

2023 Mid-year population estimates: Total population in Kent

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 (KCC) area which excludes Medway

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[Kent facts and figures](#)

This bulletin presents the 2023 mid-year population estimates. Population change between 2022 and 2023 is also presented.

Summary of findings

- The 2023 mid-year population estimates show that Kent is the most populous county council area in the South East with a population of 1,610,300 people.
- Kent’s population grew by 1.0% (15,800 people) between 2022 and 2023. This is equal to the population growth in the South East and England.
- Kent has a population density of 4.5 persons per hectare. This is higher than England (4.4) but lower than the South East (5.0).
- Dartford has the highest population density in Kent of 16.6 people per hectare. Ashford has the lowest population density of 2.4 people per hectare.
- Maidstone has the largest population of Kent’s local authorities with 184,200 people. This is equivalent to 11.4% of Kent’s total population.

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Introduction

This bulletin presents the national population estimate with the population of each of the former Government office regions in England. It then focuses specifically on the South East region and compares Kent's population alongside other counties within the South East region. It ends by looking at the total population of each of the Kent local authority districts

Only total population estimates are presented here but further details from the 2023 estimates are available on our [population and census webpages](#) in the bulletins and excel toolkits listed below:

- '2023 Mid-year population estimates: Age and Sex profile' presents the age and gender profile of each local authority district in Kent in the form of tables and population pyramids.
- 'Time series of Mid-year population estimates 2003-2023' presents total population between 2003 and 2023.
- 'What's causing Kent's population growth?' examines the reasons behind the changes in population.
- 'Interactive population estimates toolkit' allows access to population estimates for any chosen age group for all 12 Kent local authority districts and Kent County as a whole, between 2003 and 2023.

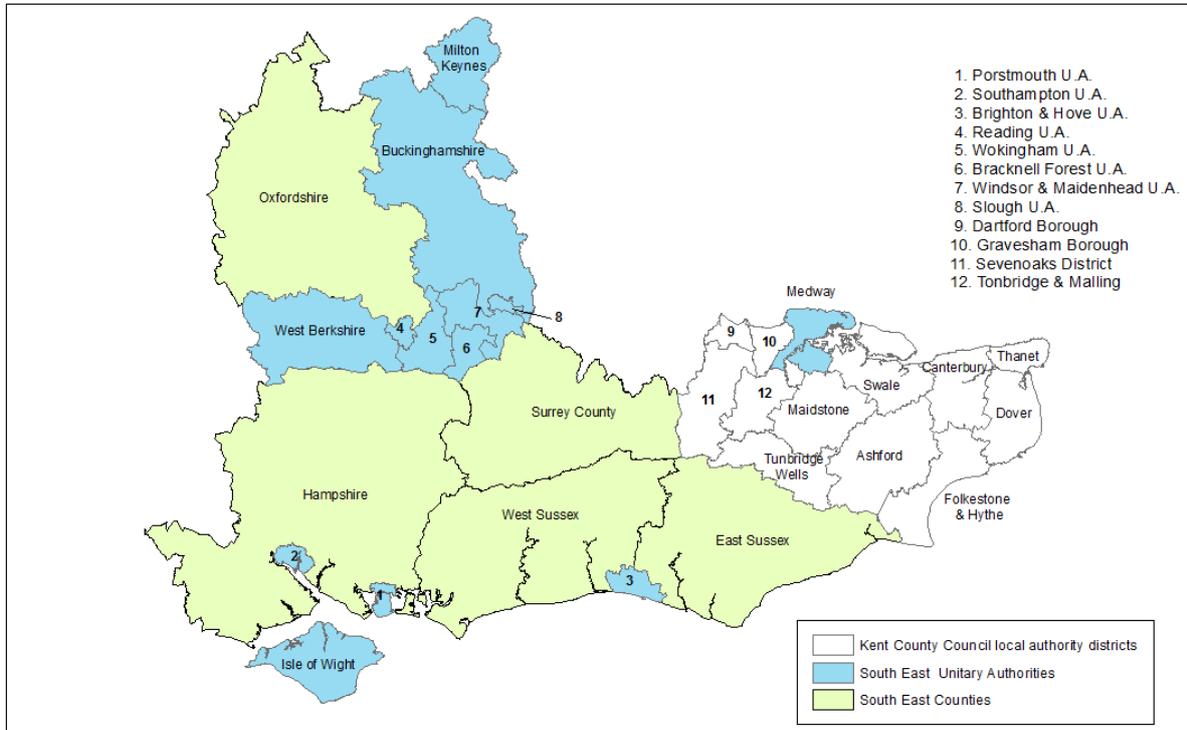
It is ONS policy to present all estimates rounded to the nearest hundred. Within this bulletin all numbers have been individually rounded and therefore may not sum. Percentages have been calculated using unrounded numbers.

