2022



2021-2022 changes:
Total deaths in East Sussex in year to June 2022: 6,870
Annual average mid-year deaths 2012-2022: 6,630
Total net migration to June 2022: 6,190
Significantly higher than the average of 4,500 per year since 2012
Loss through natural change in 2022: -2,350

- 2021 saw the largest ever loss through natural change (compared to records since 1991) with -2,900, but the levels have started to decrease again in the year to June 2022.
- The population of East Sussex increased by 3.8% in the 10 years to 2022, but rose by only 0.7% between 2021 and 2022. The highest population increase can be seen in those aged 65 and over, increasing by 15.8% since 2012, while there has been an increase in the 0-15's (down 0.8%) and the 16-29's (down 6.9%) in the same period.
- In the year to June 2022, there were 4,520 births and 6,870 deaths, giving 2,350 more deaths than births. All districts saw a negative natural change in the year to June 2022, in contrast to England and the South East where a positive natural change was recorded (higher rates of births compared to deaths).

- The decline in natural change has been counteracted by levels of internal migration and, to a lesser extent, international migration (see chart below). In 2022, 24,930 people moved into the county from the rest of the UK, and 20,670 moved out to other parts of the UK, giving net internal migration of 4,260. International migration into the county was the highest recorded at 4,010, with only 2,090 people moving abroad, giving net international migration of 1,920. Net international migration was significantly higher than previous years in all districts, this can largely be attributed to refugees entering the county after war broke out in Ukraine in February 2022.
- Between 2021 and 2022, the population grew fastest in Wealden (up 1.4%), and declines slightly in Hastings (down 0.4%). Wealden has seen the fastest growth in the county over the past 10 years, with an increase of 8.2%, while numbers in Hastings have seen the slowest growth with only 0.1% increase since 2012. Population increase in England is 6.7% since 2012, and all East Sussex districts, besides Wealden, fall well below this figure.

Table 1: Population change between 2012 and 2022

	Mid-2012 population	Mid-2022 population	Absolute change 2012-2022	Percentage change 2012-2022
Eastbourne	99,990	102,250	2,260	2.3%
Hastings	90,490	90,620	130	0.1%
Lewes	98,530	100,680	2,150	2.2%
Rother	90,740	94,160	3,430	3.8%
Wealden	150,610	163,010	12,400	8.2%
East Sussex	530,360	550,720	20,360	3.8%
South East	8,731,840	9,379,830	647,990	7.4%
England	53,506,810	57,106,400	3,599,590	6.7%

Table 2: Population change 2021-2022

	Mid-2021 population	Mid-2022 population	Absolute change 2021-2022	Percentage change 2021-2022
Eastbourne	101,600	102,250	650	0.6%
Hastings	90,970	90,620	-350	-0.4%
Lewes	100,170	100,680	510	0.5%
Rother	93,410	94,160	750	0.8%
Wealden	160,710	163,010	2,300	1.4%
East Sussex	546,860	550,720	3,860	0.7%
South East	9,295,830	9,379,830	84,000	0.9%
England	56,554,890	57,106,400	551,510	1.0%

Children and young people aged 0-17



- The population of children and young people in East Sussex has decreased by 1.4% (1,500 people) since 2012.
- Young people make up 18.7% of the total population in East Sussex in 2022. This is lower than the regional (20.9%) and national (20.8%) averages.
- Whilst the total number of children aged 0-17 fell by 1.4% in East Sussex between 2012-2022, in England and the South East numbers rose by 4.2% and 4.9% respectively.

Fig. 3: Percentage of the population aged 0-17 in East Sussex, South East and England

