

2022-based Population Projections Briefing

Aberdeenshire Key Figures

- Population projected to increase by 1.2% by 2032, below the Scottish average increase of 4.4%
- Pension age population projected to increase by 20.5% by 2032, the second highest rate of growth in Scotland. Working age population to decrease by 0.5% and number of children to decrease by 14% by 2032
- Lower population growth than anticipated at time of previous (2018-based) projections

[National Records of Scotland](#) (NRS) published the [2022-based Sub-national Population Projections](#) for Scotland and its administrative areas on 30 September 2025. The projections cover the period from 2022 up to 2047. Due to the increasing uncertainty of projections further into the future, the analysis provided by NRS and this briefing focuses on the first ten-year period up to 2032.

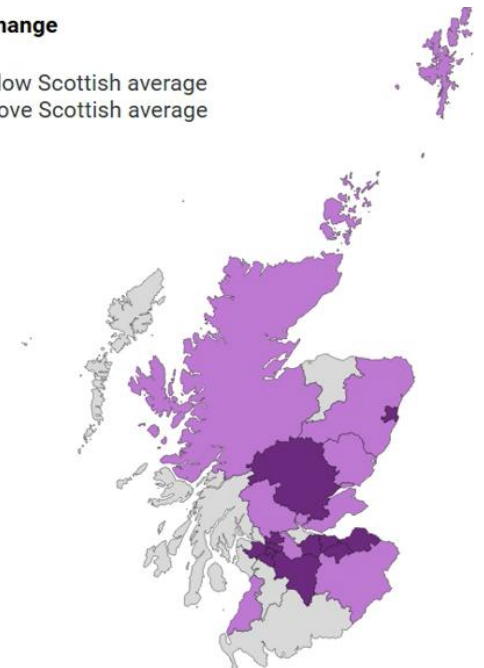
Scotland

Scotland's population is projected to increase by 4.4% from 5.45 million people in 2022 to 5.68 million in 2032. This is a much higher rate of growth than the 1.3% increase which was projected for the same ten-year period in the previous [2018-based population projections](#). This is the result of a number of factors including updated data from the 2022 Census, changes to fertility rates and life expectancy, and increases in international migration.

Population change varies across Scotland, and although the majority of Scotland's council areas are projected to see an increase in population, nine areas are expected to experience population decline. Most population growth is expected in Scotland's cities, and in areas close to Glasgow and Edinburgh, with population decline concentrated mainly in the west and south west of Scotland.

