

# What is causing Kent's population growth?: 2023

The 2023 Mid-year population estimates were released by the Office for National Statistics on 15 July 2024.

**NOTE:** within this bulletin "Kent" refers to the Kent County Council area which excludes Medway

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[Kent facts and figures](#)

**This bulletin examines the change in Kent's population between 2022 and 2023 in terms of net migration or natural change (number of births minus deaths). A time series of these components of change between 2012 and 2023 is also presented.**

## Summary

- Between mid-2022 and mid-2023 the population of Kent grew by an additional 15,800 people (1.0%) bringing the total population at the mid-year point to 1,610,300.
- The population change between mid-2021 and mid 2022 is a result of a net figure of 16,800 people moving into Kent and a total decrease of 1,000 people through natural change (more deaths than births).
- These figures equate to 106.6% increase due to net migration and a -6.6% decrease due to natural change.
- Maidstone had the highest net migration (+3,300 people) and Dartford had the highest natural change (+700 people).

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## Introduction

Each year the Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes Mid-Year Population Estimates (MYPE). The latest figures are Mid-2023 population estimates which were released on 15 July 2024.

Alongside this release the ONS have also published information on the components of population change. These are either 'migration' which is people moving in or out of the area or 'natural change' which is the number of births and deaths that have occurred amongst the usually resident population.

The estimated resident population of an area includes all those people who usually live there, regardless of nationality. Arriving international migrants are included in the usually resident population if they remain in the UK for at least a year. Emigrants are excluded if they remain outside the UK for at least a year. This is consistent with the United Nations definition of a long-term migrant. Armed forces stationed outside of the UK are excluded. Students are taken to be usually resident at their term time address.

This bulletin also presents the **net** effect of the time series of components of population change from mid-2012 to mid-2023. A more detailed bulletin on the number of births and deaths per calendar year in Kent and a detailed report on migration in Kent (outlining where people are moving to and from) are available within the [population change](#) section on our website.

For more information on the amendments ONS have made to the population estimates please visit [the ONS website](#).

It is ONS policy to present all estimates rounded to the nearest hundred. Within this bulletin all numbers have been rounded separately and therefore may not sum.

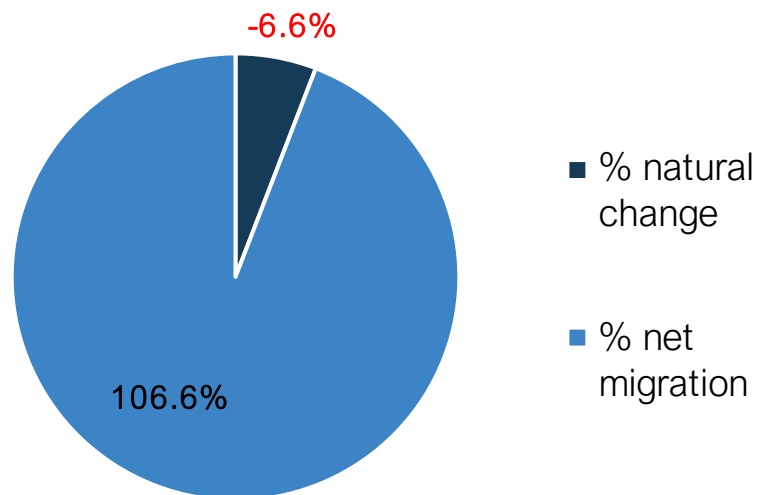
The data in this bulletin will be updated in the summer/autumn of 2025 when the mid-2024 population estimates are expected to be released.

## What caused Kent's population to change between 2022 and 2023

Kent's population grew by 15,800 people (1.0%) between mid-year 2022 and mid-year 2023. This is a result of a net figure of 16,800 people moving into Kent and a decrease of 1,000 people through natural change (less births than deaths). These figures equate to 106.6% increase due to net migration and a -6.6% decrease due to natural change.

**Chart 1: Components of population change in Kent: 2022 to 2023 MYPE**

### Components of population change: 2022 to 2023 in Kent



Source: Table MYBE3 -components of population change, The ONS. Chart presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

In six of Kent's local authority districts there were more deaths than births which resulted in a negative natural change. These are Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone & Hythe, Sevenoaks, Thanet and Tunbridge Wells. These areas have an older age profile than the rest of Kent so will naturally experience higher numbers of deaths to births. The birth rate is lowest in Folkestone & Hythe and the highest in Maidstone, as was seen the previous year.

All districts had a positive net migration, the highest being in Maidstone (+3,300 people). Maidstone had more births than deaths which resulted in an extra 300 people due to natural change. This resulted in the highest growth in population in Kent of +3,600 people. Thanet was the only Kent district that saw a population decrease, falling slightly between 2022 and 2023. Though Thanet saw positive net migration, this was outweighed by large negative natural change resulting in an overall reduction in population.

Table 1 shows the population change between 2022 and 2023 in Kent, Kent districts, Medway and England.

**Table 1: Components of population change between 2022 to 2023**

Area	Natural change	Net migration	Total change
<b>England</b>	<b>9,900</b>	<b>567,900</b>	<b>577,800</b>
<b>Kent</b>	<b>-1,000</b>	<b>16,800</b>	<b>15,800</b>
Ashford	0	2,500	2,500
Canterbury	-600	2,300	1,700
Dartford	700	1,200	1,900
Dover	-500	1,500	1,000
Folkestone & Hythe	-600	1,300	600
Gravesham	300	600	900
Maidstone	300	3,300	3,600
Sevenoaks	-100	200	100
Swale	100	1,200	1,300
Thanet	-600	300	-200
Tonbridge & Malling	0	1,500	1,500
Tunbridge Wells	-100	900	800
<b>Medway U.A.</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>4,200</b>

Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright)

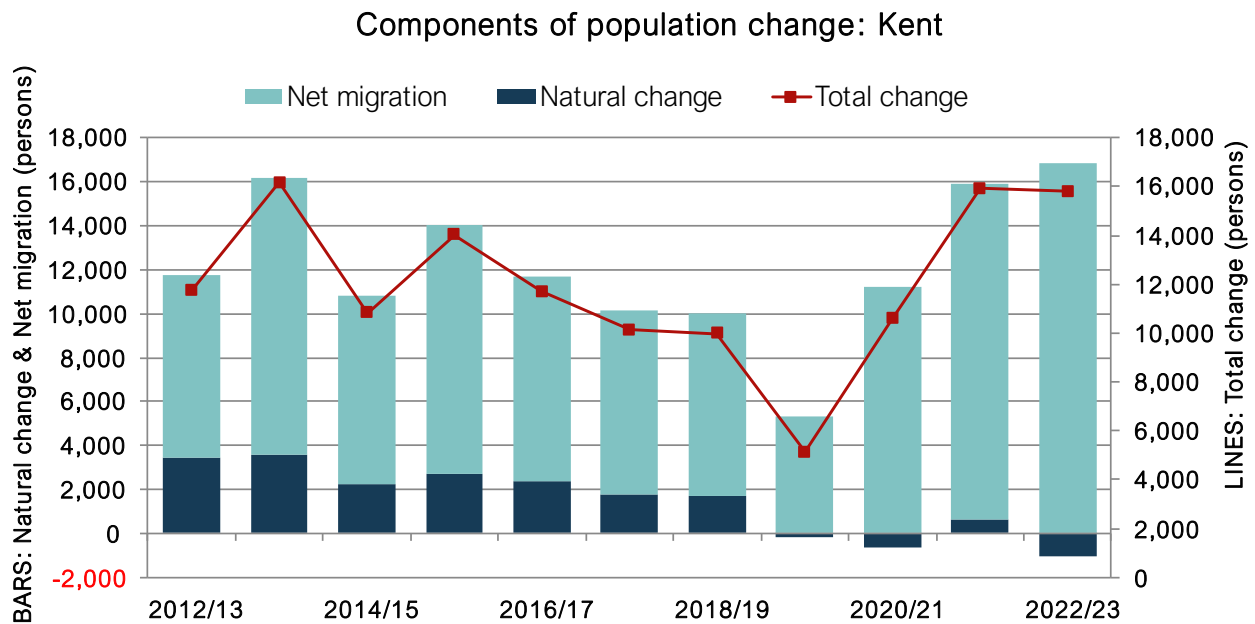
Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

All figures have been separately rounded to the nearest hundred so may not sum

## Time series analysis: Kent and England 2012 to 2023

In Kent, the highest increase due to natural change was seen in mid 2013/14 with +3,600 people accounting for 22.3% of the total population change. The impact of natural change has generally reduced over the years since then, and since 2019/20 Kent has experienced increasing negative natural change where there were more deaths than births in the county, though it did increase slightly having a positive natural change of 600 people during mid 2021/22.

