Population Briefing

September 2026

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1 Background

Mid-year population estimates (MYEs) are official statistics produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and provide an estimate of the population of a geographic area as of 30th June in a given year. The 2025 Mid-Year Estimates for England & Wales were released by ONS on 29th July 2026[1].

Population projections are an estimate of the future size and age structure of the population based on mid-year estimates and assumptions of future fertility, mortality and migration. The most recently available Subnational Population Projections (SNPPs) were released on 24th June 2025[2] using 2022 mid-year estimates as their starting point. The next set of SNPPs will not be released until 2028.

The primary purpose of this briefing is to report on the 2025 mid-year estimates, but it will also compare these with the previous projections to assess how closely aligned they are as this affects the appropriate use of the projections.

Important note: mid-year estimates are not released for the Cumbria geography as it is not currently a statistical area but where possible, Cumbria data has been derived from the unitary estimates. Estimates for areas below unitary authority such as electoral wards and Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), will not be released until late autumn. National estimates for Great Britain and the United Kingdom will also not be available until late autumn (these require data for Scotland and Northern Ireland which have their own statistics authorities).

[1] MYE 2025 England & Wales: Population estimates for England and Wales: mid-2025 - Office for National Statistics

[2] SNPP 2022-based Subnational population projections: 2022-based - Office for National Statistics

2 Key findings

- **Cumbria's population was estimated at 513,650 in 2025, an increase of 3,815 or 0.7% over the year.** This was faster than England's annual growth rate of 0.4%, although Cumbria's growth over the past decade remained lower than nationally.
- **Cumbria continues to have an older population than England.** The median age was 47.9 years, compared with 40.6 years nationally, and 25.6% of Cumbria's population was aged 65 or above.
- **The number of working-age residents increased for the fifth consecutive year**, rising by 1,481 to 302,638 in 2025. However, working-age people continue to account for a smaller share of the population than nationally.
- **The number of residents aged 18–24 increased for the first time since 2012**, although the population in this age group remained substantially lower than five and ten years earlier.
- **Deaths continued to exceed births, resulting in negative natural change of 2,055 residents in 2025.** Positive net migration of 5,829 more than offset this reduction and remained the main driver of population growth.
- **Migration rates among 18–24 year-olds were relatively low compared with similar areas.** Cumbria had the second-lowest outward migration rate among its statistical neighbours, although its inward migration rate was also the third-lowest.
- **Recent working-age population estimates are above the levels anticipated in the 2022-based projections.** The projections should therefore be used with caution, particularly if recent migration and population-growth patterns continue.

3 Population Estimates 2025

3.1 Population Overview

The population of Cumbria was estimated to be 513,650 in 2025, an increase of 3,815 (0.7%) from 2024 and 14,932 more than in 2015 (3.0%). This compares with population growth in England of 0.4% from 2024 and 7.3% from 2015.

The population of Cumberland was estimated to be 282,343, up by 2,329 from 2024 (0.8%) and 3.0% from 2015 and the population of Westmorland & Furness was estimated to be 231,307, up by 1,486 from 2024 (0.6%) and 3.0% from 2015.

Cumbria covers an area of 6,768 sq km and has a population density of 76 residents per sq km. Density in Cumberland is 94 people per sq km and in Westmorland & Furness it is 62. This places the two unitaries 284th and 295th respectively out of the 296 local authority areas in England. The England average is 511 people per sq km.

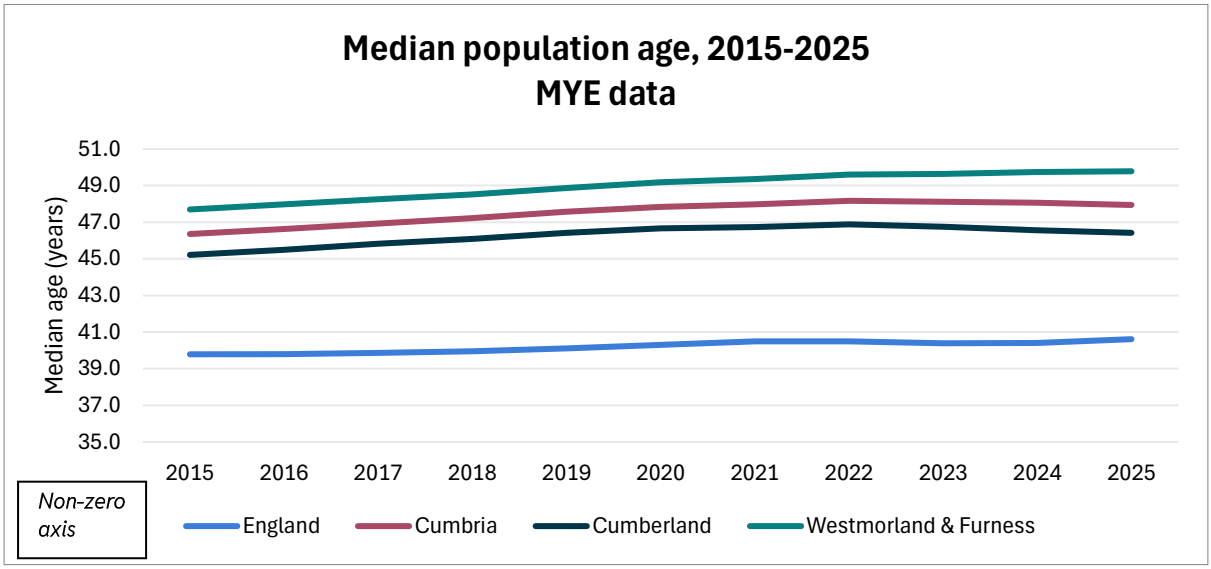
The population of Cumbria was almost evenly divided between males and females, at 49.2% and 50.8% respectively, with a similar split in both unitary areas as well as nationally.