The data in this bulletin will be updated in summer of 2025 when the 2024 mid-year population estimates will be released.

Geographical reference map

The map below shows the counties, unitary authorities in the South East and local authorities in Kent.

Former Government Office Region - Counties, Unitary Authorities and Kent Local Authority Districts



This map produced by Kent Analytics: Kent County Council
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Total population of England and the regions

The 2023 mid-year population estimate for England is 57,690,300. This is an increase of 577,800 people, or 1.0% more than the 2022 mid-year population estimate.

The South East has the largest population of all the regions with 9,482,500 people. The region with the smallest population is the North East with 2,711,400 people.

The South East region saw the largest absolute increase in population between 2022 and 2023 growing by 95,200 people (1.0%). Four regions saw the highest growth in percentage terms (North East, North West, East Midlands and West Midlands) all with a 1.1% increase.

London is the most densely populated region with 56.9 people per hectare and the South West the least densely populated with 2.4 people per hectare. Within the South East there are 5.0 people per hectare.

The population change between 2022 and 2023 for England and each of the former Government Office regions is presented in Table 1 and Chart 1.

Table 1: 2022 to 2023 Mid-year population change: Former Government Office Regions & England

Area	2022 MYPE	2023 MYPE	22-23 change	% change	Area (Hectare)	Density (people per Ha)
England	57,112,500	57,690,300	577,800	1.0%	13,031,001	4.4
South East	9,387,300	9,482,500	95,200	1.0%	1,907,305	5.0
London	8,869,000	8,945,300	76,300	0.9%	157,214	56.9
North West	7,515,700	7,600,100	84,400	1.1%	1,410,721	5.4
East	6,401,400	6,468,700	67,200	1.0%	1,911,873	3.4
West Midlands	6,017,000	6,085,700	68,700	1.1%	1,299,827	4.7
South West	5,766,900	5,811,300	44,300	0.8%	2,383,734	2.4
Yorkshire & the Humber	5,538,200	5,594,100	55,900	1.0%	1,540,535	3.6
East Midlands	4,934,800	4,991,300	56,400	1.1%	1,562,347	3.2
North East	2,682,100	2,711,400	29,300	1.1%	857,444	3.2

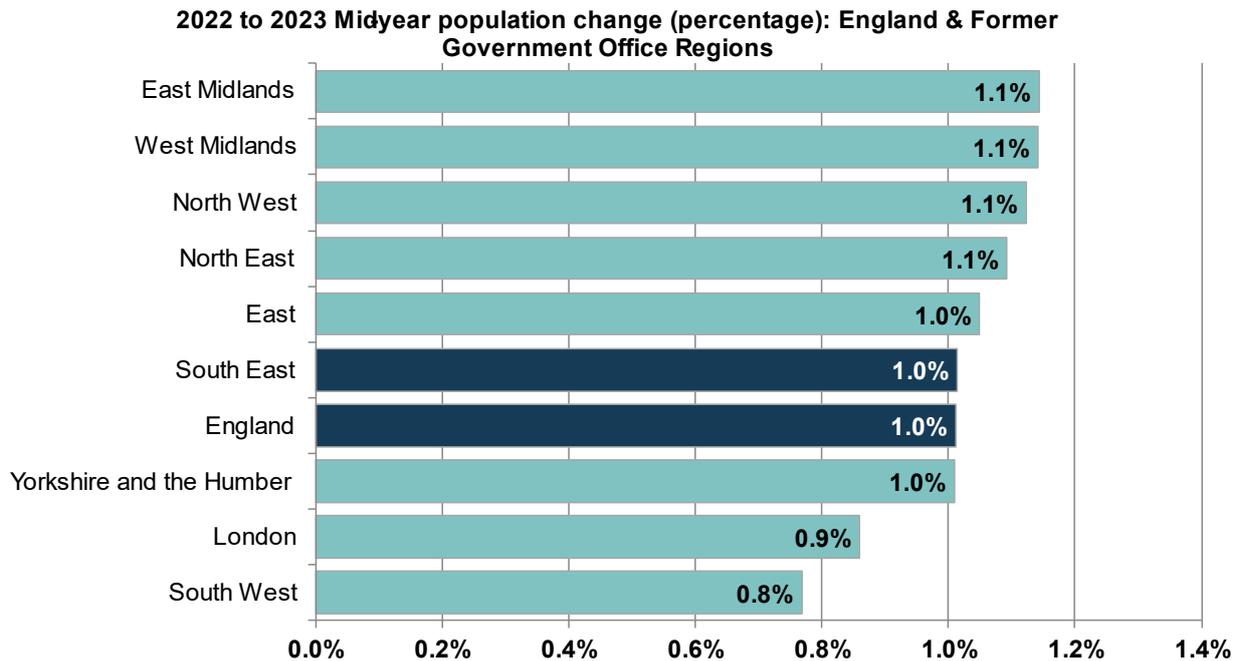
Source: 2022 and 2023 MYPE: Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright