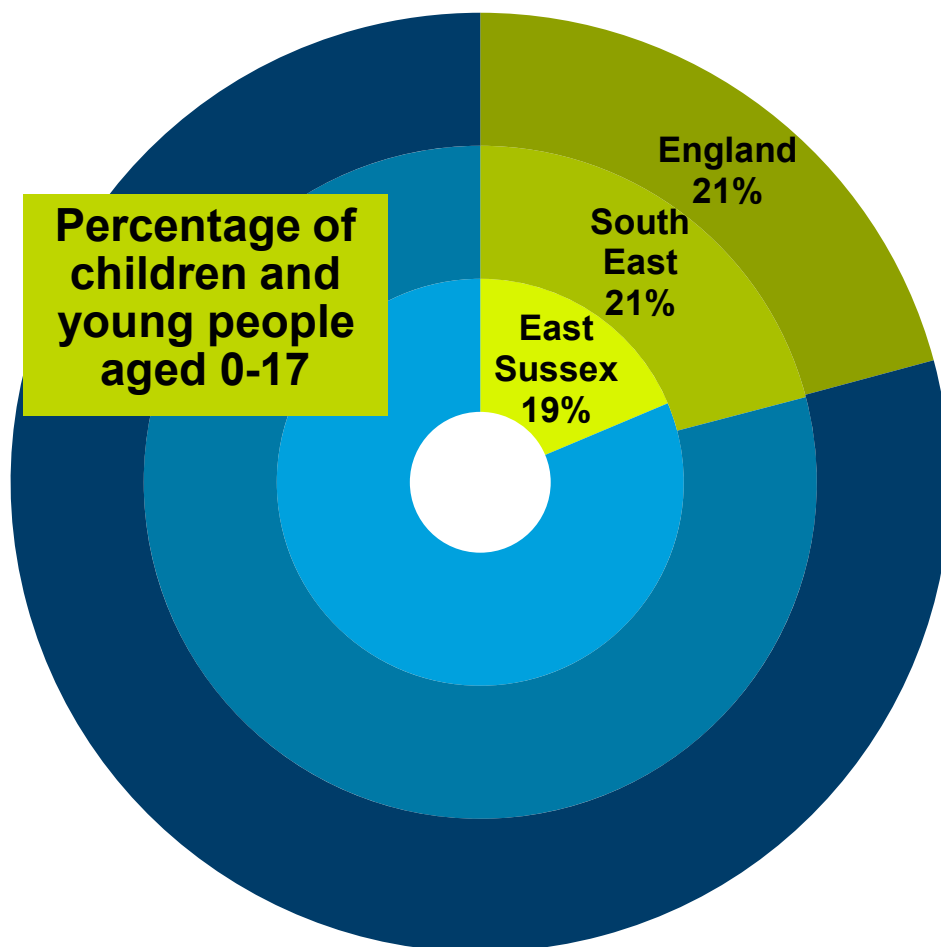
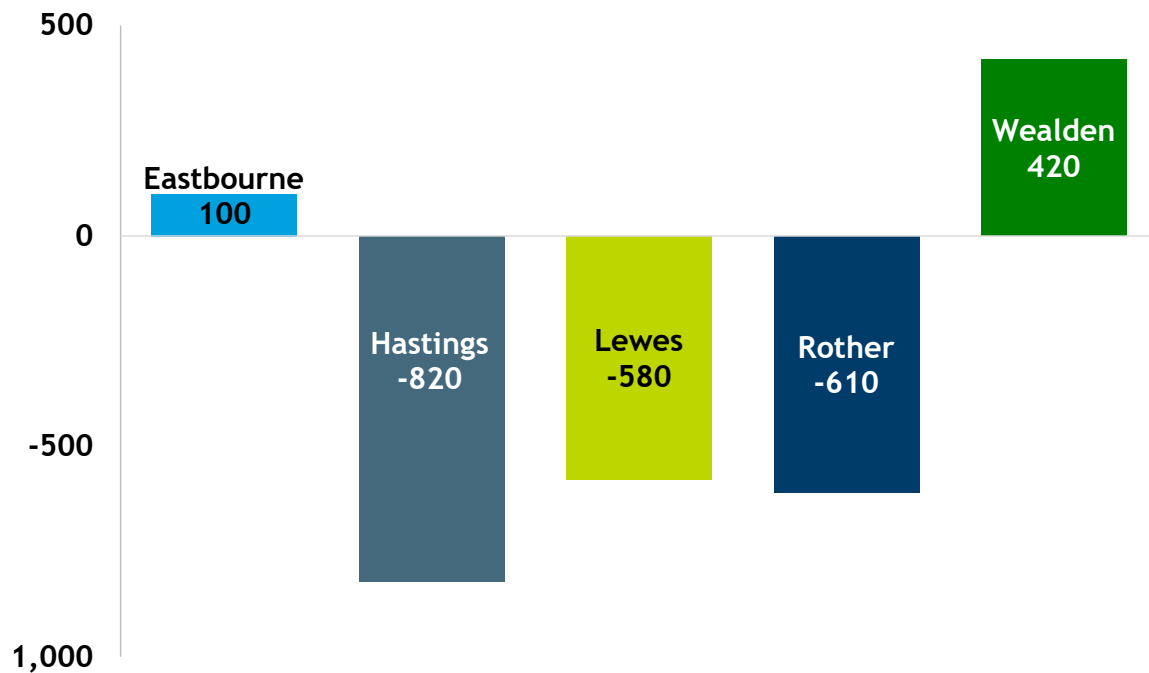
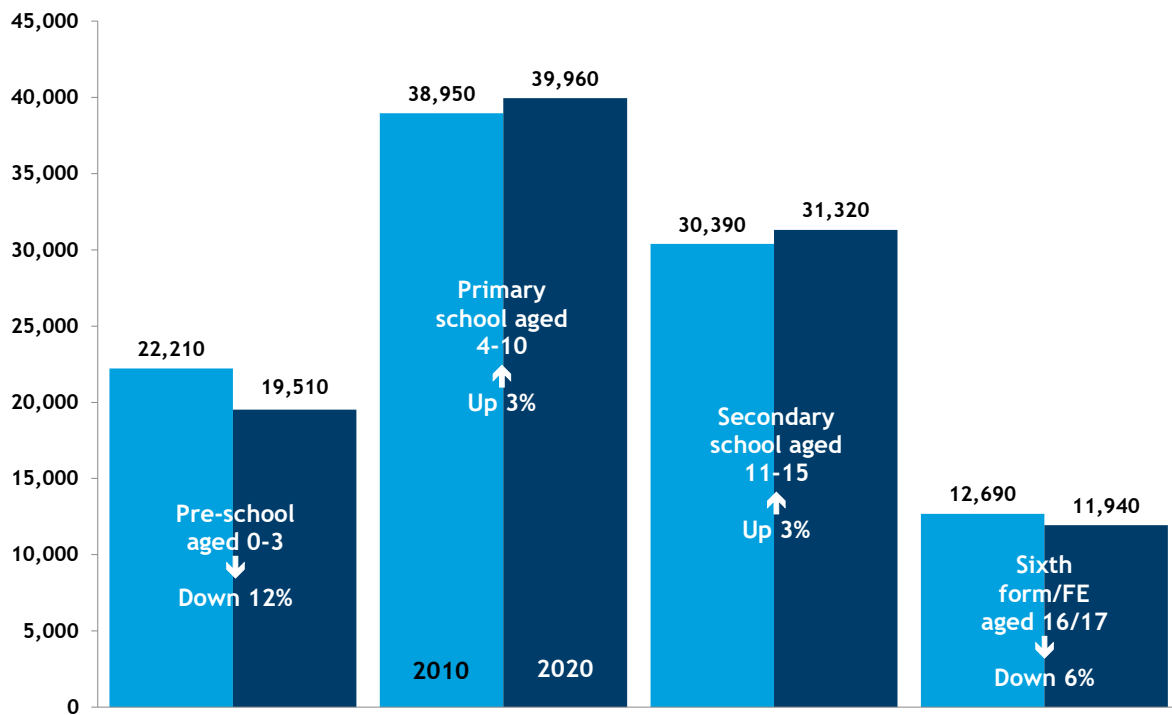


Fig. 4: Change in number of 0-17 year olds in East Sussex districts



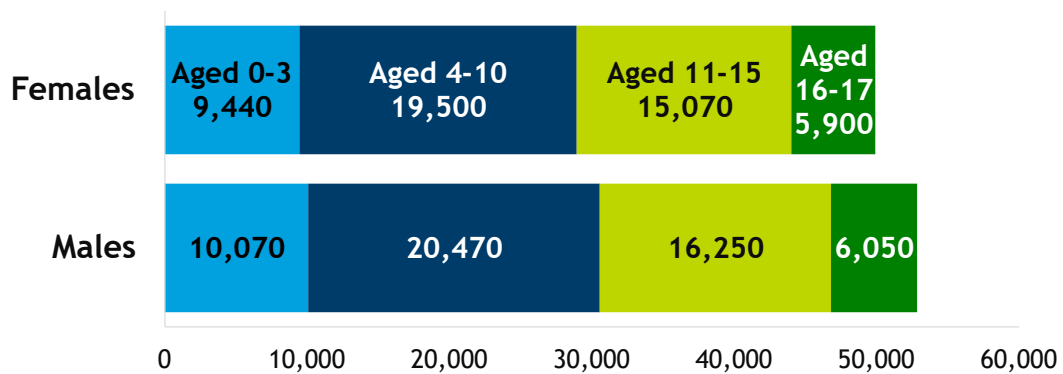
- Wealden and Eastbourne saw increases in the number of children and young people between 2012 and 2022, with numbers up by 1.4% in Wealden (up 420) and 0.5% in Eastbourne (100). But numbers fell in all other areas, -4.3% in Hastings (down 824), -3.8% in Rother (down 610), and -3.0% in Lewes (down 580).
- Overall numbers of school-age children (aged 4-15) have risen in the last decade (up 2.8%). The number of primary aged children (4-10) rose by 2.6%, and the number of secondary age (11-15) increased by 3.1%. With Lewes being the only district to see a drop in the number of primary age children (down 0.4% from 2012), and Rother being the only district to have a drop in secondary aged children (down 3.1%).
- In the last year the 4-10 age group fell slightly (down 0.2%) between 2021 and 2022, but there was a 2.8% rise among those aged 11-15.