Net migration accounts for a very large percentage of population change. Kent saw 16,800 residents migrating to Kent in 2022/23, the highest number of people migrating to Kent since 2012. Chart 2 and table 2 show the population change in Kent between 2012/13 and 2022/23.

**Chart 2: Components of population change in Kent: 2012 to 2023**


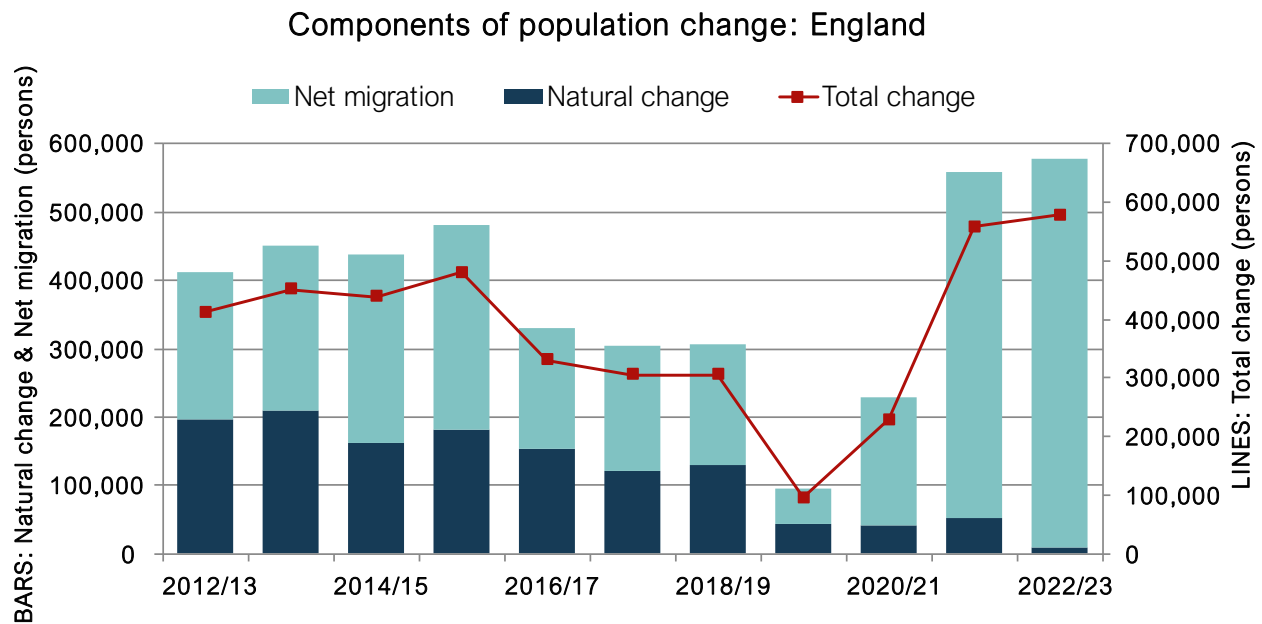
Source: MYBE3-Summary of components of population change, ONS. Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 2: Components of population change in Kent: 2012 to 2023**

Year	Natural change	% natural change	Net migration	% net migration	Total change
2012-2013	3,400	29.2%	8,300	70.8%	11,800
2013-2014	3,600	22.3%	12,600	77.7%	16,200
2014-2015	2,200	20.7%	8,600	79.3%	10,800
2015-2016	2,700	19.6%	11,300	80.4%	14,000
2016-2017	2,400	20.3%	9,300	79.7%	11,700
2017-2018	1,800	17.5%	8,400	82.5%	10,100
2018-2019	1,700	17.2%	8,300	82.8%	10,000
2019-2020	-200	-3.6%	5,300	103.6%	5,100
2020-2021	-600	-6.0%	11,200	106.0%	10,600
2021-2022	600	4.0%	15,300	96.0%	15,900
2022-2023	-1,000	-6.6%	16,800	106.6%	15,800

Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright). Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council  
 All figures have been separately rounded to the nearest hundred so may not sum  
 Percentages have been calculated using unrounded numbers

Nationally the components of population change have been more balanced. However, between mid-2022/23 England has seen the highest proportion of population change due to net migration. Chart 3 and table 3 show the population change in England since 2012/13.

**Chart 3: Components of population change in England: 2012 to 2023**


Source: MYBE3-Summary of components of population change, ONS. Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 3: Components of population change in England: 2012 to 2023**

Year	Natural change	% natural change	Net migration	% net migration	Total change
2012-2013	195,600	47.5%	216,300	52.5%	411,900
2013-2014	208,600	46.2%	243,100	53.8%	451,600
2014-2015	162,300	37.0%	276,000	63.0%	438,400
2015-2016	181,100	37.7%	299,300	62.3%	480,400
2016-2017	153,000	46.3%	177,500	53.7%	330,500
2017-2018	121,300	39.8%	183,700	60.2%	305,000
2018-2019	130,300	42.6%	175,300	57.4%	305,500
2019-2020	44,300	46.2%	51,600	53.8%	95,900
2020-2021	40,700	17.8%	188,300	82.2%	228,900
2021-2022	52,900	9.5%	504,700	90.5%	557,700
2022-2023	9,900	1.7%	567,900	98.3%	577,800

Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright). Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council  
 All figures have been separately rounded to the nearest hundred so may not sum  
 Percentages have been calculated using unrounded numbers

## Time series analysis: Kent local authority districts 2012 to 2023

The time series of the components of population change for each Kent district are broadly similar to the county profile. However, there are some local variations.

Natural change in the coastal districts of Dover, Folkestone & Hythe and Thanet has historically been negative, meaning that there are more people dying than are being born. This is attributed to the older age profile of these districts.

Canterbury is another district which has historically seen negative natural change but for different reasons. Canterbury has a young age profile, due to it being a university town. However, fewer young women are bearing children. The low fertility rate in the district is outweighed by the number of deaths, causing negative natural change. Within these districts, all population growth has been a result of net migration.

Gravesham is the only area to experience a more even balance of natural change and net migration than Kent as a whole, between 2012 and 2015. However, recent years have seen Gravesham's population change because of a higher natural change and negative net migration.

