



## UK Population Grows To More Than 60m

Posted by [Chris Vernon](#) on August 27, 2006 - 11:28am in [The Oil Drum: Europe](#)

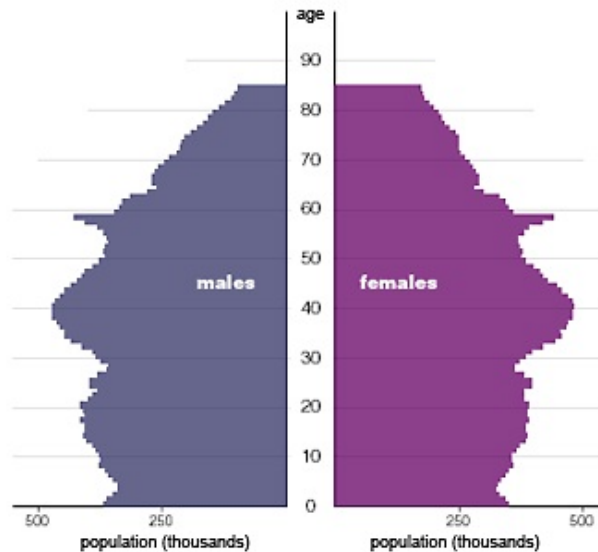
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On 24th August 2006 the [Office for National Statistics](#) published updated population information for the UK:

In mid-2005 the UK was home to 60.2 million people, of which 50.4 million lived in England. The average age was 38.8 years, an increase on 1971 when it was 34.1 years. In mid-2005 approximately one in five people in the UK were aged under 16 and one in six people were aged 65 or over.

The UK has a growing population. It grew by 375,100 people in the year to mid-2005 (0.6 per cent). The UK population increased by 7.7 per cent since 1971, from 55.9 million. Growth has been faster in more recent years. Between mid-1991 and mid-2004 the population grew by an annual rate of 0.3 per cent and the average growth per year since mid-2001 has been 0.5 per cent.



Population: by gender and age, mid-2005

Source: [National Statistics](#)

The baby-boomer spike approaching their sixtieth birthday is clear to see.

The growth is being driven by migration rather than net births with the [CIA World Fact Book](#) stating:

Birth rate: **10.71** births/1,000 population (2006 est.)  
Death rate: **10.13** deaths/1,000 population (2006 est.)  
Net migration rate: **2.18** migrant(s)/1,000 population (2006 est.)

We don't always fully trust the official statistics when it comes to energy reporting but how reliable are these population numbers? Douglas McWilliams, chief executive of the [Centre for Economics and Business Research](#) suspects these figures are in fact a serious underestimation:

There are four reasons why the official estimates of the population are too low. The first is that the figures are out of date. The figures released in the past week relate to "mid-2005". With the population rising by 375,000 in a normal year, timing matters and the figures also suggest that the critical 62m figure will be reached in 18 months' time.

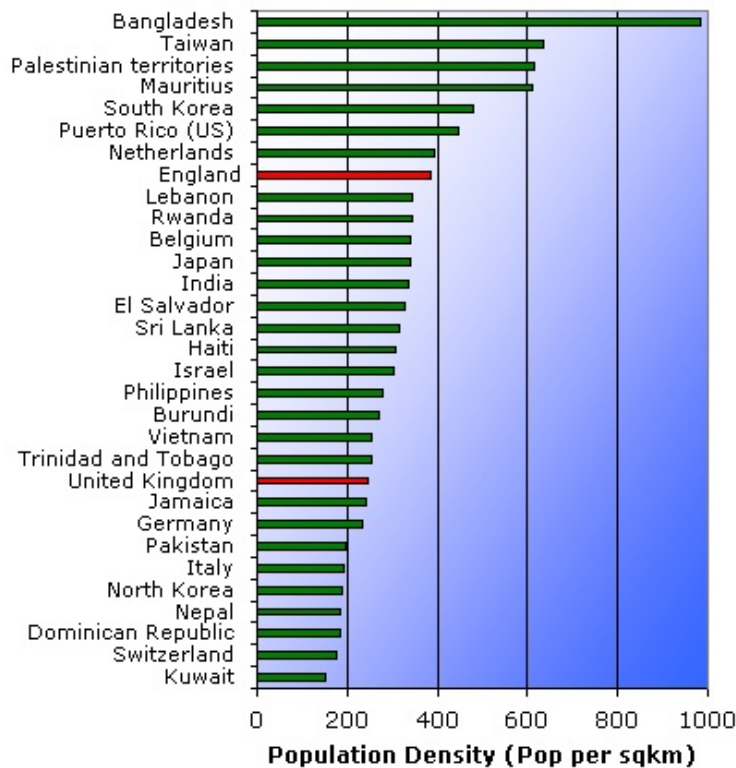
The figures also fail to include illegal migrants, of which even the government says there are 430,000 in the UK. The official figures also only include migrants who say they are definitely planning to stay for more than 12 months. So they include only 100,000 from the EU accession countries even though the latest data show 412,000 from accession countries who have been granted National Insurance numbers since accession in May 2004.

Finally, the numbers are based on the infamous 2001 census, which estimated a population about 900,000 too low compared with what the Centre estimated from alternative sources and from what the government's own data had estimated from earlier censuses, births, deaths and migration data. There is some overlap between all these categories so the crude total is not an additional 1.9m but only 1.4m, which brings the total population up to 61.5m from the official estimate of 60.1m.

[UK population is 1.4m higher than officials claim](#)

Population density is another way of looking at this data.

This graph shows national population densities ignoring countries with populations under 1 million and Singapore which is basically a city of over 4 million people on a small island (population density = 6,333 per sq km!).



Whilst it can probably be shown that recent economic migration has a net benefit on UK the economy one has to wonder about the impacts of a growing population moving forward as energy supply starts to decline. Total energy supply hasn't yet started to fall in the UK but it can only be a matter of time before North Sea depletion and infrastructure decommission reduces total supply.



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