Fig. 5: Population change among children in East Sussex, 2012-2022



- The 0-3 age group fell by 12.2% between 2012 and 2022, and saw a 0.4% fall in the year to 2022.
- The number of sixth formers (aged 16-17) fell by 5.9% between 2012 and 2022 but rose by 0.9% in the year to 2022.

Fig. 6: Number of children and young people in East Sussex by sex



Among this age group there are more males than females:

Aged 0 to 17 years: Male 51:49 Female

Total population: Male 48:52 Female

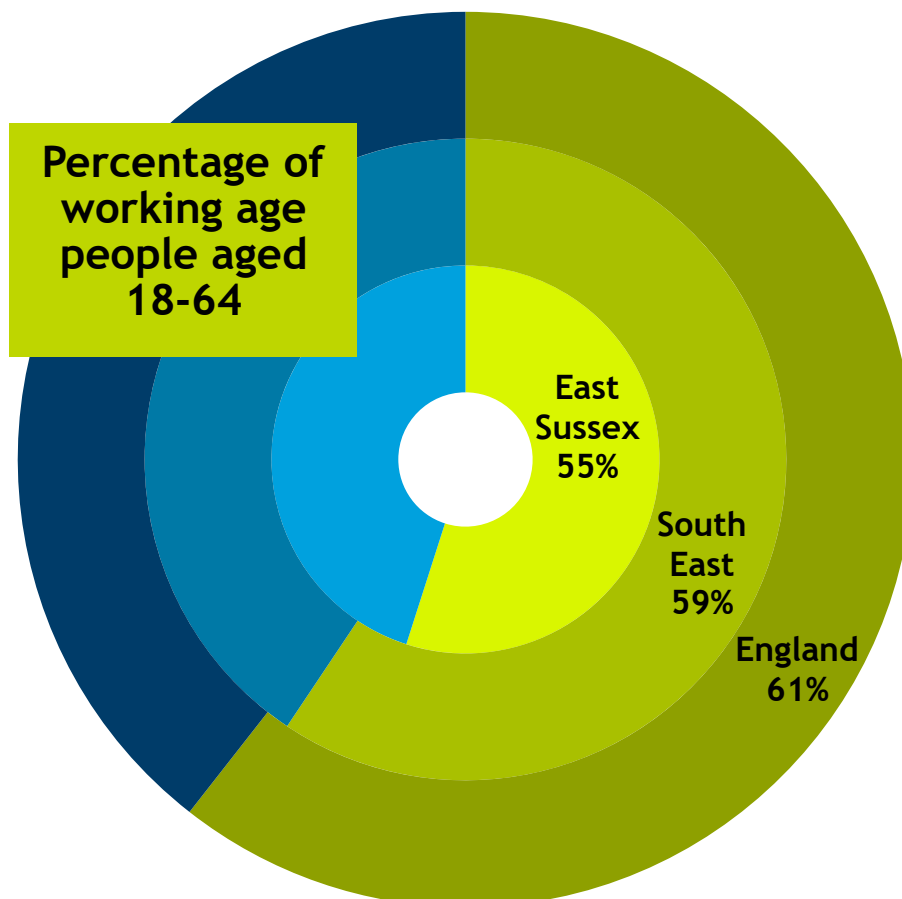
Working-age people (aged 18-64)

300,600
Population in 2012

302,500
Population in 2022

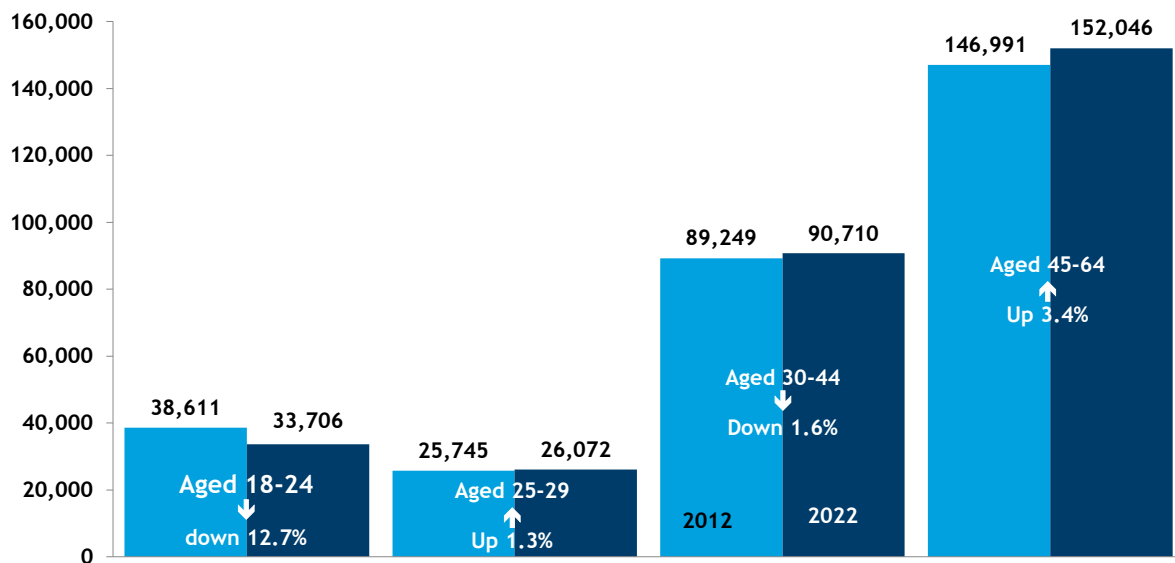
- The population of working age people in East Sussex has increased slowly, 0.3% in the year to 2022 and by 0.6% (1,940 people) since 2012, compared to an increase from 2012 of 4.6% nationally and 5.0% regionally.
- Working age people make up 54.9% of the total population in East Sussex in 2022. This is lower than the regional (59.4%) and national (60.6%) averages.

Fig. 7: Percentage of working age people in East Sussex, South East and England in 2022



- Internal migration (from within the UK) is the main driver of population change among the 18-64 age group, with a net inflow of 26,480 working age people moving into the county from the UK in the decade to 2022, 55% of whom were female.
- Between 2012 and 2022, only 13.4% of net migration of working age people in the county was from overseas, but in Hastings the proportion was 101% (there was a negative net change for internal migration and an inflow of 710 people from international migration), compared to just 1.3% in Wealden and 1.6% in Rother.
- In 2022, there was a net inflow from overseas of working age people of 4,100, of whom 63.3% were female.
- In East Sussex numbers of young working age adults (aged 18-29) increased by 0.6% in the last decade, however numbers of young men dropped by 610 (0.4%), while numbers of young females rose by 2,550 (1.7%). There were net outflows to migration of 17,310 among this age group in 2022.
- The oldest age group 45-64 have risen most, up 3.4% in the last decade, while numbers of those aged 18-24 have seen a large drop in the same time period, down 12.7%.

