

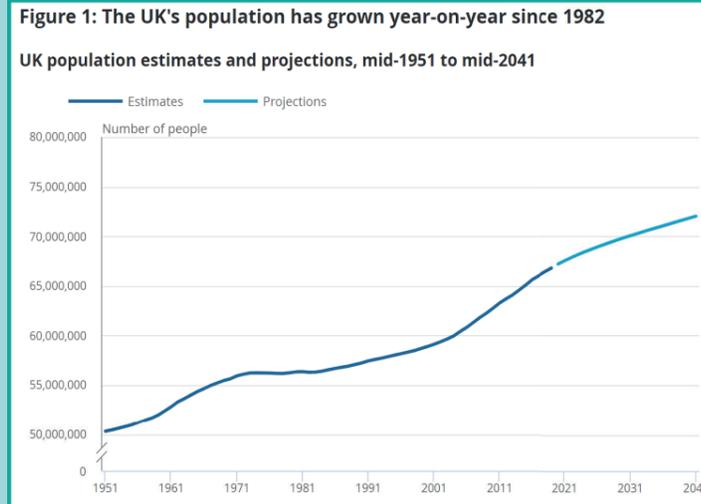
2.2.1 What are the causes and consequences of population change in the UK?

Population is constantly changing in Wales and in the UK as a whole:

- The population of Wales was 3.17 million in 2020.
- In 2019, the population of the UK reached 66.8 million.
- The UK and Wales' population has increased every year since 1982.
- According to the latest data (March 2020), there was an increase in net migration.
- Migration has been the main reason for the UK's population growth since 1990.
- It is estimated that the UK population will reach 72 million by 2041.

Factors that affect population change

There are several factors which affect population change. These factors can be shared into three categories:



Key words

Infant mortality rate: the number of children that die under one year of age, per 1,000 births, per year.

Life expectancy: the age to which a person is expected to live. In the UK, on average, the life expectancy is 81 years old.

Net migration: the difference in the number of people who immigrate to and emigrate from a country.

An ageing UK population

People in the UK are living longer. A high percentage of the UK's population is over 65 years old. This leads to an **ageing population**. There are two main reasons for this: increasing **life expectancy** and a **low birth rate**.

As a result, there are many positive consequences for the UK, however an ageing population can also create economic, health and social challenges.

Economic	Health	Social
An increased social care bill as the elderly often need specialist care in care homes or their own home.	Older people are more likely to visit their doctor more often and have more home visits. This can put increased strain on healthcare services .	Many people of working age have to look after their older parents, as well as their own children.
Many countries face a pensions crisis whereby there is not enough money (from taxes) to cover the increasing pensions bill.	There is an increased demand for social care , as the elderly often need specialist care in care homes or their own home.	The number of older people living alone is increasing which can lead to feelings of loneliness .
Less people of working age in the UK, therefore less taxes are paid.		
Gaps in the job market, with businesses and public services facing a shortage of workers and skills .		

The need for new housing

With an increase in population due to people **living longer** and more **immigration**, more people in the UK need to be provided with housing. Demand for housing is highest in the South East of England, the East of England, and London, as these are the areas with the highest population growth.

Economic	Political	Social
Many women in the UK decide to pursue a career rather than to have children.	Children in the UK receive several vaccines before they reach adulthood. This reduces the infant mortality rate .	Health care increases life expectancy , and a lower infant mortality rate .
Increasing the length and amount of statutory maternity leave may encourage women to have more children.	The number of people migrating to the UK has continued to rise. This reason, along with a higher birth rate among migrants, causes population increase.	Couples in the UK get married at an older age than 50 years ago. This can affect how many children they have.
The cost of raising a family in the UK is more expensive now than ever before. This factor may influence how many children a couple has.	All pupils receive sex education lessons in school and contraception is readily available. This reduces the number of unwanted pregnancies.	Women in the UK often wait until they are in their 30's before having children. This may reduce the amount of children a woman has.
		A high percentage of the UK's population is over 65. This creates an ageing population . This leads to a lower birth rate .