

Census 2021 briefing

Children and young people

GMCA Research
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Datalink: The data used in this briefing can be found at [Census – Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk)

Definition: This report combines cross-cutting census release data that relate to the thematic area of children and young people, focusing on individuals aged 0 to 24 years. It segments these residents into three groups based on their alignment with UK social policy. Firstly 0 to 4 years, which is the Early Years Foundation Stage. Secondly 5 to 17 years, which is the compulsory school-age population. Thirdly ages 18 to 24 years, an age group post-compulsory education but which is typically understood as being within adolescence and which remains subject to extended statutory provisions in England, such as social care for care leavers and children with special educational needs. When the term ‘children and young people’ is used without reference to ages, this refers to 0 to 24 year-olds.

Census day: The 2021 census was held in England and Wales on 21 March 2021. Census 2021 was undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic so may not show normal population and household patterns due to temporary changes in living circumstances during the pandemic for some households.

Key points

- 914,369 children and young people (aged 0 to 24) constituted 31.9% of Greater Manchester’s total population in 2021, down 0.9 percentage points compared to 2011.
- Between 2011 and 2021, the number of children and young people in Greater Manchester increased by 34,087 (up 3.9%) to a total of 914,369.
- There was a decrease in number of 0-4 years olds (-4.3%) and 18 – 24 year olds (-6.6%) between 2011 and 2021, while the number of school age children increased (14.4%), with the majority growth in those aged 6-13.
- Children and young people in Greater Manchester were more diverse than the all-age population in 2021. The ethnic minority population constituted 34.0% of this age group, compared to 23.6% of the all-age population.
- 58.3% of the children and young people in Greater Manchester lived in the 30% most deprived¹ Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) nationally, an increase on 2011 (up 5.3%).

¹ According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), a measure of relative deprivation at small local area levels (LSOAs) across England. It is important to note that IMD deciles do

Analysis

This briefing is concerned with Greater Manchester's younger population. People between the ages of 0-24 are, of course, hardly a homogenous group. It includes new-born babies, toddlers, children, teenagers, and young adults; some of the latter group will be parents themselves. Although there is a case for analysing the issues they face separately, we have opted here to treat 'children and young people' together for brevity. The age range is split into three broad groupings of 0-4, 5-17 and 18-24. These ranges can be seen for policy purposes as Early Years Foundation Stage, compulsory school age and young adulthood. When the term 'children and young people' is used without reference to an age range in what follows, it refers to 0-24-year-olds as a whole.

Age and population change

Both in Greater Manchester and England, children and young people made up a smaller proportion of the total population in 2021 compared to 2011. Children and young people accounted for 31.9% of the total Greater Manchester population in 2021, a decrease of 0.9 percentage points since 2011. While in England, children and young people constituted a smaller proportion of the total population, falling by 1.6 percentage points from 30.8% to 29.2%.

The children and young people population grew in size both in Greater Manchester and England. The 2021 census recorded 914,369 Greater Manchester residents aged between 0 to 24 years, up 34,087 on 2011 (up 3.9%) compared to a 1.0% increase in England.

The population increase in children and young people in Greater Manchester was underpinned by a substantial increase in the school age population, with the majority of growth in ages 6 – 13 with all groups seeing a growth of over 10%. In Greater Manchester, an additional 60,328 school age (5 – 17) individuals were reported (up 14.4%). Again, this pattern is similar nationally where an 8.5% increase was observed.

Conversely, the early years (0-4) and young adult populations (18-24) have fallen. The number of Greater Manchester 0-4 residents fell by 7,864 (down 4.3%). However, Salford saw a 6.2% increase in residents aged 0-4. Nationally, a decrease was similarly observed (down 7.3%). Among those aged 18-24, the population fell in Greater Manchester by 18,374 (down 6.6%). This is in line with nationally, where there was a 5.5% reduction.

not reflect an individual's personal level of deprivation but rather indicate the deprivation level of the area where they reside.