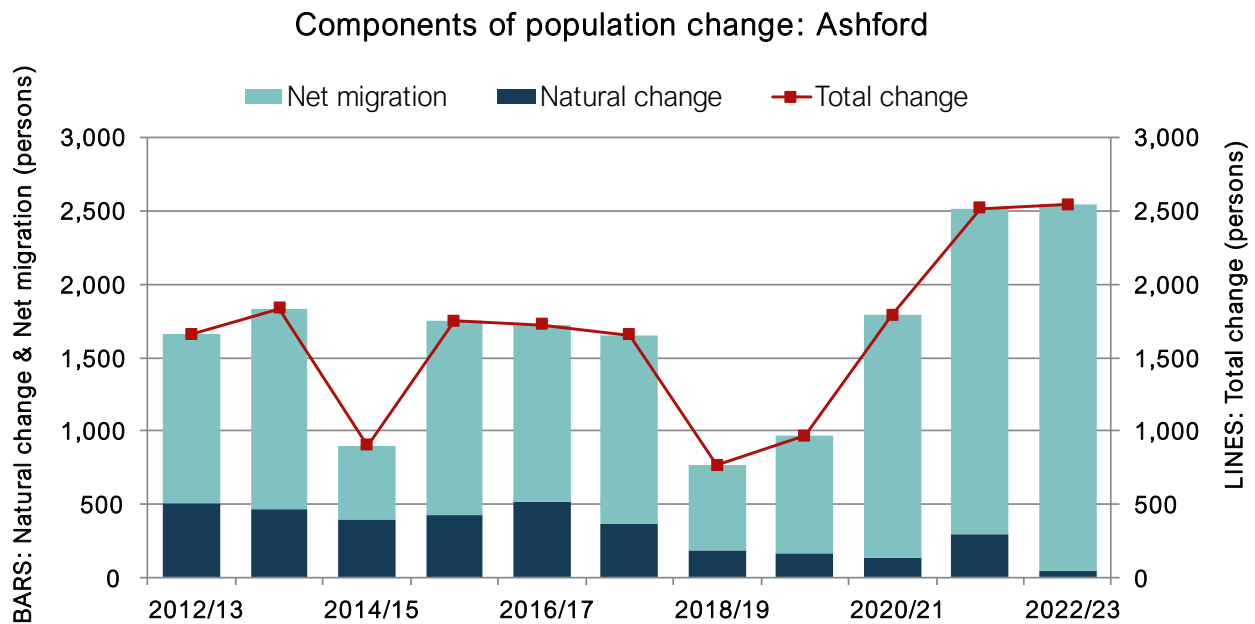
During 2019/20 Sevenoaks saw negative natural change for the first time. This was seen again in 2022/23.

Natural change in Tunbridge Wells has gradually been decreasing until 2019/20 where it became negative for the first times since 2012/13. Net migration has fluctuated considerably over the same time scale and during four of the past 11 years Tunbridge Wells has seen negative net migration, however, since 2019/20 the net migration has increased.

Although there has been mostly positive natural change in Ashford, Dartford, Maidstone, and Swale, and Tonbridge & Malling net migration has been greater.

The time series for each Kent district and Medway Unitary Authority is presented in the tables and charts on pages 7 to 19.



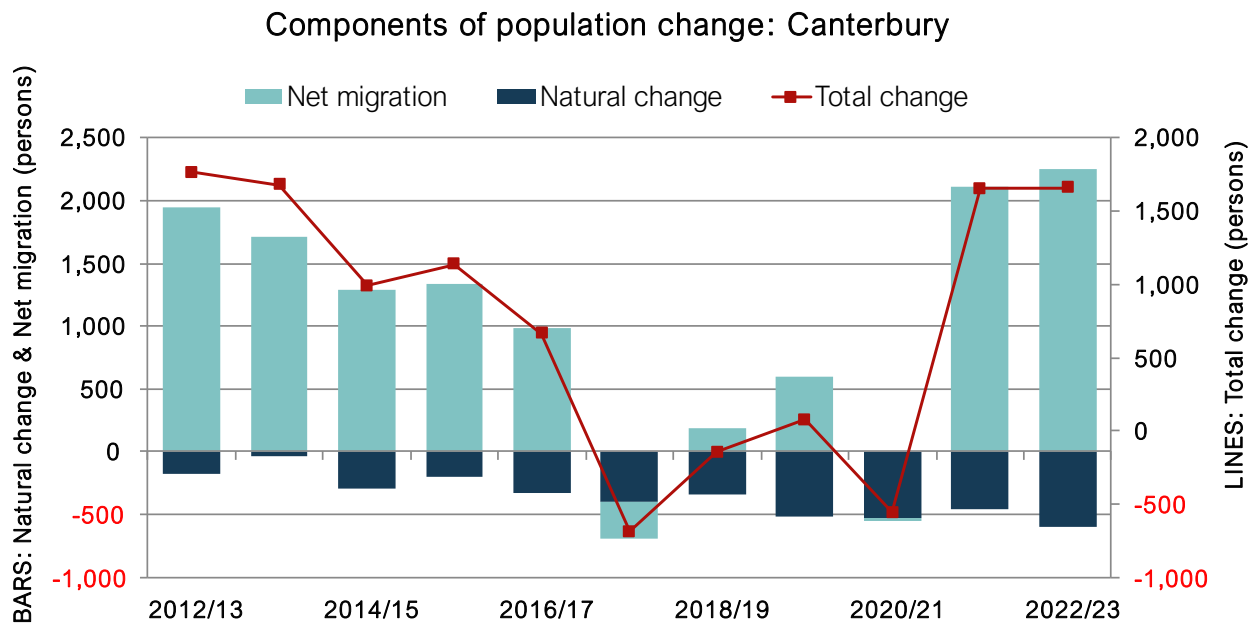
**Chart 4: Components of population change in Ashford: 2012 to 2023**


Source: MYBE3-Summary of components of population change, ONS. Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 4: Components of population change in Ashford: 2012 to 2023**

Year	Natural change	% natural change	Net migration	% net migration	Total change
2012-2013	500	30.7%	1,200	69.3%	1,700
2013-2014	500	25.3%	1,400	74.7%	1,800
2014-2015	400	44.4%	500	55.6%	900
2015-2016	400	24.1%	1,300	75.9%	1,700
2016-2017	500	30.1%	1,200	69.9%	1,700
2017-2018	400	22.0%	1,300	78.0%	1,700
2018-2019	200	24.3%	600	75.7%	800
2019-2020	200	16.5%	800	83.5%	1,000
2020-2021	100	7.7%	1,700	92.3%	1,800
2021-2022	300	11.7%	2,200	88.3%	2,500
2022-2023	0	1.8%	2,500	98.2%	2,500

Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright). Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council  
 All figures have been separately rounded to the nearest hundred so may not sum  
 Percentages have been calculated using unrounded numbers

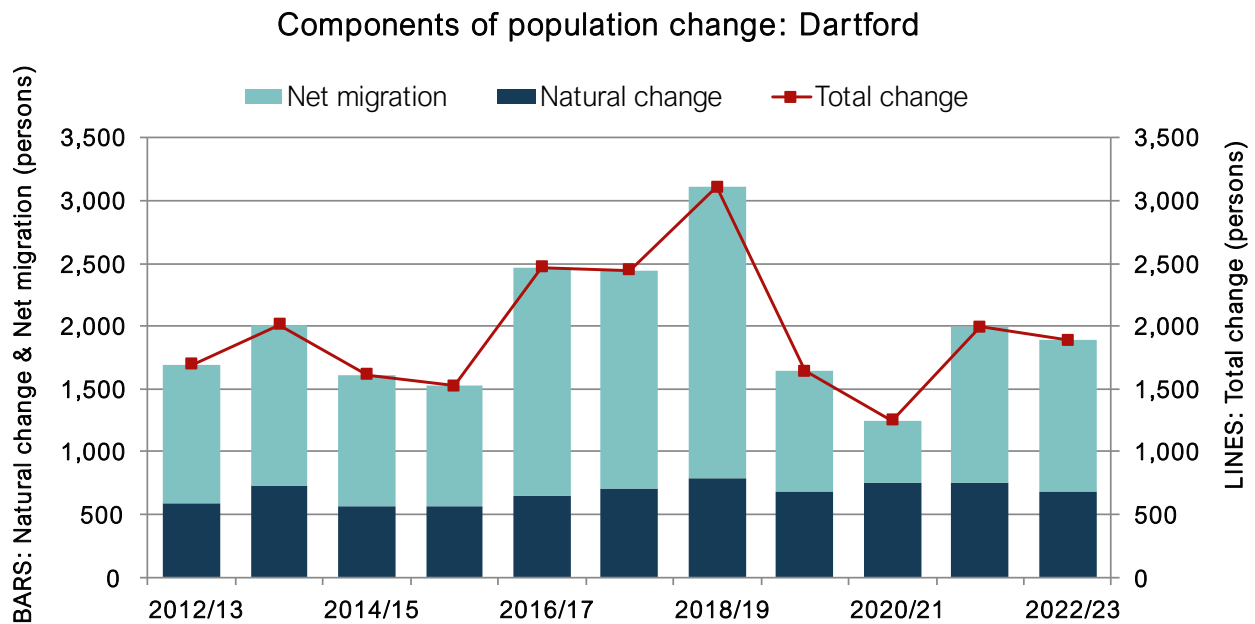
**Chart 5: Components of population change in Canterbury: 2012 to 2023**