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All figures are separately rounded to the nearest hundred and therefore may not sum.

Percentages and densities are calculated using unrounded numbers

Chart 1: 2022 to 2023 Mid-year population change (%): Regions



Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright), Chart produced by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Total population South East counties

The 2023 mid-year population estimates show that Kent is the most populous county council area in the South East with a population of 1,610,300 people. This also means that Kent remains the largest non-metropolitan local authority area in England.

Hampshire is the second largest county in the South East with a population of 1,428,600. East Sussex is the smallest county in the South East with a population of 555,500.

Of the counties in the South East, Kent experienced the largest increase in population in absolute terms between 2022 and 2023 growing by 15,800 people (1.0%). Oxfordshire experienced the largest increase in population in percentage terms between 2022 and 2023 growing by 1.7% (12,400 people).

Surrey is the most densely populated county in the South East with 7.4 people per hectare, which is higher than the average density for the South East (5.0 people per hectare).

Kent and West Sussex are the second most densely populated counties with 4.5 people per hectare. Oxfordshire is the least densely populated county in the South East with 2.9 people per hectare.

The population change between 2022 and 2023 for each of the counties in the South East is presented in Table 2 and Chart 2.

Table 2: 2022 to 2023 Mid-year population change: South East Counties

Area	2022 MYPE	2023 MYPE	22-23 change	% change	Area (Hectares)	Density (people per Ha)
South East	9,387,300	9,482,500	95,200	1.0%	1,907,305	5.0
Kent	1,594,500	1,610,300	15,800	1.0%	354,494	4.5
Hampshire	1,417,300	1,428,600	11,300	0.8%	367,890	3.9
Surrey	1,217,000	1,228,700	11,600	1.0%	166,252	7.4
West Sussex	892,800	900,900	8,100	0.9%	199,087	4.5
Oxfordshire	737,800	750,200	12,400	1.7%	260,493	2.9
East Sussex	551,000	555,500	4,500	0.8%	170,856	3.3

Source: 2022 and 2023 MYPE: Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright

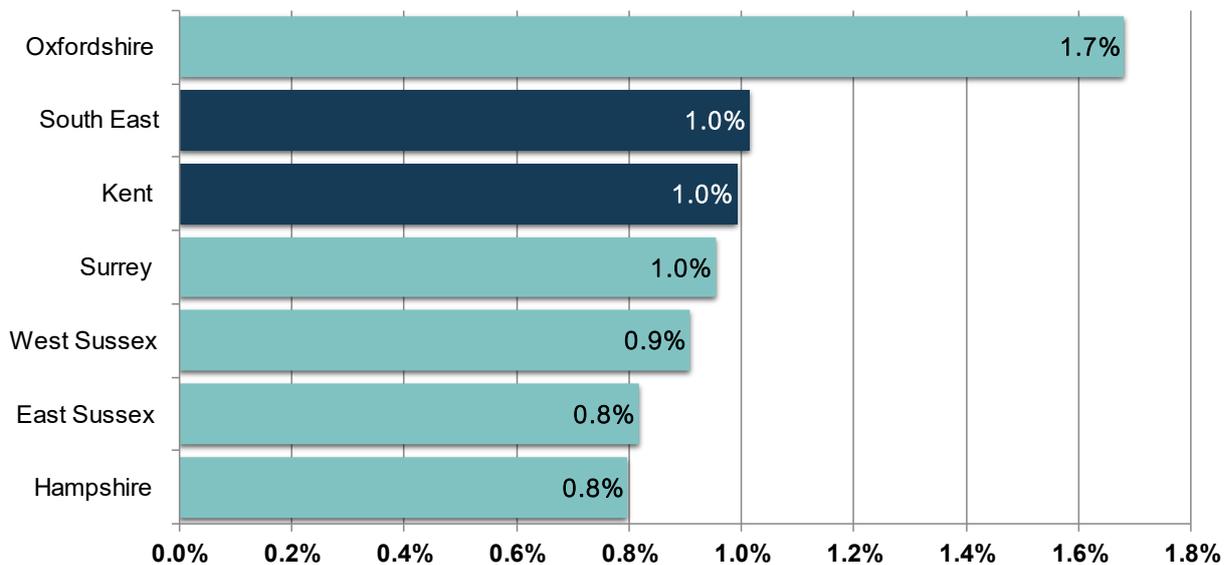
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Chart 2: 2022 to 2023 Mid-year population change (%): South East Counties