Population change, by age group and district, between 2011 and 2021

District	Aged 0 to 4			Aged 5 to 17			Aged 18 to 24		
	2011	2021	%	2011	2021	%	2011	2021	%
Bolton	18,765	18,456	-1.6%	45,794	53,016	15.8%	24,870	23,192	-6.7%
Bury	12,235	11,157	-8.8%	29,717	32,719	10.1%	14,985	13,402	-10.6%
Manchester	36,413	34,378	-5.6%	71,739	92,574	29.0%	88,963	84,642	-4.9%
Oldham	16,491	16,005	-2.9%	40,066	45,960	14.7%	20,335	19,940	-1.9%
Rochdale	14,754	14,639	-0.8%	36,018	39,986	11.0%	19,485	16,877	-13.4%
Salford	16,255	17,257	6.2%	34,441	41,387	20.2%	26,179	29,537	12.8%
Stockport	17,342	16,575	-4.4%	43,280	45,857	6.0%	21,346	18,251	-14.5%
Tameside	14,439	13,670	-5.3%	34,056	37,529	10.2%	19,159	16,405	-14.4%
Trafford	14,870	13,462	-9.5%	36,861	41,334	12.1%	16,549	14,846	-10.3%
Wigan	19,681	17,782	-9.6%	48,407	50,342	4.0%	26,787	23,192	-13.4%
Greater Manchester	181,245	173,381	-4.3%	420,379	480,704	14.4%	278,658	260,284	-6.6%
England	3,318,449	3,076,949	-7.3%	8,018,511	8,697,649	8.5%	4,970,636	4,697,724	-5.5%