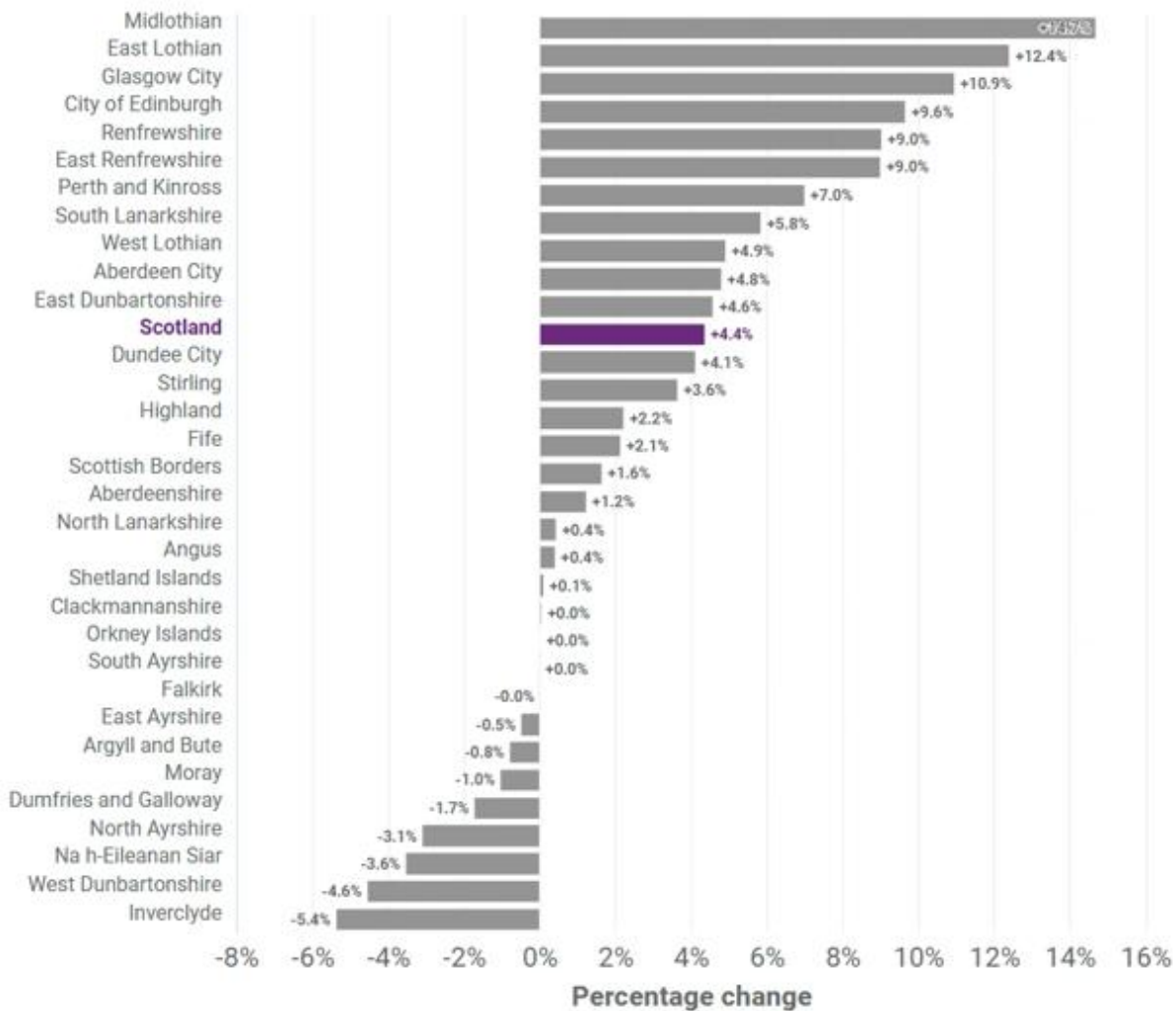
Population change

- Decline
- Growth below Scottish average
- Growth above Scottish average



Source: NRS

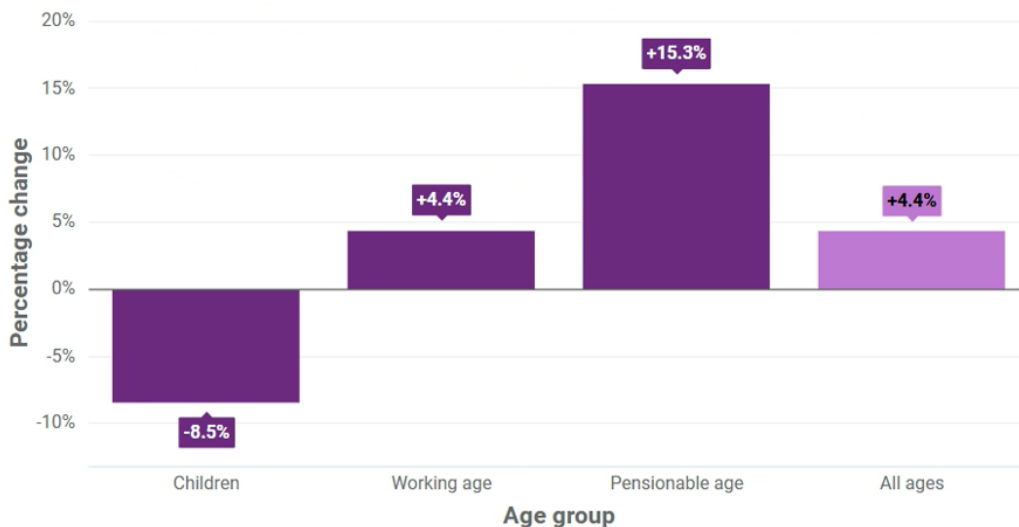
Projected percentage change in population, council areas, mid-2022 to mid-2032



Source: NRS

Scotland's population is projected to continue to age, with the number of people of pensionable age projected to increase in all 32 council areas over the 10 years to 2032.

