



# Bradford District population update

## At a glance:

- Bradford's population increased by 4,500 (0.8%) people in the last year to 563,600
- Bradford is the fifth largest metropolitan district council after Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield and Manchester
- Bradford has the ninth largest percentage (22.3%) of people aged from 0 to 15 in England and is the second youngest city (after the City of Peterborough)
- Bradford has the highest population density (1,538 people per square kilometre) in West Yorkshire

## Introduction

The 2024 mid-year population estimates were published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on 30 July 2025. These population estimates update the 2023 mid-year estimates. The estimates for Bradford District include the people usually resident here and long-term international migrants (people who intend to stay for 12 months or more), but not short-term migrants (who stay or leave for less than 12 months).

## Summary

The 2024 mid-year estimate for Bradford's population is 563,600 people, an increase of 4,500 (0.8%) people since the June 2023 population total (*ONS have revised the mid-2023 population estimates to account for updated international and internal migration*). The population is 51% female and 49% male.

Bradford is the fifth largest metropolitan district council in England in terms of population after Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield and Manchester.

Bradford has the highest population density (1,538 people per square kilometre) and the second lowest median age (36.9 years) after Leeds (36.1) in West Yorkshire. Bradford also has the highest percentage of young people under the age of 16 in West Yorkshire.

West Yorkshire local authorities	Population density	Median age	Total population	Age 0 – 15	Age 16 – 64	Age 65 – 84	Age 85+
Bradford	1,538	36.9	563,600	22.3%	62.1%	13.5%	2.1%
Calderdale	580	42.3	210,900	18.8%	61.6%	17.3%	2.3%
Kirklees	1,096	39.8	447,800	19.7%	62.2%	15.8%	2.3%
Leeds	1,532	36.1	845,200	18.6%	65.8%	13.5%	2.1%
Wakefield	1,086	41.0	367,700	18.7%	62.2%	16.8%	2.3%

## Population by metropolitan district and unitary authorities

Comparing the mid-2024 Bradford population total with other metropolitan district councils shows that Bradford is the fifth largest after Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield.

Population by metropolitan district	
Local Authority	Total population
Birmingham	1,183,600
Leeds	845,200
Manchester	589,700
Sheffield	582,500
Bradford	563,600

When the mid-2024 population total is compared with other metropolitan districts and unitary authorities shows that Bradford is the ninth largest after Birmingham, Leeds, North Yorkshire, Manchester, Somerset, Cornwall, Sheffield and Buckinghamshire.

Population by metropolitan district and unitary authority	
Local Authority	Total population
Birmingham	1,183,600
Leeds	845,200
North Yorkshire	635,300
Manchester	589,700
Somerset	588,300
Cornwall	583,300
Sheffield	582,500
Buckinghamshire	578,800
Bradford	563,600

## Population change from 2023 to 2024

The District's population has increased by 4,500 people (0.8%) since 2023. The increase is largely due to international migration (there have been around 8,100 more people coming to live in Bradford from overseas than emigrating). 5,600 people left Bradford for other parts of the UK than came to live here. There were more than 2,000 more births than deaths.

## Young people

Bradford has the ninth highest percentage of young people aged from 0 to 15 in England (22.3%) and is the second youngest city (after the City of Peterborough).

Percentage of people under the age of 16 by local authority			
Local Authority	Authority type	Total population	% age 0-15
Barking & Dagenham	London Borough	232,700	25.3%
Slough	Unitary Authority	167,400	24.8%
Luton	Unitary Authority	239,100	23.2%
Peterborough	Unitary Authority	223,700	22.9%
Dartford	Non-metropolitan District	125,000	22.8%
Blackburn with Darwen	Unitary Authority	162,500	22.7%
Thurrock	Unitary Authority	181,000	22.7%
Oldham	Metropolitan District	251,600	22.5%
Bradford	Metropolitan District	563,600	22.3%

When looking at numbers of young people aged 0 to 18, Bradford has the eighth highest percentage of in England (26.7%) and is the second youngest city (after the City of Peterborough).

Percentage of people under the age of 19 by local authority			
Local Authority	Authority type	Total population	% age 0-18
Barking & Dagenham	London Borough	232,700	30.0%
Slough	Unitary Authority	167,400	29.2%
Luton	Unitary Authority	239,100	27.3%
Blackburn with Darwen	Unitary Authority	162,500	27.2%
Peterborough	Unitary Authority	223,700	27.0%
Oldham	Metropolitan District	251,600	26.9%
Thurrock	Unitary Authority	181,000	26.8%
Bradford	Metropolitan District	563,600	26.7%

## Median age

The median age is the mid-point where half the population is older and the other half is younger. Bradford's median age is 36.9 – the second lowest in West Yorkshire after Leeds (36.1). Calderdale, by contrast has the highest median age in West Yorkshire (42.3) and this is higher than both the national figure (40.2) and the regional figure (40.3).

## Population density

As the population increases the density (usually measured as the number of people per square kilometre) increases. Bradford has had the highest population density in West Yorkshire since 2004, followed closely by Leeds. Calderdale has the lowest population density in West Yorkshire (38% of the Bradford figure) and the national and regional rates are lower still.

Number of people per square kilometre						
	2004	2011	2013	2016	2021	2024
Bradford	1,324	1,428	1,435	1,453	1,493	1,538
Calderdale	536	561	566	574	568	580
Kirklees	972	1,035	1,047	1,065	1,061	1,096
Leeds	1,310	1,361	1,379	1,416	1,466	1,532
Wakefield	938	964	974	995	1,045	1,086
Yorkshire & Humber	329	343	346	352	356	386
England	385	408	413	424	434	450

## Data sources and further information

A briefing note about the population of Bradford at ward level will be published in November 2025

Source: ONS Population estimates

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/estimatesofthepopulationforenglandandwales>

Link: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity)  
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