Source: ONS, Nomis – 2021 Census

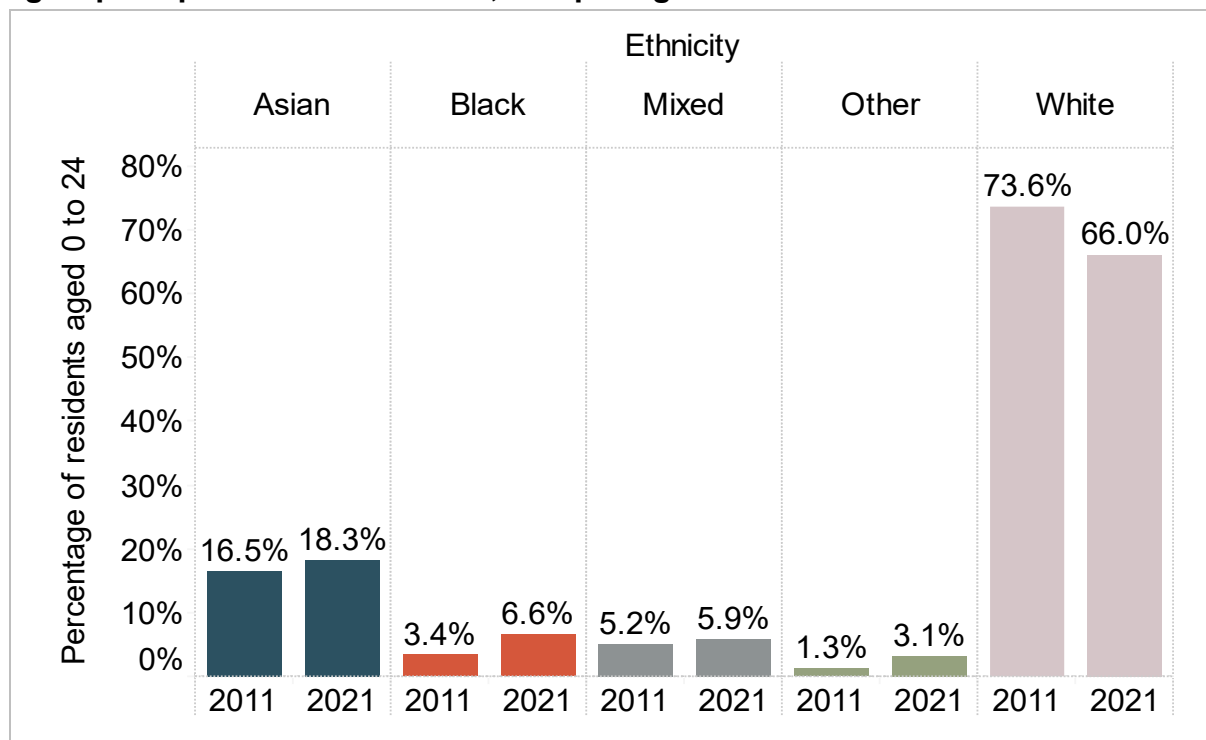
Ethnicity

The population of children and young people in Greater Manchester showed greater diversity compared to the all-age population. In 2021, 34.0% of individuals aged 0 to 24 were of an ethnic minority population, with over 30% of those 18 and under being of an ethnic minority population. This was a substantially higher proportion compared to the all-age population, which stood at 23.6%.

Additionally, Greater Manchester's children and young people population was more diverse than England, where 25.9% were from an ethnic minority group.

The number of children and young people increased among all ethnic minority groups between 2011 and 2021. The biggest population increase was seen among those in the Black population, rising by 29,652 (up 95.4%). Conversely, the White population reduced in size by 68,448 (down 10.2%). The all-age trend between 2011 and 2021 mirrors the same pattern, although the percentage decrease in residents from the White population was less pronounced.

Percentage of residents aged 0 to 24 in each of the five high level ethnic groups captured in the census, comparing 2011 and 2021.