Fig. 8: Population change among working age people, 2012-2022



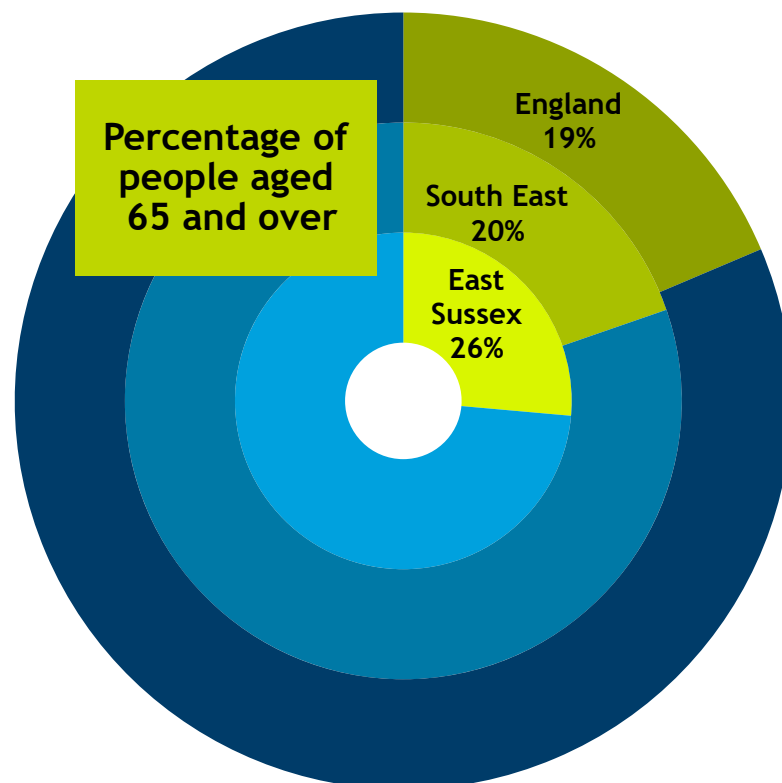
- In 2021-2022, there was an increase in the number of 30-44 year olds in the county (up 2.6%), however there was a decrease of other working age groups with 18-29 year olds down 1.8% but 45-64 year olds down only 0.1% in the year to 2022.
- The gender split of the working age population in East Sussex matches the split of the population as a whole with 48% male and 52% female.

Older population (aged 65 and over)



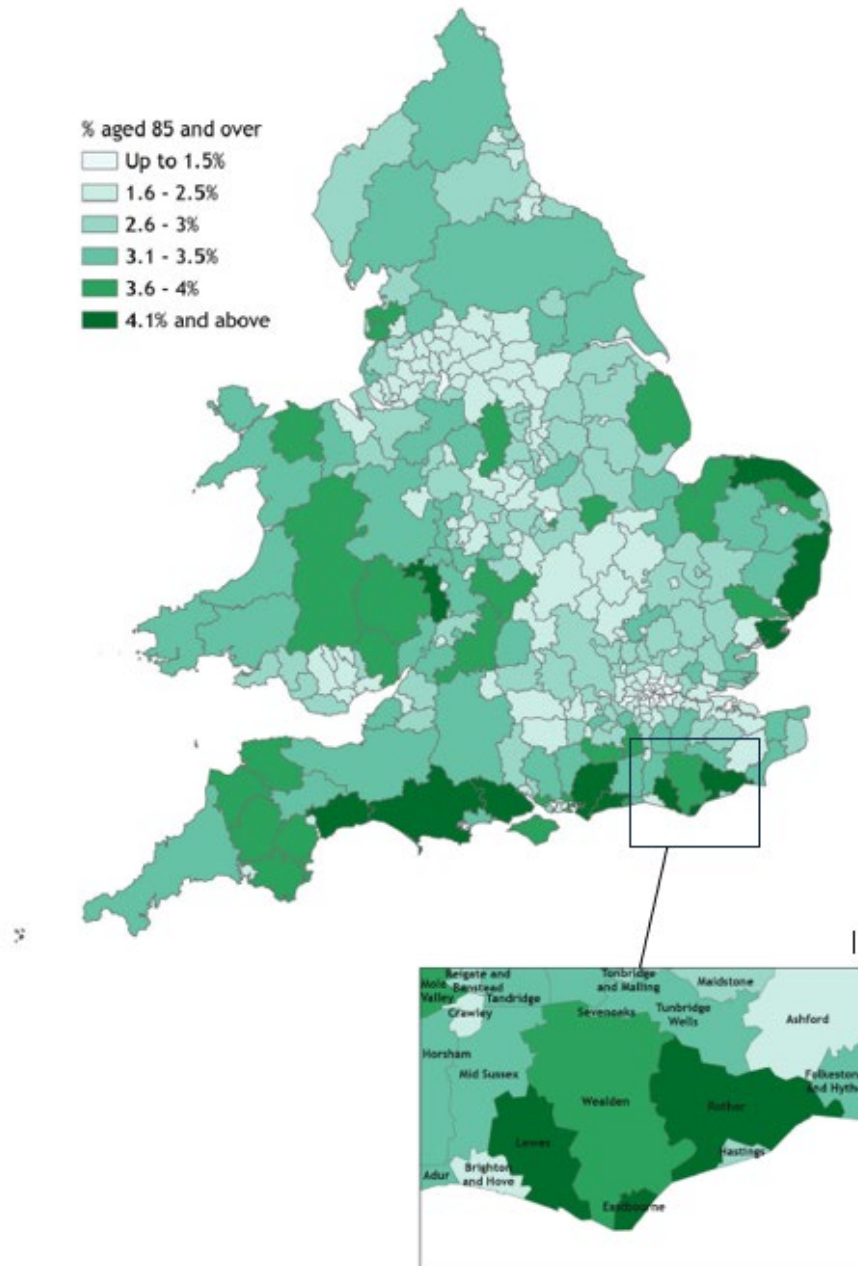
- The population of elderly people in East Sussex has increased by 1.4% in the year to 2022 and by 15.9% (19,920 people) since 2012, a slightly smaller increase than the decade change both nationally (17.5%) and regionally (18.7%).
- Older people make up 26.4% of the total population in East Sussex in 2022. This is lower than the regional (19.7%) and national (18.6%) averages.
- 20% of the county's population is aged 70+, compared to only 14.7% regionally and 13.7% nationally.
- 3.9% of the population in East Sussex are 85+, joint third highest of all counties/UAs, after Dorset (4.4%), and Isles of Scilly (4.2%), and compared to just 2.5% nationally.