2022 to 2023 Mid-year population change (percentage): South East Counties



Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright), Chart produced by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Total population South East Unitary Authorities

Buckinghamshire became a Unitary Authority as of 1 April 2020 and is the largest unitary authority in the South East with a population of 566,700 people according to the 2023 mid-year population estimates. Milton Keynes is the second largest unitary authority with a population of 298,300, followed by Medway with 286,800 people. Bracknell Forest has the smallest population with 128,400 people.

Portsmouth is the most densely populated unitary authority in the South East with 52.1 people per hectare, which is considerably higher than the average density for the South East (5.0 people per hectare). West Berkshire is the least densely populated unitary authority with 2.3 people per hectare. Within Medway there are 14.8 people per hectare.

Buckinghamshire experienced the largest absolute increase in population between 2022 and 2023 growing by 6,000 people. Milton Keynes had the highest percentage increase at 2.0%. Isle of Wight experienced the smallest increase in real and percentage terms over the past year growing by 100 people (0.1%).

The population of Medway increased by 4,200 people (1.5%). See Table 3 and Chart 3 for details.

Table 3: 2022 to 2023 Mid-year population change: South East Unitary Authorities

Area	2022 MYPE	2023 MYPE	22-23 change	% change	Area (Hectares)	Density (people per Ha)
South East	9,387,300	9,482,500	95,200	1.0%	1,907,305	5.0
Buckinghamshire	560,700	566,700	6,000	1.1%	156,495	3.6
Milton Keynes	292,500	298,300	5,800	2.0%	30,863	9.7
Medway	282,600	286,800	4,200	1.5%	19,354	14.8
Brighton & Hove	278,400	279,600	1,300	0.5%	8,279	33.8
Southampton	252,200	256,100	4,000	1.6%	4,991	51.3
Portsmouth	208,900	210,300	1,300	0.6%	4,039	52.1
Wokingham	181,400	183,900	2,500	1.4%	17,897	10.3
Reading	175,700	178,200	2,500	1.4%	4,040	44.1
West Berkshire	162,400	163,400	1,000	0.6%	70,417	2.3
Slough	159,400	160,700	1,300	0.8%	3,254	49.4
Windsor & Maidenhead	154,900	155,200	400	0.3%	19,650	7.9
Isle of Wight	140,800	140,900	100	0.1%	38,016	3.7
Bracknell Forest	127,000	128,400	1,300	1.0%	10,938	11.7