Source: **ONS, Nomis – 2021 Census**

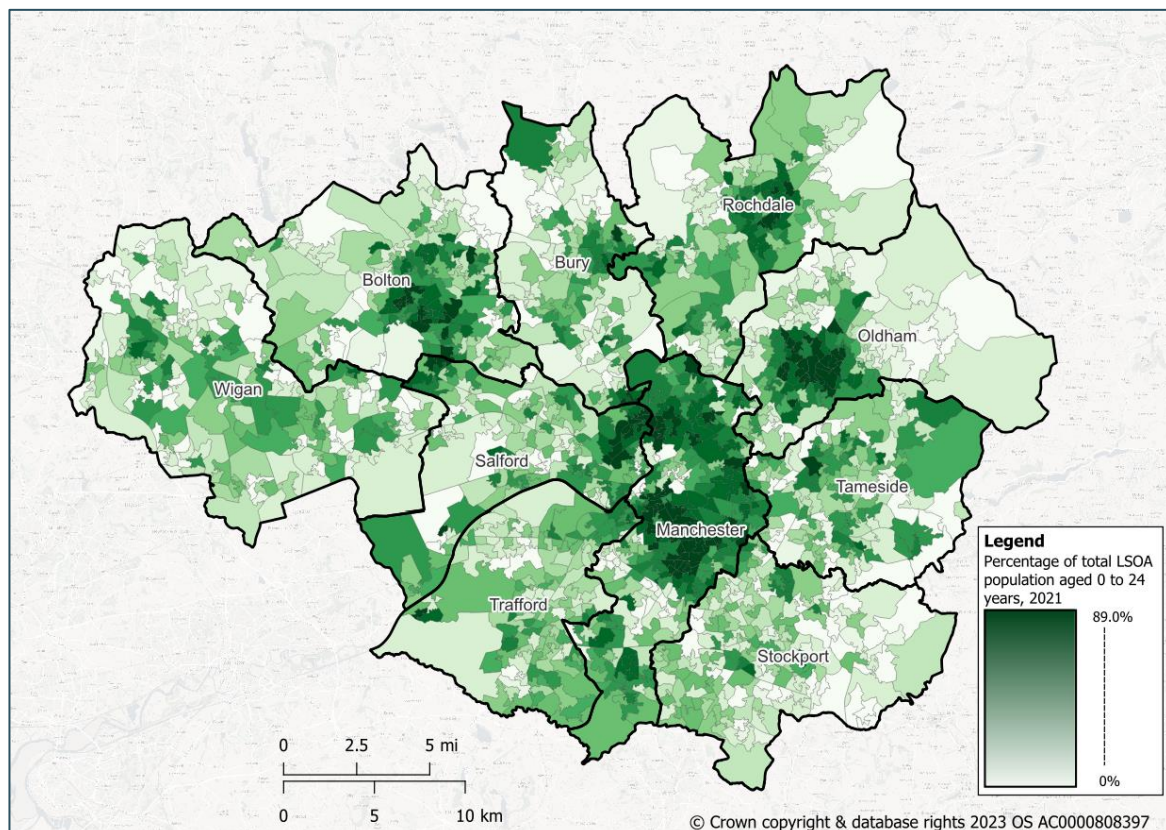
Location of residence

High concentrations of young people reside in Greater Manchester's inner city and nearby suburbs, while the ageing population tends to reside in outer suburbs of the conurbation.

The distribution of children and young people by area of residence follows a broadly similar profile across ages, although to varying degrees. Two aspects are of note. Firstly, a substantial increase in young adults residing in the city centre and its immediate suburbs has occurred since 2011. This does not appear to be counterbalanced by a decrease in this population elsewhere across Greater Manchester, suggesting that these increases might not stem solely from internal migration within the city region.

Moreover, the student population can significantly affect residency rates in local areas. In areas like Fallowfield, Old Moat, and Withington, 2021 figures showed that residents aged 0 to 24 comprised as much as 89.1% of the all-age population. This can be attributed to the high density of student housing and houses of multiple occupation in these areas. When only 0- to 17-year-olds are considered, the highest concentration of these ages in any one LSOA was 57.8% in Broughton, Salford.

Residents aged 0 to 24 as a percentage of the total all age LSOA population, 2021



Source: **ONS, Nomis – 2021 Census**

Deprivation

In 2021, 58.3% of children and young people in Greater Manchester lived in the 30% most deprived LSOAs nationally. This has increased by 5.3 percentage points since 2011 and means that 43,061 more children and young people in the city region are growing up and living in some of the most deprived areas nationally.

Children and young people living in areas of deprivation in Greater Manchester substantially surpasses the national average. Nationally, in 2021, 35.0% children and young people lived in the 30% most deprived LSOAs nationally, a considerable 23.3 percentage points lower than the 58.3% in Greater Manchester.

Even within Greater Manchester itself, there are age-based disparities in deprivation by area of residence. A notably larger proportion of children and young people in Greater Manchester reside in the 30% most deprived LSOAs nationally compared to the working-age and ageing population.² These disparities highlight concerning variations in deprivation of residence between age groups within the city region.

Reflections

- Greater Manchester is a relatively 'young city region'. Its population of young people has grown over the decade between censuses, especially within inner city and urban areas. This has consequences for the general culture of the city – the way of life. And it also means that any policy targeted at, or affecting, babies, young children, schools, universities, families and so on, will have a greater impact locally than elsewhere in the country.
- Children and young people are disproportionately impacted by deprivation. They tend to live in areas that experience high levels of poverty. Well over a third of Greater Manchester's young people are growing up in the most deprived parts of the city. Furthermore, the census shows clearly that deprivation has increased.
- The population of Greater Manchester will be increasingly diverse in the future. We know this because children and young people are far more ethnically diverse than the all-age population. In 2021, 34% of people aged 24

² Deprivation figures for 2021 in Greater Manchester are likely an underestimate due to missing LSOAs. A total of 66 LSOAs do not feature in the deprivation analysis as they were created following boundary changes after the time of the 2019 IMD. Specifically, many missing LSOAs are situated in urban inner-city regions, typically characterised by higher levels of socioeconomic deprivation. For instance, a large proportion are found on the Salford-Manchester border. Consequently, the actual count of children and young people within the most deprived IMD deciles is likely higher than what is reflected in the reported figures.

and below were from an ethnic minority background in Greater Manchester. This is well above the proportion across all age groups: 23.6%.

- Higher education is a key industry in Greater Manchester. The timing of the census during the Covid pandemic means that insights into the student population of the city need to be qualified. Even so, the census suggests students are transforming some wards: strikingly, almost 90% of the population of areas such as Fallowfield and Withington are aged below 24.