Fig. 9: Percentage of the population aged 65+ in England, South East and East Sussex



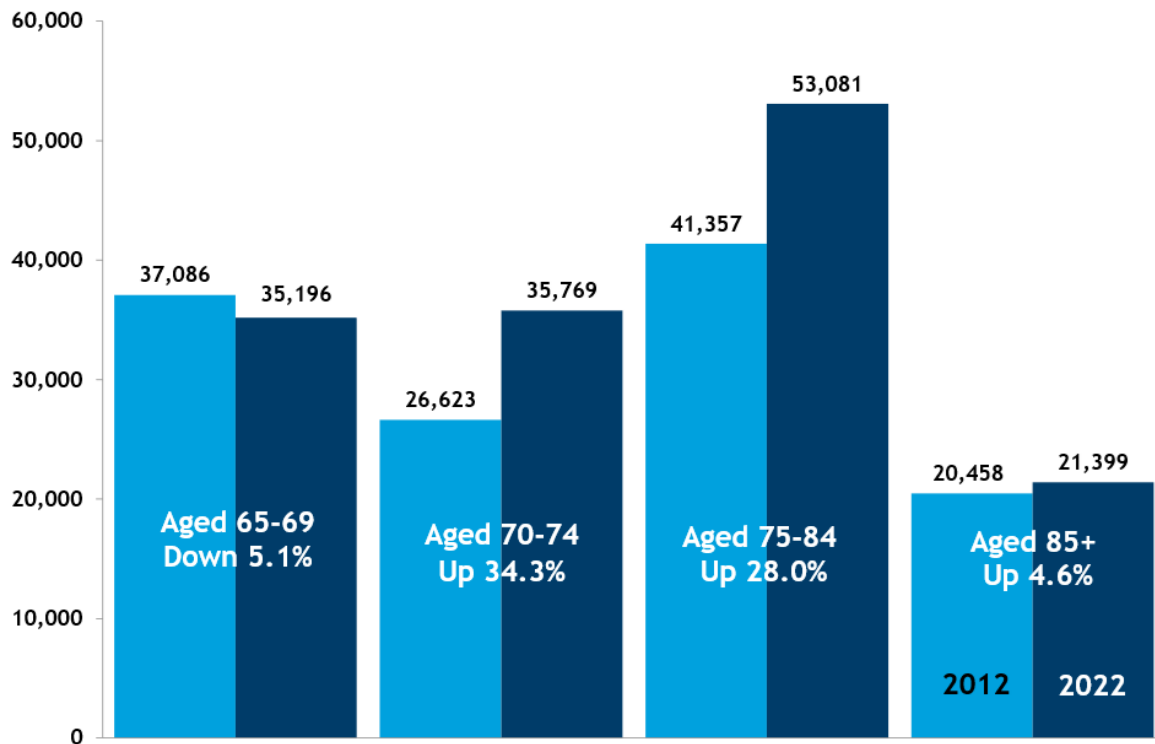
- At 15.9%, the rise in older people since 2012 is lower than the national (17.5%) and regional (18.7%) increase.

Fig. 10: Percentage of people aged 85 and over in local authority districts and unitary authorities in England, 2022



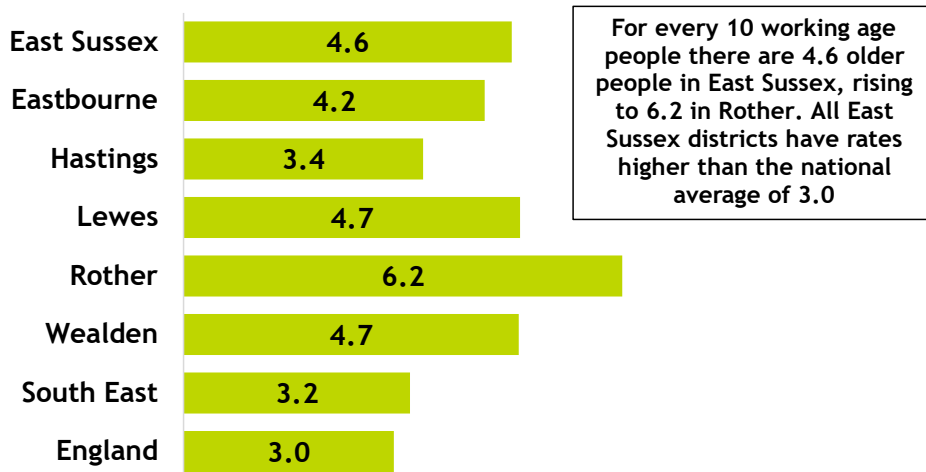
- At 4.9%, Rother now has the highest proportion of over 85s of all districts/UAs in the country just followed by North Norfolk and New Forest (both 4.8%). Rother and North Norfolk also have the highest proportion of 80-84 year olds in the country (both with 4.6%).