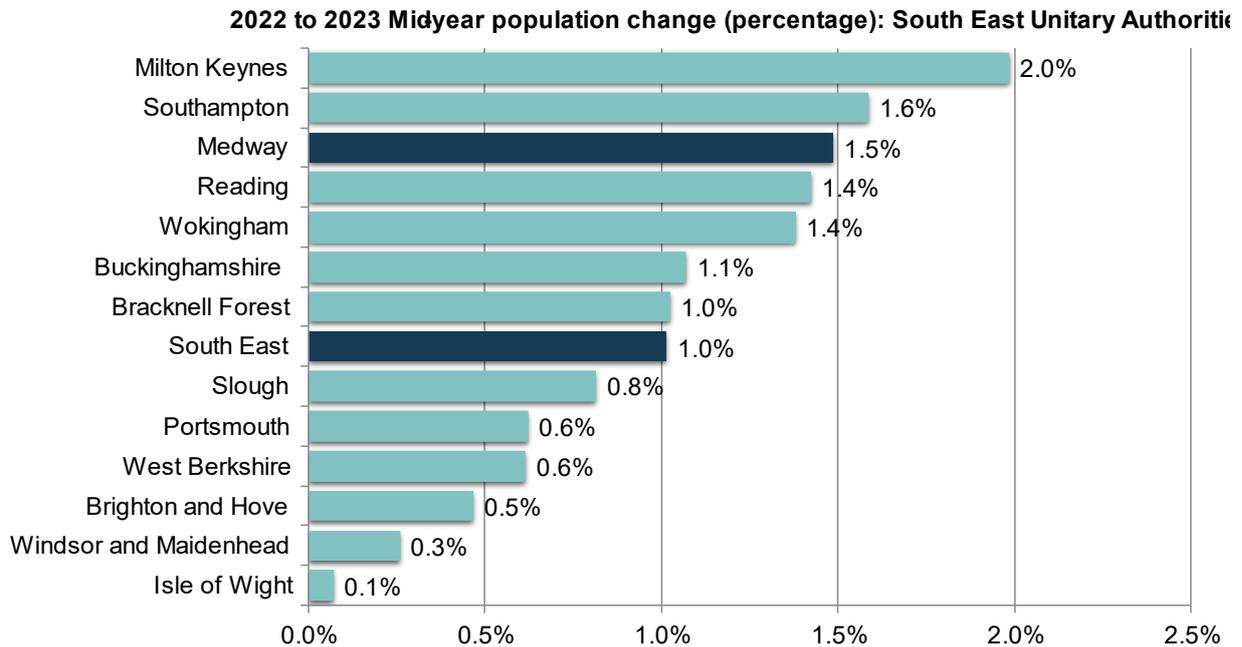
Source: 2022 and 2023 MYPE: Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright

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Chart 3: 2022 to 2023 Mid-year population change (%): South East Unitary Authorities



Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright), Chart produced by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Total population in local authorities in Kent

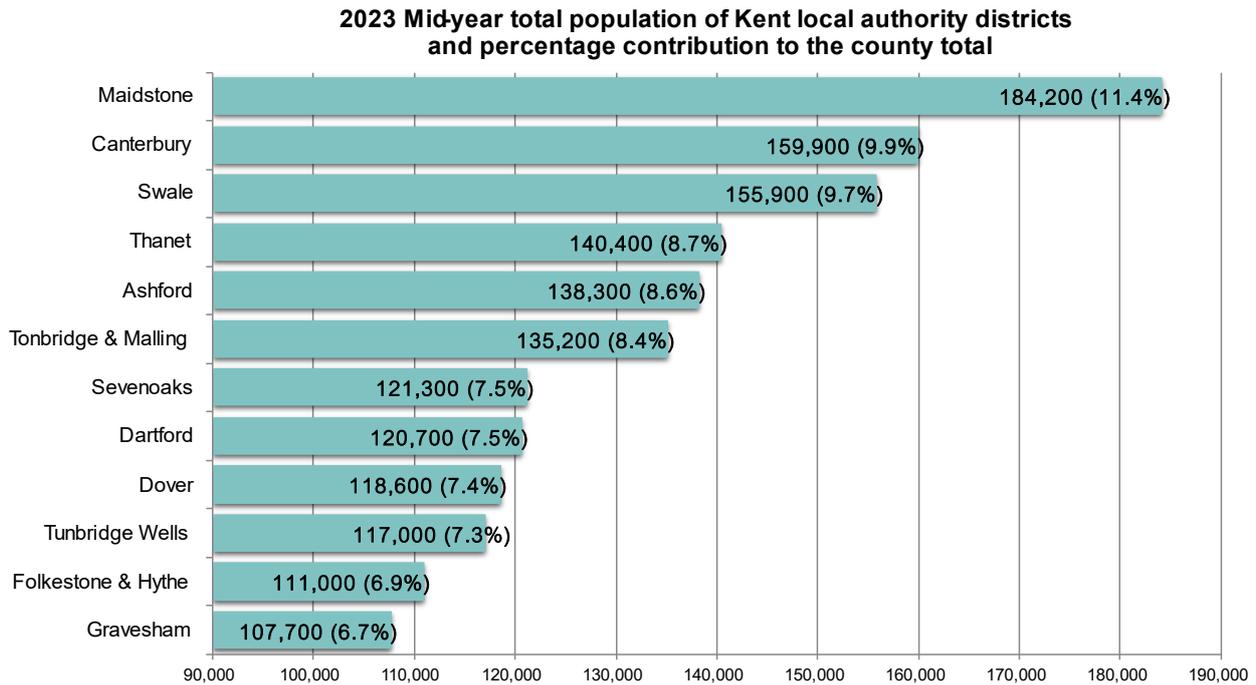
The total population of Kent is 1,610,300 people according to the 2023 mid-year population estimates.