Source: MYBE3-Summary of components of population change, ONS. Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 5: Components of population change in Canterbury: 2012 to 2023**

Year	Natural change	% natural change	Net migration	% net migration	Total change
2012-2013	-200	-10.1%	1,900	110.1%	1,800
2013-2014	0	-2.1%	1,700	102.1%	1,700
2014-2015	-300	-30.1%	1,300	130.1%	1,000
2015-2016	-200	-17.1%	1,300	117.1%	1,100
2016-2017	-300	-49.1%	1,000	149.1%	700
2017-2018	-400	58.6%	-300	41.4%	-700
2018-2019	-300	228.6%	200	-128.6%	-100
2019-2020	-500	-660.3%	600	760.3%	100
2020-2021	-500	94.1%	0	5.9%	-600
2021-2022	-500	-27.7%	2,100	127.7%	1,700
2022-2023	-600	-36.0%	2,300	136.0%	1,700

Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright). Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council  
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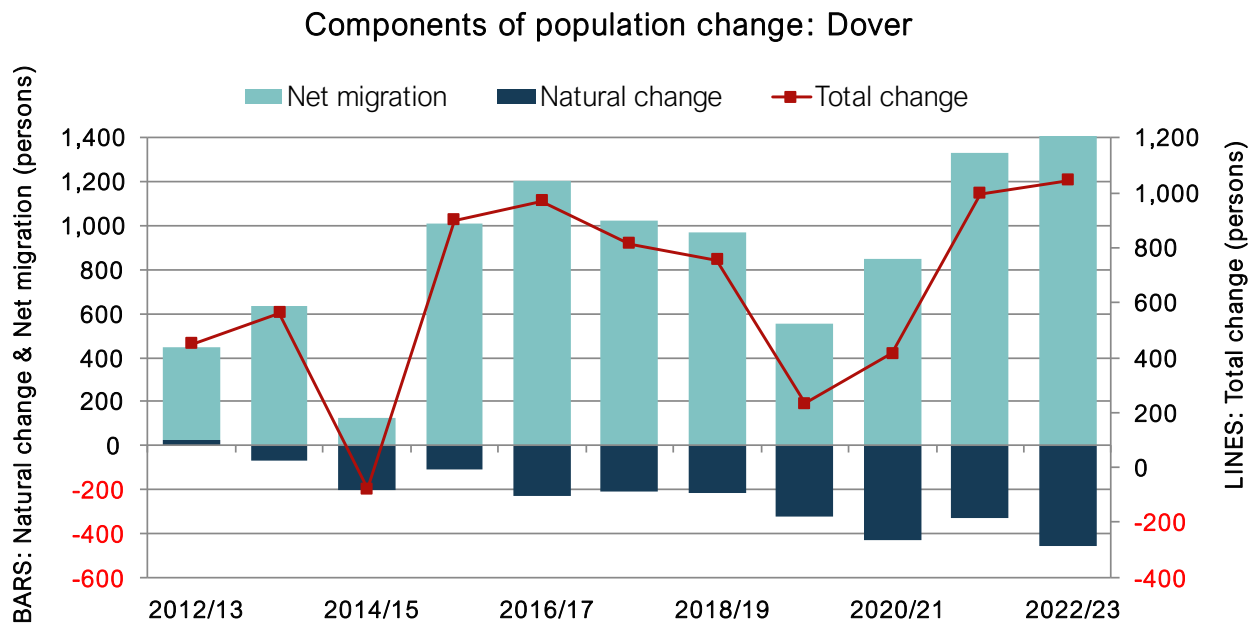
**Chart 6: Components of population change in Dartford: 2012 to 2023**


Source: MYBE3-Summary of components of population change, ONS. Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 6: Components of population change in Dartford: 2012 to 2023**

Year	Natural change	% natural change	Net migration	% net migration	Total change
2012-2013	600	34.6%	1,100	65.4%	1,700
2013-2014	700	36.1%	1,300	63.9%	2,000
2014-2015	600	35.1%	1,000	64.9%	1,600
2015-2016	600	37.2%	1,000	62.8%	1,500
2016-2017	700	26.3%	1,800	73.7%	2,500
2017-2018	700	29.1%	1,700	70.9%	2,400
2018-2019	800	25.2%	2,300	74.8%	3,100
2019-2020	700	41.8%	1,000	58.2%	1,600
2020-2021	800	60.8%	500	39.2%	1,200
2021-2022	800	37.8%	1,200	62.2%	2,000
2022-2023	700	36.4%	1,200	63.6%	1,900

Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright). Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council  
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**Chart 7: Components of population change in Dover: 2012 to 2023**


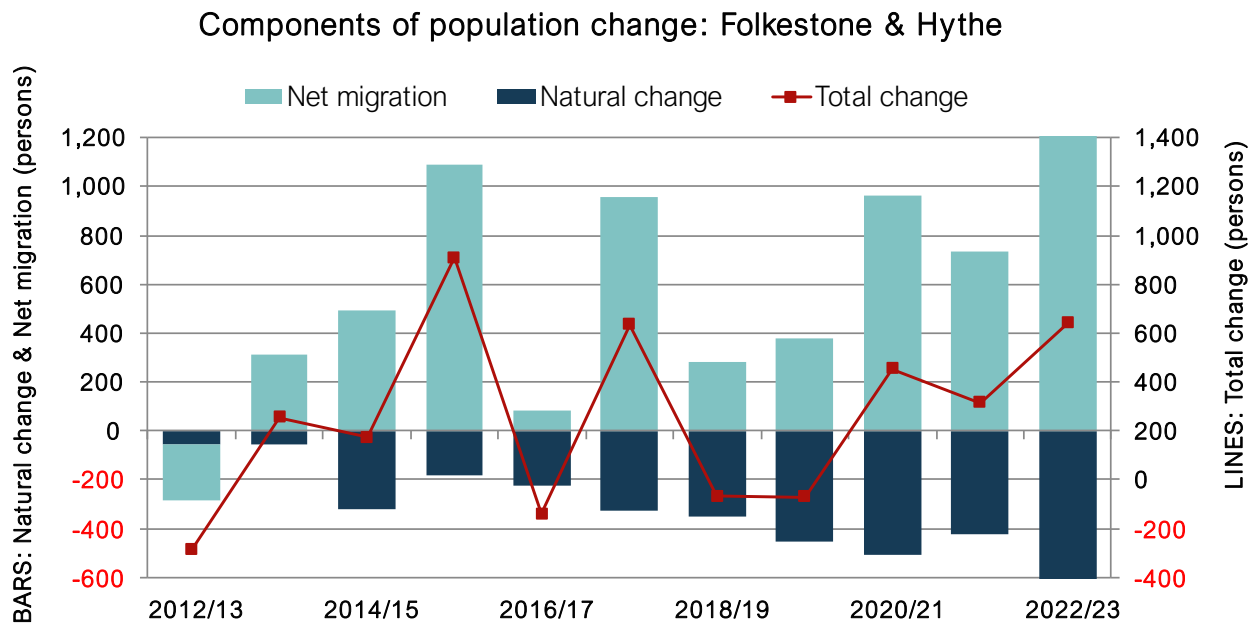
Source: MYBE3-Summary of components of population change, ONS. Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 7: Components of population change in Dover: 2012 to 2023**