Fig. 11: Population change among those aged 65+, East Sussex 2012-2022



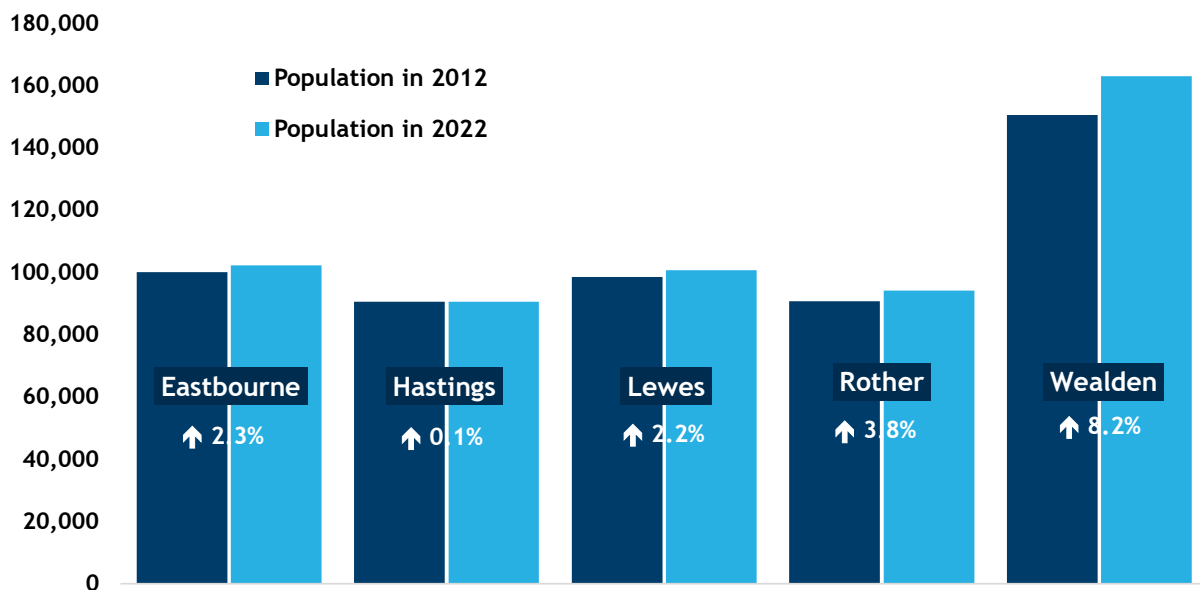
- The number of males aged 65+ has increased slower than females - there was a 3.5% increase in the number of males, compared to a 4.2% increase in females in this age group over the ten years.
- However all age groups over 75 have seen a largest increase of males compared to females, most notably among 85-89 year olds where the number of males increased by 14.6% compared to a decrease in females of 1.3%, and the 90+ age group who saw a 24.8% increase in males and a 2.9% decrease in females in the decade to 2022.
- There are more females than males in this age group, with females making up 55% of the population aged 65+, and males making up 45%. In the population as a whole females make up 52% of the population with males making up 48%.
- Almost 1/3 of Rother’s population (32.6%) are aged 65+, ranking second highest in of all districts/UAs, behind North Norfolk. Rother now has the highest proportion of over 85s in the country at 4.9%, with Lewes and Eastbourne having the joint 6th highest (4.1%) with Chichester, Malvern Hills, Tendring and East Suffolk.
- Hastings has the smallest proportion of older people in the county with only 20.7% of the population being aged 65+, and 2.6% of the population being 85+.
- Numbers of pensioners aged 75-79 rose fastest, 11% higher in the year to 2022, mainly due to the post-war baby boomers reaching their mid 70s (see pyramid on page 1).

Fig. 12: Elderly dependency ratios in East Sussex districts, South East and England in 2022



Districts

Fig. 13: East Sussex population by districts in 2012 and 2022



Eastbourne

The population of Eastbourne has increased by 2.3% since 2012 (up 2,260), but this increase has been dominated by older people aged 65 and over (up 9.3% over 10 years), with falls among younger adult age groups - there were 1,910 fewer people aged 16-29 (down 11.4%). There was a small increase of 170 people aged 30-44 (up 0.9%), and children aged 0-15 (up 1.2%). In the year from 2021, there was a decrease in young adults aged 16-29 (down 190 people, 1.3%), but an increase in all other ages in the district, with an overall population increase of 650 people (up 0.6%).

Hastings

Hastings has seen the population rise by 0.1% since 2012, the lowest increase in the county. Again, the increase has been dominated by older people with an increase of 2,620 (16.3%) among people aged 65 and over, and 3.7% among those aged 45-64, compared to a fall of 18.3% among those aged 16-29 (down 2,901 people) and a 3.5% decline in children aged 0-15. In the year to 2022, there was a 0.4% decrease in people in Hastings (-350 people) overall.

Lewes

Overall population numbers in Lewes have risen by 2.2% since 2012, with the biggest rise among people aged 65+ (up 16.2% or 3,760 more people), more modest rises among those aged 45-64 (up 0.7%) and a decline in all other age groups. The number of children aged 0-15 has declined by 3.1%, while people aged 16-19 fell by 8.8% or 1,200 people, and people aged 30-44 decreased by 0.4%. There was a rise of 0.5% (510 more people) in the year to 2022, with the largest increases being in the 30-44 age group (up 1.9%).

Rother

The population of Rother has risen by 3.8% since 2012, with a 14.2% rise among those 65 and over (3,810 more people in this age group), and a 2.0% rise in those aged 30-44 (250 more people). There were decreases in all other age groups, the largest of which being 2.6% fewer children aged 0-15 (down 370). Rother saw a total population increase of 0.8% in the year to 2022 (750 more people). Rother now has the highest proportion of those aged 85+ of all local authorities in the country and it has the second highest proportion of people aged 65 and over (32.6% - behind North Norfolk at 33.8%).

Wealden

Wealden has seen the biggest rise in population in the county since 2012, of 8.2% (12,400 more people), reflecting increased housing provision in the district. The rise was dominated by older people with 21.0% more people aged 65+, and 5.5% more people aged 45-64. But there were also rises among all other age groups, the 30-44 age group saw an increase of 4.2%, the 16-29 age group was up 4.5% and children aged 0-15 were up 2.0%. Since 2021 there has been a total population rise of 1.4% (2,300 more people), with increases among all age groups, with the exception of a small drop in 16-29 year olds (down 0.2% or 34 people).

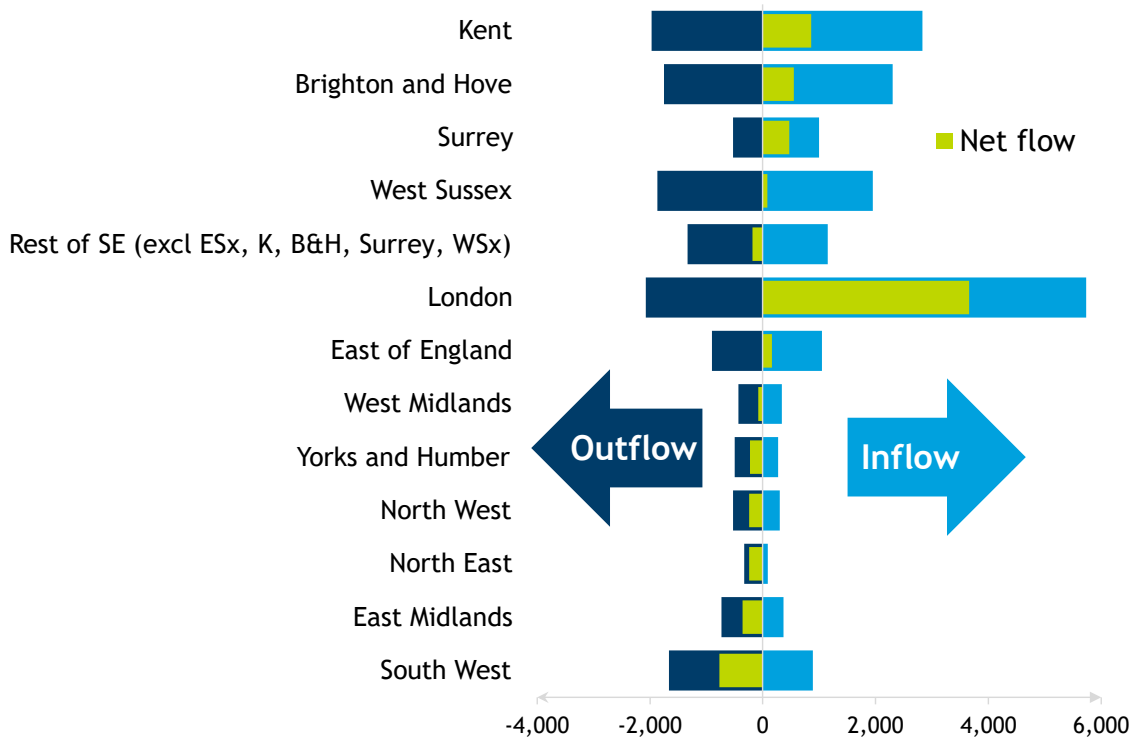
Population change due to migration

Internal migration

- The area seeing the largest net flows into the county in 2021 was London with 3,660 people moving from the capital. From the South East, the largest net flows were from Kent (860), Brighton and Hove (550) and Surrey (470), with a net flow of only 80 from West Sussex, and a net out-flow of 180 to the rest of the South East.