Maidstone has the largest population with 184,200 people, which is equivalent to 11.4% of Kent's total population. Gravesham has the smallest population in Kent with 107,700 people, which is equivalent to 6.7% of Kent's total population.

The total population of each of the Kent local authority districts, according to the 2023 mid-year population estimates, and the proportion each local authority contributes to the overall population of Kent is presented in Chart 4.

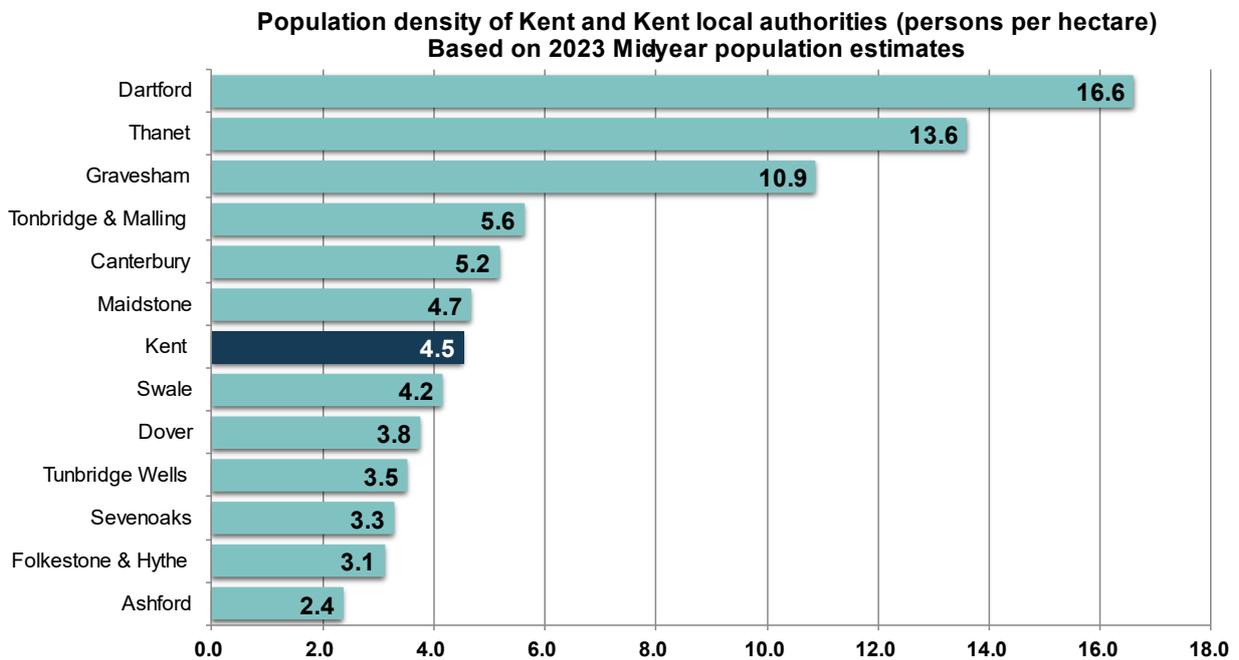
Dartford is Kent's most densely populated local authority district with 16.6 people per hectare. Ashford is the least densely populated with 2.4 people per hectare. Chart 5 presents the population density of the local authorities in Kent.

Chart 4: 2023 Mid-year population of Kent local authorities and proportion of Kent



Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright), Chart produced by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Chart 5: 2023 population density of Kent local authorities (persons per hectare)



Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright), Chart produced by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

The population of Kent grew by 1.0% between 2022 and 2023 which was equal to the rate of growth in the South East and England.

Of the local authority districts in Kent, Maidstone has seen the largest increase in population in both absolute and percentage terms between 2022 and 2023 with 3,600 more people (+2.0%). Sevenoaks experienced the smallest absolute and percentage increase with 100 more people (+0.1%).