Year	Natural change	% natural change	Net migration	% net migration	Total change
2012-2013	0	6.0%	400	94.0%	500
2013-2014	-100	-12.6%	600	112.6%	600
2014-2015	-200	266.2%	100	-166.2%	-100
2015-2016	-100	-11.8%	1,000	111.8%	900
2016-2017	-200	-23.8%	1,200	123.8%	1,000
2017-2018	-200	-25.7%	1,000	125.7%	800
2018-2019	-200	-28.4%	1,000	128.4%	800
2019-2020	-300	-138.4%	600	238.4%	200
2020-2021	-400	-104.3%	800	204.3%	400
2021-2022	-300	-33.4%	1,300	133.4%	1,000
2022-2023	-500	-43.6%	1,500	143.6%	1,000

Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright). Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council  
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**Chart 8: Components of population change in Folkestone & Hythe: 2012 to 2023**

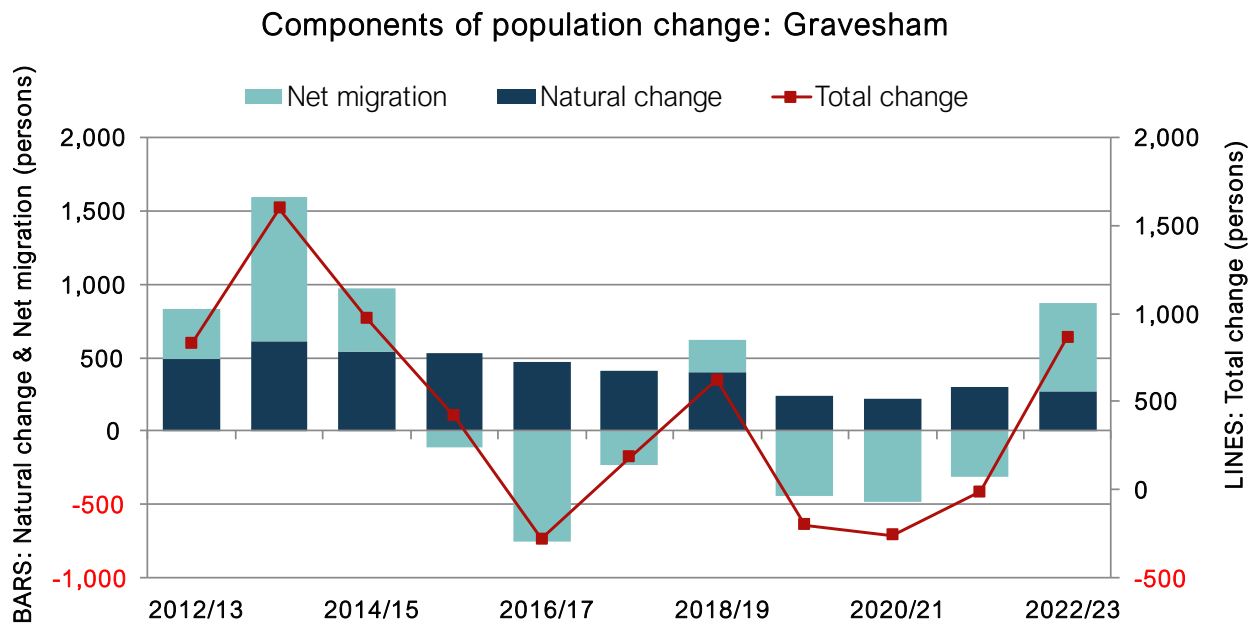


Source: MYBE3-Summary of components of population change, ONS. Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 8: Components of population change in Folkestone & Hythe: 2012 to 2023**

Year	Natural change	% natural change	Net migration	% net migration	Total change
2012-2013	-100	18.5%	-200	81.5%	-300
2013-2014	-100	-22.0%	300	122.0%	300
2014-2015	-300	-183.3%	500	283.3%	200
2015-2016	-200	-20.2%	1,100	120.2%	900
2016-2017	-200	161.4%	100	-61.4%	-100
2017-2018	-300	-51.2%	1,000	151.2%	600
2018-2019	-400	513.0%	300	-413.0%	-100
2019-2020	-500	626.4%	400	-526.4%	-100
2020-2021	-500	-112.6%	1,000	212.6%	500
2021-2022	-400	-133.2%	700	233.2%	300
2022-2023	-600	-97.3%	1,300	197.3%	600

Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright). Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council  
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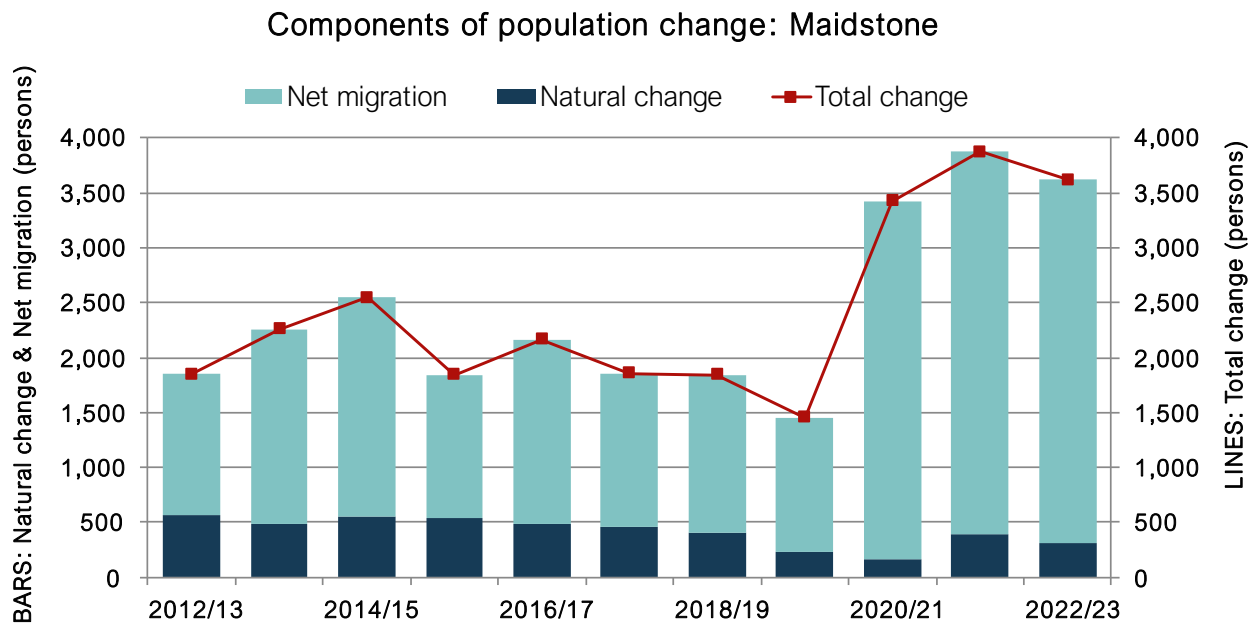
**Chart 9: Components of population change in Gravesham: 2012 to 2023**


Source: MYBE3-Summary of components of population change, ONS. Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 9: Components of population change in Gravesham: 2012 to 2023**