UK migrant flow	Number of migrants
Inflow	+24,930
Outflow	-20,670
Net flow	+4,260

Fig. 14: Internal migration by area of move



- In 2022, internal migration was dominated by those over age 30, especially the middle-aged (45-64). While there was a net outflow of people aged 18-29 with 1,520 more young adults leaving than moving to the county from within the UK, there were net inflows of 1,910 people aged 30-44 and 1,990 people aged 45-64.

Fig. 15: Net internal migration by age group

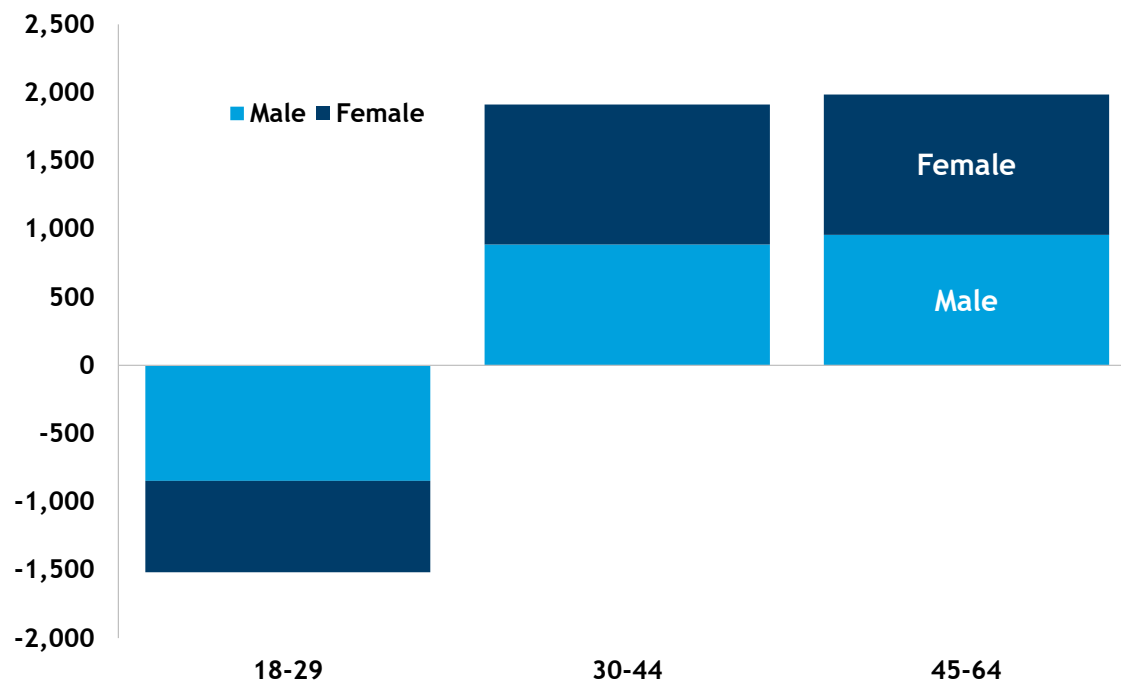
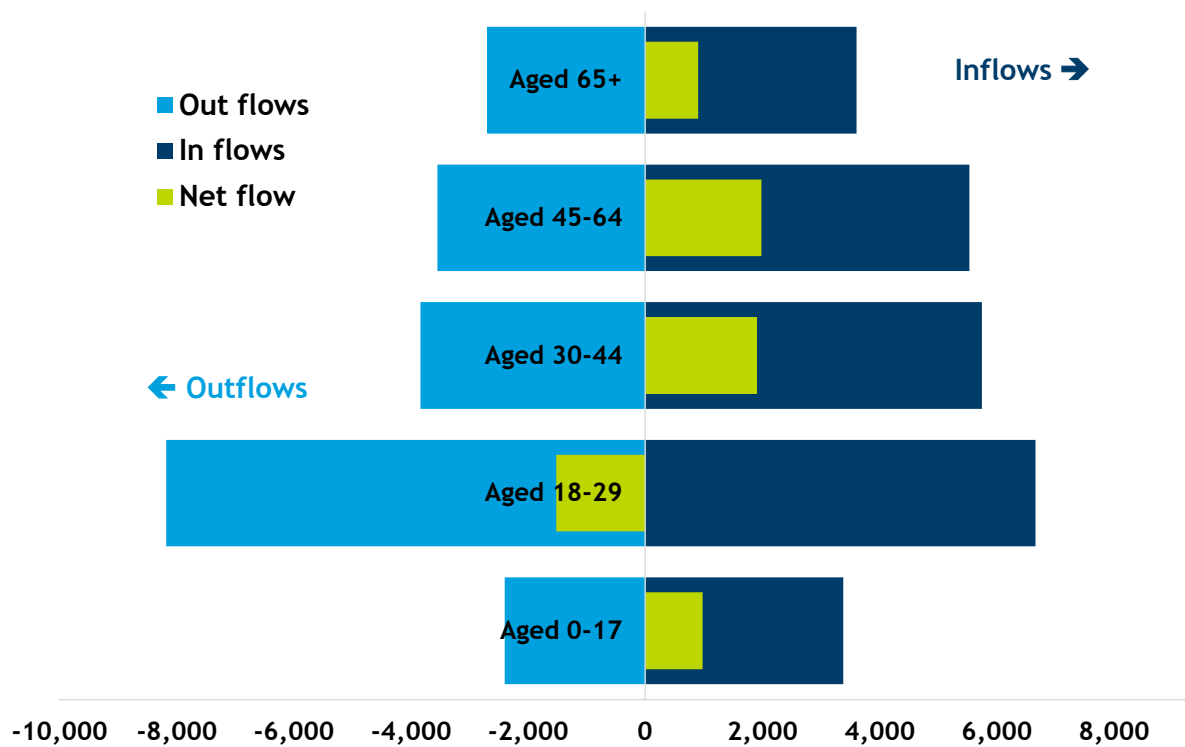