Projected percentage change by age group, Scotland, mid-2022 to mid-2032



Source: NRS

Nearly all council areas are expected to see more deaths than births over the period, which means that projected population growth is primarily driven by net migration. International migration is projected to be the biggest driver of population increase in Scotland's cities while in other council areas migration from other parts of Scotland and the UK is more significant.

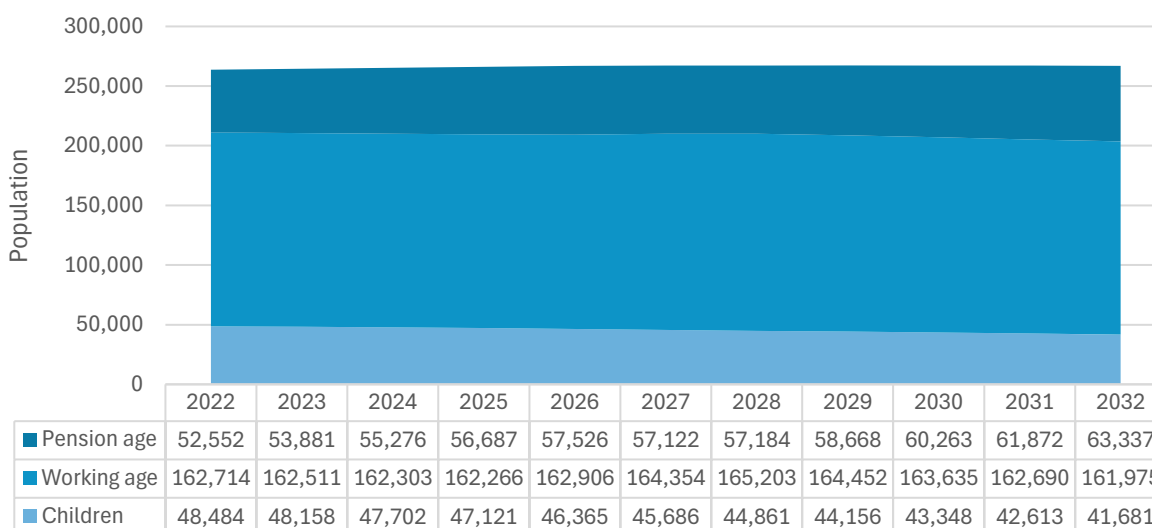
Aberdeenshire

In Aberdeenshire, the population is projected to grow from 263,750 in 2022 to 266,993 in 2032, an increase of 1.2%. This is lower than the Scottish average growth over the period of 4.4%. Most of the growth in Aberdeenshire is in the first five years with a levelling off after this followed by a decreasing trend from 2030 onwards.

Age Structure

Although the overall population increase in Aberdeenshire is small, there is projected to be very significant growth in the numbers of older people with an additional 10,785 people of pension age between 2022 and 2032. This is an increase of 20.5%, the second highest rate of growth in Scotland after East Lothian at 27.5%. In terms of population balance, the increase in Aberdeenshire is particularly significant because while in East Lothian the working age population is also growing significantly (+11.6%), in Aberdeenshire **only** the pension age population is increasing while the working age population is projected to decrease by 0.5%. In addition, the number of children under 16 is projected to decrease by 14% in Aberdeenshire.