Year	Natural change	% natural change	Net migration	% net migration	Total change
2012-2013	500	59.4%	300	40.6%	800
2013-2014	600	38.5%	1,000	61.5%	1,600
2014-2015	500	55.6%	400	44.4%	1,000
2015-2016	500	125.8%	-100	-25.8%	400
2016-2017	500	-168.2%	-800	268.2%	-300
2017-2018	400	226.2%	-200	-126.2%	200
2018-2019	400	65.0%	200	35.0%	600
2019-2020	200	-118.3%	-400	218.3%	-200
2020-2021	200	-82.9%	-500	182.9%	-300
2021-2022	300	-2307.7%	-300	2407.7%	0
2022-2023	300	31.0%	600	69.0%	900

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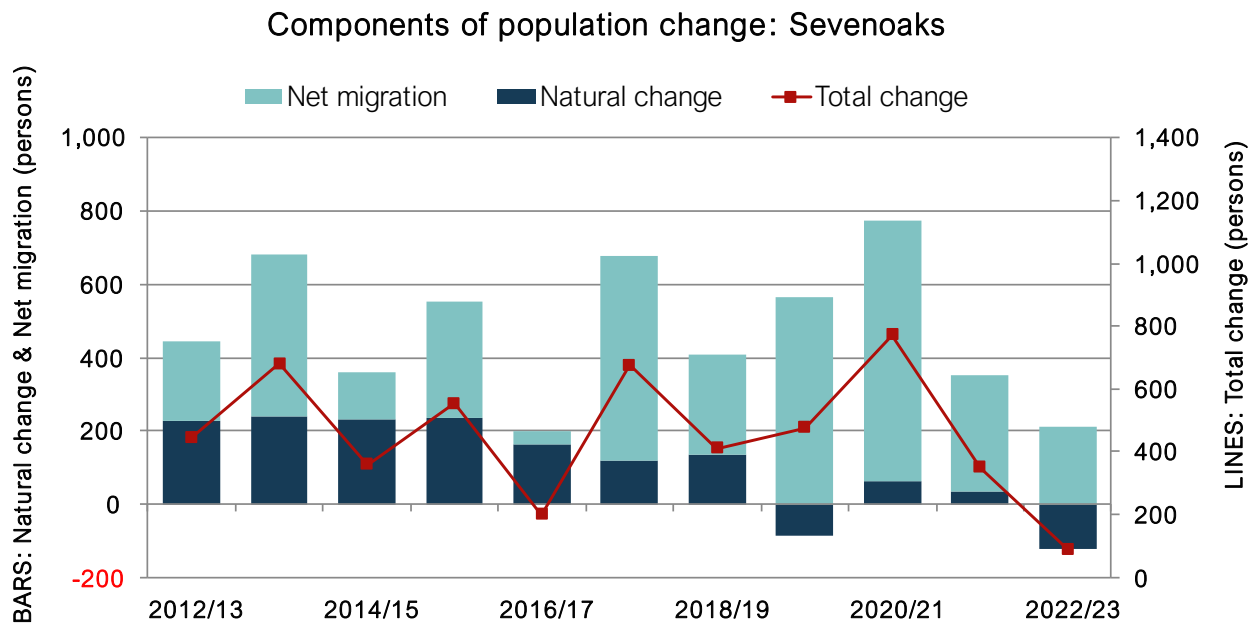
**Chart 10: Components of population change in Maidstone: 2012 to 2023**


Source: MYBE3-Summary of components of population change, ONS. Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 10: Components of population change in Maidstone: 2012 to 2023**

Year	Natural change	% natural change	Net migration	% net migration	Total change
2012-2013	600	30.8%	1,300	69.2%	1,900
2013-2014	500	21.8%	1,800	78.2%	2,300
2014-2015	600	21.7%	2,000	78.3%	2,500
2015-2016	500	29.2%	1,300	70.8%	1,800
2016-2017	500	22.6%	1,700	77.4%	2,200
2017-2018	500	24.5%	1,400	75.5%	1,900
2018-2019	400	22.1%	1,400	77.9%	1,800
2019-2020	200	16.3%	1,200	83.7%	1,500
2020-2021	200	4.8%	3,300	95.2%	3,400
2021-2022	400	10.3%	3,500	89.7%	3,900
2022-2023	300	8.5%	3,300	91.5%	3,600

Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright). Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council  
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**Chart 11: Components of population change in Sevenoaks: 2012 to 2023**


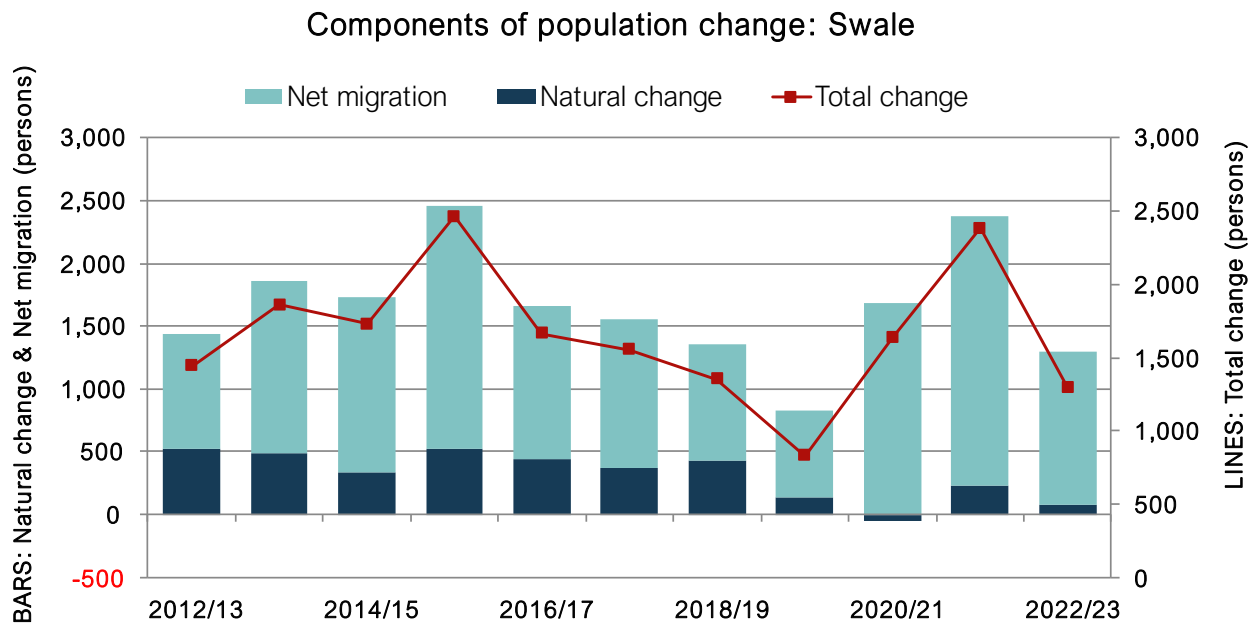
Source: MYBE3-Summary of components of population change, ONS. Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 11: Components of population change in Sevenoaks: 2012 to 2023**

Year	Natural change	% natural change	Net migration	% net migration	Total change
2012-2013	200	51.1%	200	48.9%	400
2013-2014	200	35.1%	400	64.9%	700
2014-2015	200	64.9%	100	35.1%	400
2015-2016	200	42.8%	300	57.2%	600
2016-2017	200	80.5%	0	19.5%	200
2017-2018	100	17.3%	600	82.7%	700
2018-2019	100	32.4%	300	67.6%	400
2019-2020	-100	-18.3%	600	118.3%	500
2020-2021	100	8.3%	700	91.7%	800
2021-2022	0	10.3%	300	89.7%	400
2022-2023	-100	-136.0%	200	236.0%	100

Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright). Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council  
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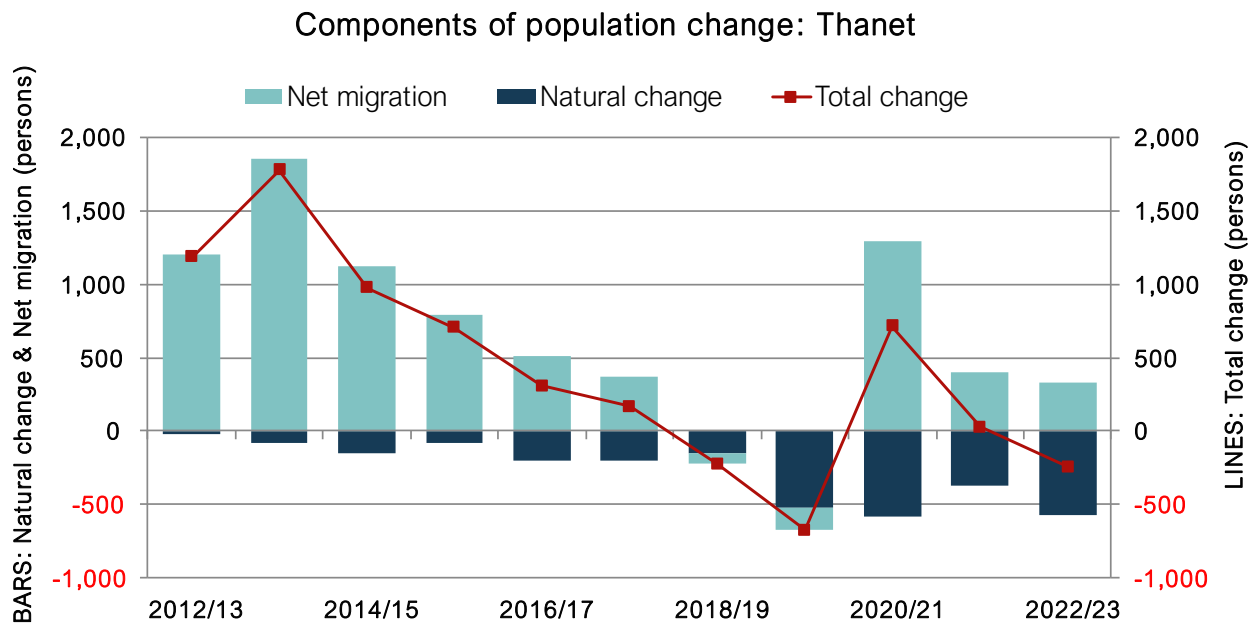
**Chart 12: Components of population change in Swale: 2012 to 2023**


Source: MYBE3-Summary of components of population change, ONS. Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 12: Components of population change in Swale: 2012 to 2023**

Year	Natural change	% natural change	Net migration	% net migration	Total change
2012-2013	500	36.0%	900	64.0%	1,400
2013-2014	500	26.2%	1,400	73.8%	1,900
2014-2015	300	19.3%	1,400	80.7%	1,700
2015-2016	500	21.3%	1,900	78.7%	2,500
2016-2017	400	26.4%	1,200	73.6%	1,700
2017-2018	400	24.2%	1,200	75.8%	1,600
2018-2019	400	31.6%	900	68.4%	1,400
2019-2020	100	17.1%	700	82.9%	800
2020-2021	-100	-3.2%	1,700	103.2%	1,600
2021-2022	200	9.5%	2,200	90.5%	2,400
2022-2023	100	6.3%	1,200	93.7%	1,300

Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright). Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council  
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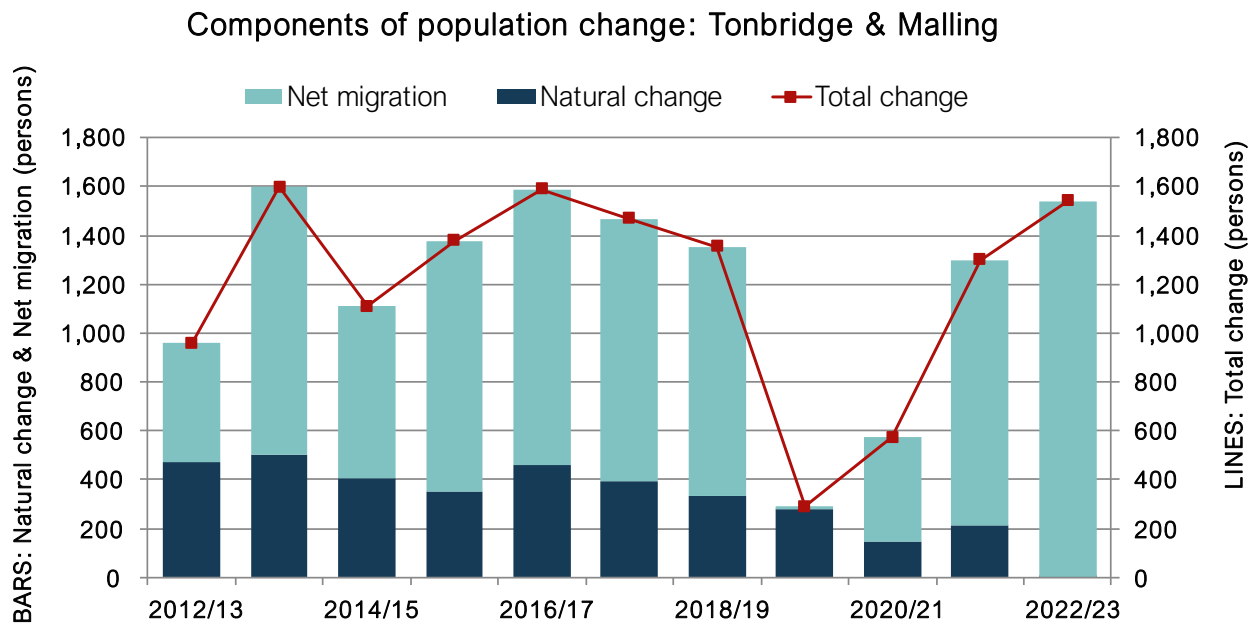
**Chart 13: Components of population change in Thanet: 2012 to 2023**


Source: MYBE3-Summary of components of population change, ONS. Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 13: Components of population change in Thanet: 2012 to 2023**

Year	Natural change	% natural change	Net migration	% net migration	Total change
2012-2013	0	-1.7%	1,200	101.7%	1,200
2013-2014	-100	-4.5%	1,900	104.5%	1,800
2014-2015	-200	-15.7%	1,100	115.7%	1,000
2015-2016	-100	-12.1%	800	112.1%	700
2016-2017	-200	-65.8%	500	165.8%	300
2017-2018	-200	-120.2%	400	220.2%	200
2018-2019	-200	69.2%	-100	30.8%	-200
2019-2020	-500	77.5%	-200	22.5%	-700
2020-2021	-600	-82.0%	1,300	182.0%	700
2021-2022	-400	-1488.0%	400	1588.0%	0
2022-2023	-600	236.5%	300	-136.5%	-200

Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright). Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council  
 All figures have been separately rounded to the nearest hundred so may not sum  
 Percentages have been calculated using unrounded numbers