Thanet was the only local authority to experience a decrease in population between 2022 and 2023 with a loss of 200 people (-0.1%).

The population change between the 2022 and 2023 mid-year population estimates for Kent as a whole, and each of the local authority areas within Kent is presented in Table 4 and Chart 6.

Table 4: 2022 to 2023 Mid-year population change: KCC Area and districts

Area	2022 MYPE	2023 MYPE	22-23 change	% change	Area (Hectares)	Density (people per Ha)
Kent	1,594,500	1,610,300	15,800	1.0%	354,494	4.5
Maidstone	180,600	184,200	3,600	2.0%	39,333	4.7
Canterbury	158,300	159,900	1,700	1.1%	30,888	5.2
Swale	154,600	155,900	1,300	0.8%	37,447	4.2
Thanet	140,700	140,400	-200	-0.1%	10,334	13.6
Ashford	135,700	138,300	2,500	1.8%	58,062	2.4
Tonbridge & Malling	133,700	135,200	1,500	1.1%	24,013	5.6
Sevenoaks	121,200	121,300	100	0.1%	36,923	3.3
Dartford	118,800	120,700	1,900	1.6%	7,276	16.6
Dover	117,500	118,600	1,000	0.9%	31,507	3.8
Tunbridge Wells	116,200	117,000	800	0.7%	33,133	3.5
Folkestone & Hythe	110,400	111,000	600	0.5%	35,676	3.1
Gravesham	106,900	107,700	900	0.8%	9,902	10.9

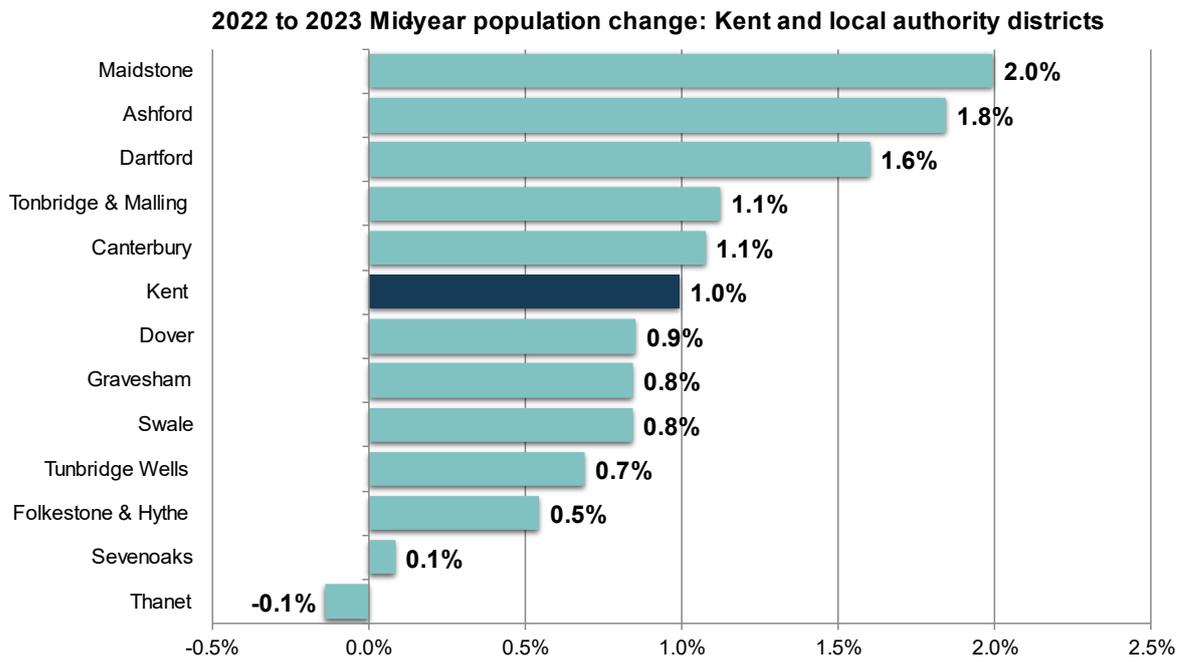
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Table 6: 2022 to 2023 Mid-year population change: Kent local authorities



Source: Office for National Statistics (Crown Copyright), Chart produced by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Related documents

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