Fig. 16: UK migration flows by age 2021-2022

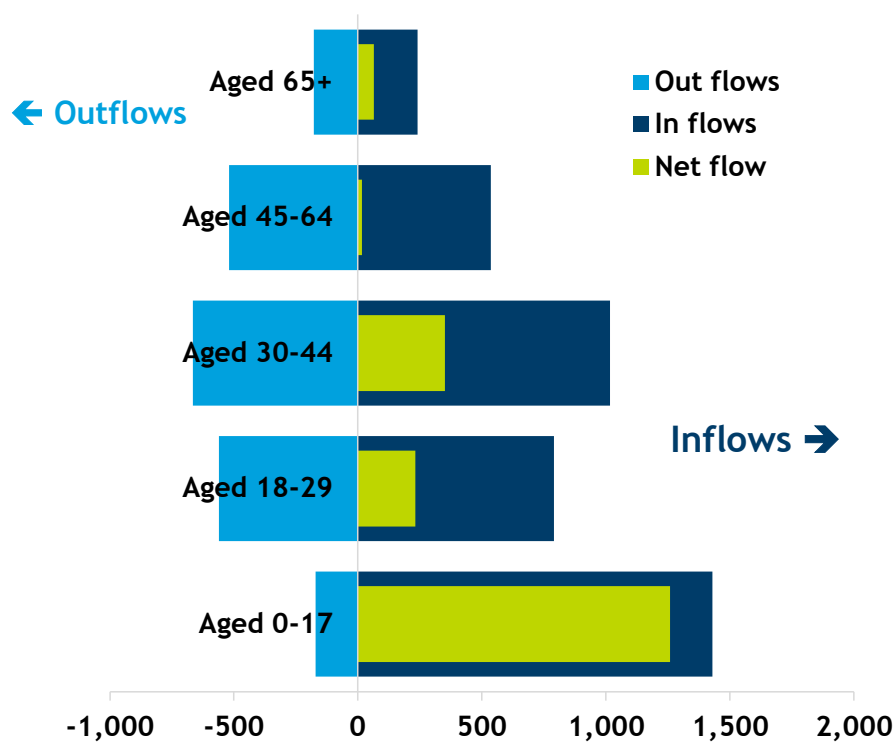


International migration

- International migration was more dominated by children, with 56% of the total number of net international migrants (1080 people) in the 0 to 14 age group. There were net inflows for all broad age groups, with a few small net outflows seen among individuals in their late 50's.

Overseas migrant flow	Number of migrants
Inflow	+4,010
Outflow	-2,090
Net flow	+1,920

Fig. 17: Overseas migration flows by age, 2021-22



- There was some variation in the districts, although all districts saw significant overall net inflows from overseas. Eastbourne had the highest level of international migration, and Lewes had the lowest numbers, but all districts saw positive inflows among all age groups.

Detailed components of change data

Table 3: Population and components of change, 2021-2022

	East Sussex**	South East	England
Population mid-2021	546,860	9,295,830	56,554,890
Births	4,520	92,940	591,230
Deaths	6,870	87,040	538,310
Natural change	-2,350	5,900	52,920
Internal in-migration	24,930	317,300	112,340
Internal out-migration	20,670	299,650	132,770
Internal migration - net	4,260	17,650	-20,450
International in-migration	4,010	127,100	949,640
International out-migration	2,090	66,930	430,150
International migration - net	1,920	60,170	519,490
Other*	-1,090	6,680	-7,150
Population mid-2022	550,720	9,379,830	57,106,400

*Other changes presented in this table comprise changes to the size of armed forces stationed in the UK and other special population adjustments such the prison population. This figure also includes unattributable change, explained in the [further information section at the end of this document](#).

**County level internal in- and out-flows exclude flows between districts in East Sussex

Table 4: Population and components of change, 2012-2022 Districts

	Eastbourne	Hastings	Lewes	Rother	Wealden
Population mid-2021	101,600	90,970	100,170	93,410	160,710
Births	840	910	770	6320	1,370
Deaths	1,290	1,050	1,230	1,440	1,870
Natural change	-450	-140	-460	-810	-500
Internal in-migration	6,930	4,780	6,480	6,990	11,270
Internal out-migration	6,460	5,410	5,780	5,750	8,800
Internal migration - net	470	-630	700	1,250	2,470
International in-migration	1,250	710	630	570	860
International out-migration	640	310	370	260	510
International migration - net	610	400	250	310	350
Other*	-140	-100	-230	-440	-370
Population mid-2022	102,250	90,620	100,680	94,160	163,010

Further information

The mid-year population estimates are produced annually by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for every local authority and health area in England & Wales. The latest mid-2022 population estimates were released by ONS on 29 November 2023, alongside the detailed components of change. The ONS have also substantially revised the mid-year estimates for the period 2012-2021 and all the components of change for these years with this release.

This data is available by gender and age groups at district level and a useful [Analysis Tool](#) is also available from the ONS.

Unattributable population change

This year's components of change also include large numbers for Unattributable Population Change (UPC), at around -1,360 per year every year since 2012 in East Sussex. The ONS acknowledges that they "... believe the UPC is most likely to be associated with migration (whether internal or international, and without judging whether it is inflow or outflow), and so [they] apportion it proportionally to the migration churn over the age profile (so ages more strongly associated with migration had more UPC assigned to them). In practice this increases the amount of UPC assigned to typical student ages and young working ages but does not tend to have a particularly different effect over time."

The level of UPC is not insignificant compared to migration volumes or natural change.

Brexit and other world events, such as the war in Ukraine have had a significant impact on international migration into and out of the county. So while net international migration was negative in the period from 2019-2021, there were net flows from overseas of an average of +340 per year over the 10 year period 2009-2018. In 2022, there was a net inflow of over 1,900, but this may partly reflect a large number of refugees who arrived into the county through the Homes for Ukraine scheme, and numbers are unlikely to be as large in the future.

- For more information about mid-year population estimates see the [ONS website](#). Data is also available to download from the [Nomis](#) website.
- View East Sussex in Figures for more data on [population estimates](#) by sex and age group, from 2001 to 2022 at district level and [dependency ratios](#) time series. Data is also available for [internal migration](#) by age group, [international migration](#), and [births, deaths and natural change](#).
- For further information about population estimates for East Sussex, contact Emma Corby by email emma.corby@eastsussex.gov.uk

Contact details

The Research and Intelligence Team, Governance Services, provides demographic and socio-economic data, intelligence and insight to support East Sussex County Council and other East Sussex Partners. The Team also manages East Sussex in Figures (ESiF), the Local Information System for East Sussex.

ESiF is a web-based information system that contains detailed, up-to-date and reliable information on a very wide range of topics.

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