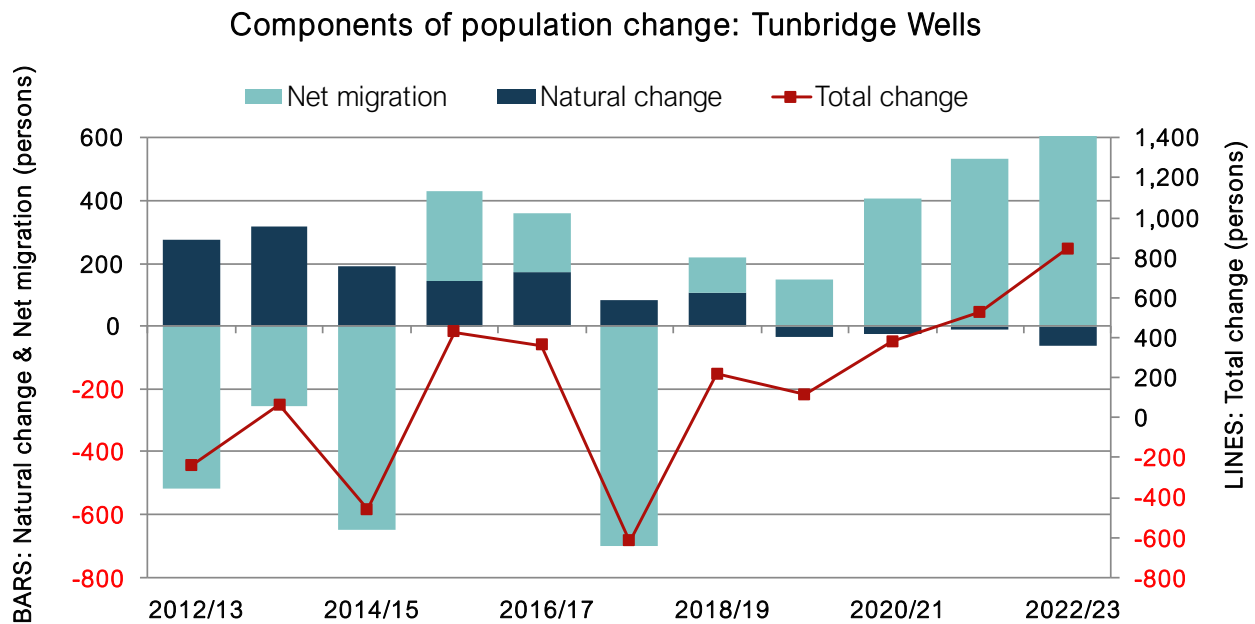
**Chart 14: Components of population change in Tonbridge & Malling: 2012 to 2023**


Source: MYBE3-Summary of components of population change, ONS. Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 14: Components of population change in Tonbridge & Malling: 2012 to 2023**

Year	Natural change	% natural change	Net migration	% net migration	Total change
2012-2013	500	49.4%	500	50.6%	1,000
2013-2014	500	31.4%	1,100	68.6%	1,600
2014-2015	400	36.5%	700	63.5%	1,100
2015-2016	400	25.5%	1,000	74.5%	1,400
2016-2017	500	28.9%	1,100	71.1%	1,600
2017-2018	400	26.8%	1,100	73.2%	1,500
2018-2019	300	24.6%	1,000	75.4%	1,400
2019-2020	300	97.2%	0	2.8%	300
2020-2021	100	25.7%	400	74.3%	600
2021-2022	200	16.4%	1,100	83.6%	1,300
2022-2023	0	0.1%	1,500	99.9%	1,500

Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright). Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council  
 All figures have been separately rounded to the nearest hundred so may not sum  
 Percentages have been calculated using unrounded numbers

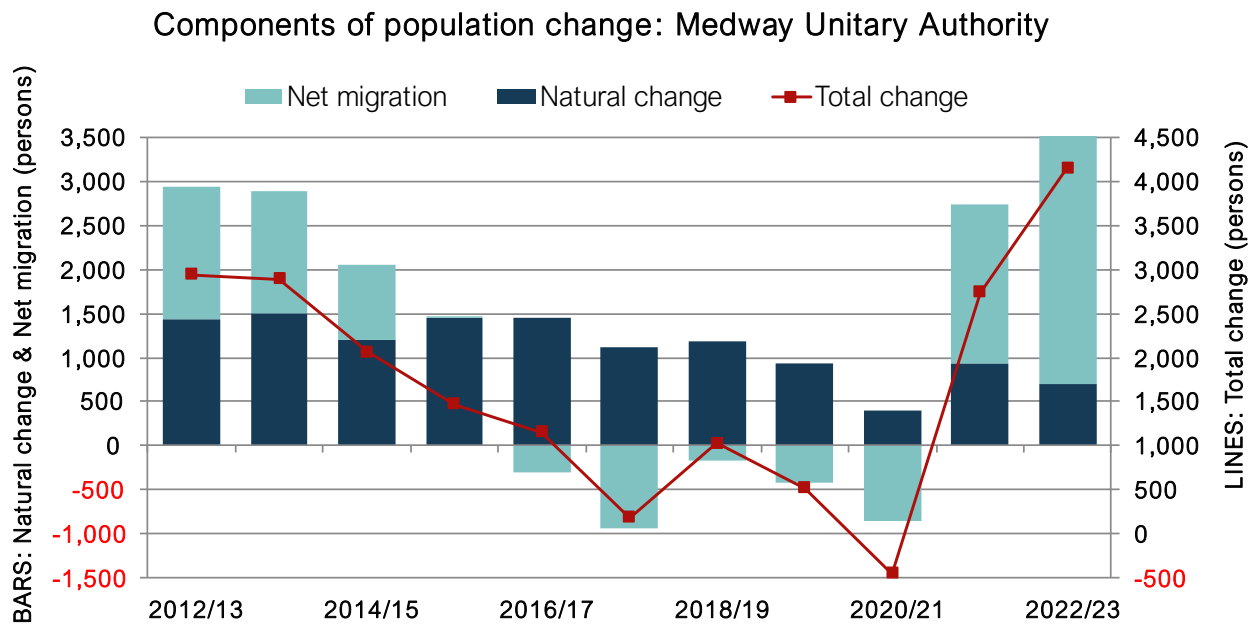
**Chart 15: Components of population change in Tunbridge Wells: 2012 to 2023**


Source: MYBE3-Summary of components of population change, ONS. Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 15: Components of population change in Tunbridge Wells: 2012 to 2023**

Year	Natural change	% natural change	Net migration	% net migration	Total change
2012-2013	300	-116.4%	-500	216.4%	-200
2013-2014	300	498.4%	-300	-398.4%	100
2014-2015	200	-41.2%	-600	141.2%	-500
2015-2016	100	33.3%	300	66.7%	400
2016-2017	200	47.6%	200	52.4%	400
2017-2018	100	-13.4%	-700	113.4%	-600
2018-2019	100	48.2%	100	51.8%	200
2019-2020	0	-30.1%	100	130.1%	100
2020-2021	0	-7.1%	400	107.1%	400
2021-2022	0	-1.9%	500	101.9%	500
2022-2023	-100	-7.6%	900	107.6%	800

Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright). Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council  
 All figures have been separately rounded to the nearest hundred so may not sum  
 Percentages have been calculated using unrounded numbers

**Chart 16: Components of population change in Medway: 2012 to 2023**


Source: MYBE3-Summary of components of population change, ONS. Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 16: Components of population change in Medway: 2012 to 2023**

Year	Natural change	% natural change	Net migration	% net migration	Total change
2012-2013	1,400	48.7%	1,500	51.3%	2,900
2013-2014	1,500	52.1%	1,400	47.9%	2,900
2014-2015	1,200	58.3%	900	41.7%	2,100
2015-2016	1,500	99.4%	0	0.6%	1,500
2016-2017	1,500	126.7%	-300	-26.7%	1,100
2017-2018	1,100	636.6%	-900	-536.6%	200
2018-2019	1,200	116.3%	-200	-16.3%	1,000
2019-2020	900	182.6%	-400	-82.6%	500
2020-2021	400	-85.2%	-900	185.2%	-500
2021-2022	900	34.2%	1,800	65.8%	2,700
2022-2023	700	16.8%	3,500	83.2%	4,200

Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright). Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council  
 All figures have been separately rounded to the nearest hundred so may not sum  
 Percentages have been calculated using unrounded numbers

## Related documents

Information can be found on our [Population & Census](#) webpages about the population and the 2021 Census.