

November  
2024

# State of Dorset Population



Change in Dorset's demographic make-up can have an impact on service demands and provision but can also affect housing demand and business needs.

Changes in our population are shaped by both natural change (births and deaths) and by migration into and out of Dorset.

By projecting future population change, we can plan to target services and resources to the places where they will be needed most.

Big Numbers Box

**3.1%**

projected population change  
2024-2034

**25,650**

Total increase in  
+65's 2024-2034, an  
increase of 2.1%pa

**384,809**

total  
population  
in 2023

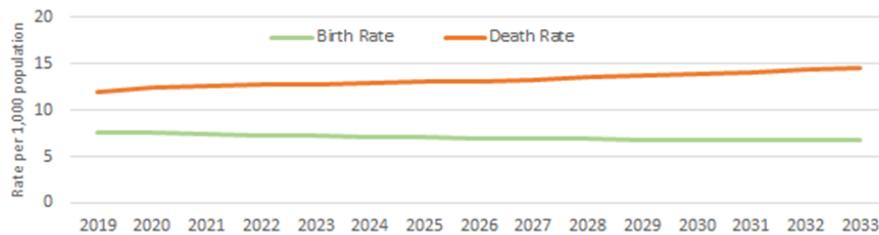
**2.1%pa**

65+ projected pop-  
ulation change  
2024-2034

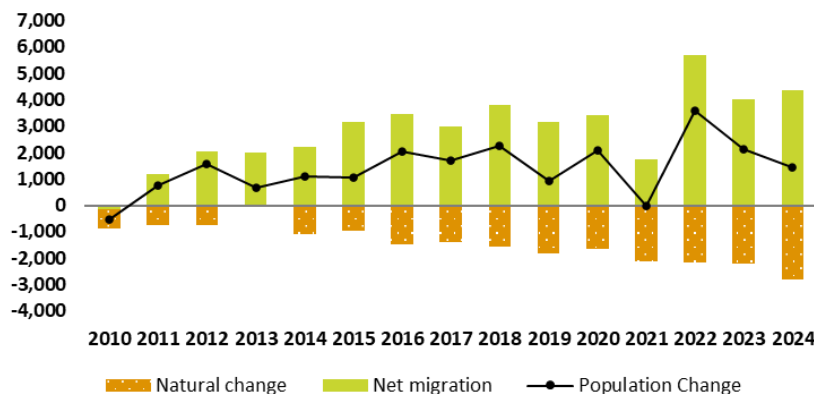
**5,520**

decrease in 0  
to 15 yrs age  
group  
2024-2034

## Box 1: Population Change



In the last five years, the death rate has steadily increased by just under 10%, while the birth rate has decreased by 5% as shown in the graph above. This pattern is projected to continue over the next ten years. Total number of births in the year 2022/23 were 2,459, total deaths were 5,288. Due to the net decline in natural change (births minus deaths) population growth is driven by migration into the area. The graph below shows the contribution net migration makes to population growth. Net migration in the year 2022-2023 was 4,378.



The figure above shows the components of change for each year. Note years 2023 onwards are projected population. Over the period 2013-2023, Dorset's population grew by 17,200, a growth of 4% compared with 7% nationally. Over the period 2023 to 2033, the population is projected to grow by another 3% (12,654) compared to 4% nationally.

## Box 2: Age breakdown of population

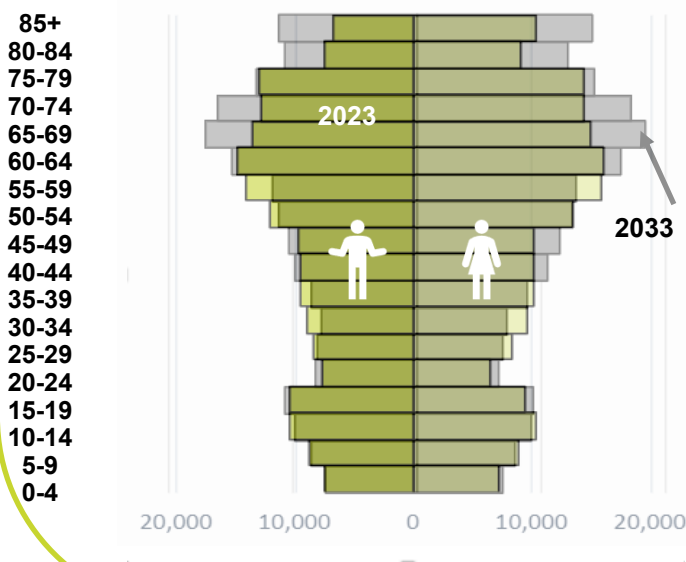
	2013	2023	2033
0-15 yrs	59,600	59,600	53,800
16-64 yrs	211,700	207,200	199,900
65+ yrs	97,200	118,200	144,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>368,600</b>	<b>384,800</b>	<b>397,700</b>

The median age of Dorset council was 46 in 2011. This increased to 51 in 2021 and is projected to increase to 54 by 2031. The current median age for England is 40.5.

Over the period 2013-2023, the number aged 65+ is estimated to grow by 21,000 up by 22% and is projected to further increase by 25,800 up by 22% to 2033. The proportion of the population aged 65+ continues to grow; from 26% in 2013 to 30% in 2023 and a projected figure of 36% in 2033.

In contrast Dorset's working age (16-64) population continues to fall; dropping by 4,500 between 2013-2023 and projected to drop by a further 7,300 by 2033. Similarly the population of Dorset's 0-15 year olds is projected to decline; falling by 5,800 between 2013 and 2033.

Dorset Council 2013, 2023 and 2033 population



The top heavy shape of the population pyramid has changed little in the past 10 years and is projected to expand over the next ten. This is illustrated by the graph to the left which shows proportion of 5yr age groups for 2023 in the light bars, and 2033 the grey bars. Females are on the right of the graph, males the left. Aging of the early 60's baby boomers can be clearly seen - driving the bulge in the population between the ages of 55 to 74. This is further increased by net internal migration which is highest for the 60-64 age group. Migration out of the area by young adults is also clearly illustrated.

## Box 3: Census 2021

- Much of our data and therefore, how we understand the experiences and issues affecting people in Dorset, comes from the Census.
- The Census is carried out every 10 years and Census Day was on 21st March 2021.
- As the Census only happens every 10 years, there is likely to be considerable change in our understanding of the population.
- Census 2021 reflected shifting language and will help with our understanding of marginalised communities, for example asking about Armed Forces service, sexual orientation and gender identity.
- The Census is important not only for understanding communities but for ensuring that funding is directed where it is needed. Many organisations will use it to plan, predict and develop their services, based on population make-up and characteristics represented in the Census.

### Sources

The following datasets have been used throughout the bulletin:  
 2023 Mid-year estimates, Office for National Statistics  
 2023 Components of Population Change, Office for National Statistics  
 2020 based Dorset Council Continuity projections, Experimental, Dorset Council