Aberdeenshire projected change in population and age structure
2022-2032

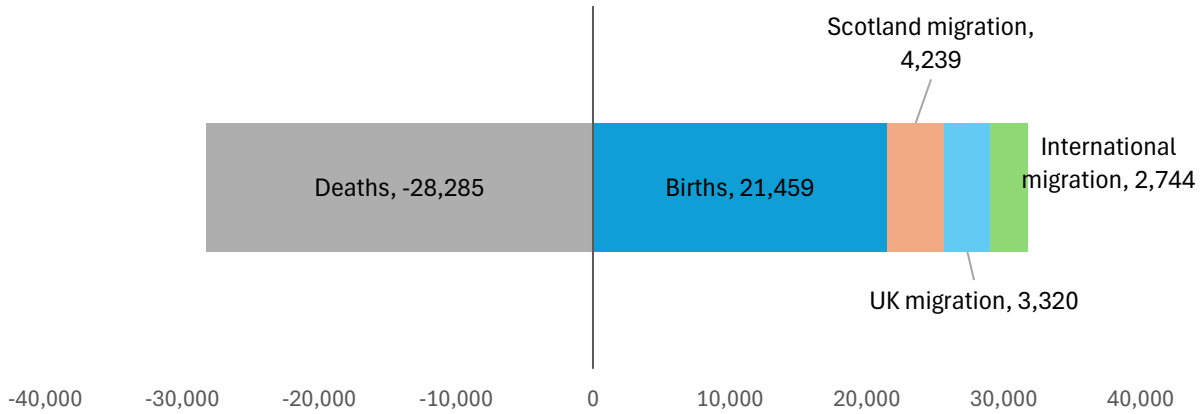


Births, Deaths and Migration

In common with most other council areas, Aberdeenshire is projected to have more deaths than births in the period from 2022-2032 and migration is therefore the main driver of population growth with around 10,000 more people coming to the area than leaving. 41% of this is net migration within Scotland, 32% from the rest of the UK and

27% international. The graph below shows the breakdown of factors influencing population change in Aberdeenshire.

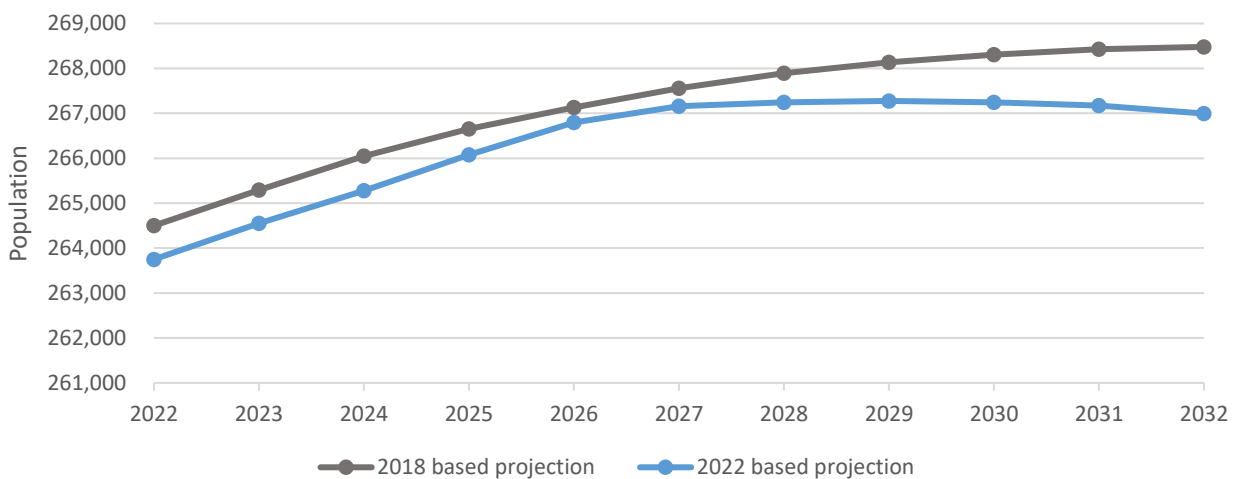
Components of population change, Aberdeenshire 2022-2032



Comparison with previous projections

The 2022-based projections show a smaller increase and less overall growth than the previous 2018-based projections. The projected population in 2032 is 266,993 compared with 268,479 previously, a difference of 1,486. The previous projections also indicated a continuing upward trend in population in the future, now the population is projected to decline from 2030 onwards.

Comparison of 2018-based and 2022-based projections, Aberdeenshire



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