3.2 Age Structure 2025

The age profile of the population in Cumbria, and in both Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness, is older than nationally with proportionally fewer people in all 5-year age bands up to (and including) 45-49 years and proportionally more in all age bands from 50-54 years and above.

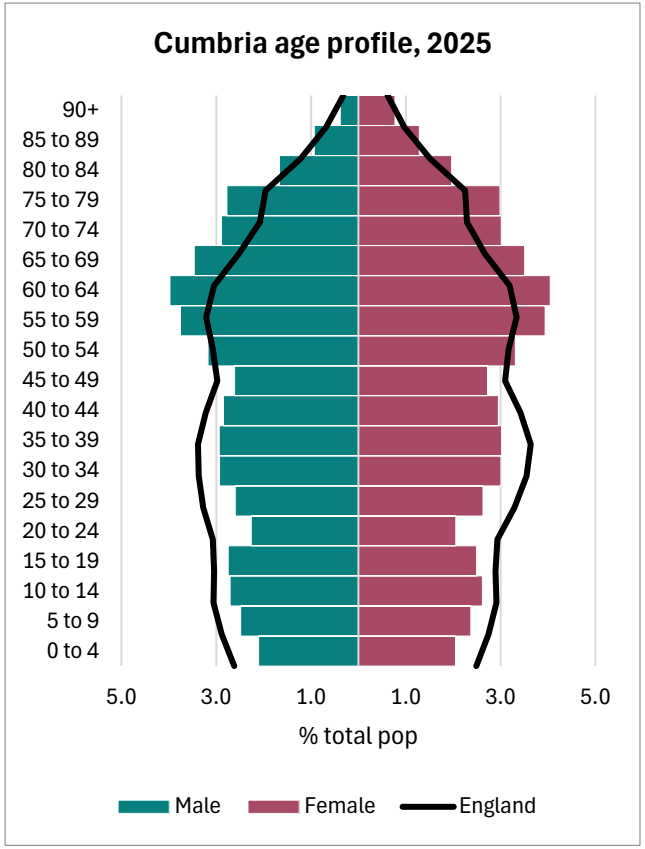
The median age of the population in England is 40.6 years compared to 47.9 in Cumbria. In Cumberland it is 46.4 years and in Westmorland & Furness it is 49.8 years placing them 61st and 22nd respectively among the 296 local authorities in England (the area ranked 1 has the oldest median age). The median age had been increasing in both unitaries prior to the pandemic but has been falling slightly year-on-year in Cumberland since 2022 and has been stable in Westmorland & Furness.

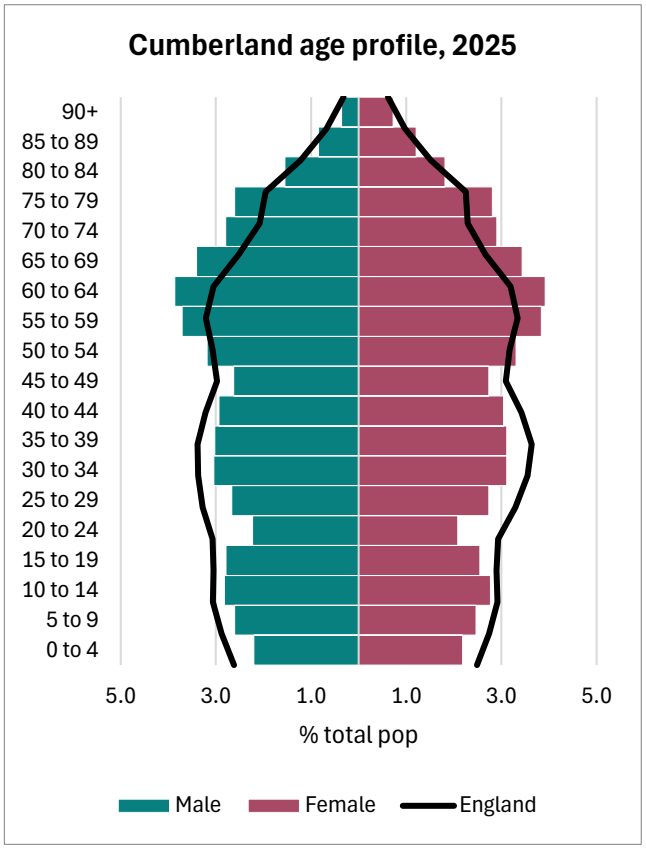
Figure 1: Median age

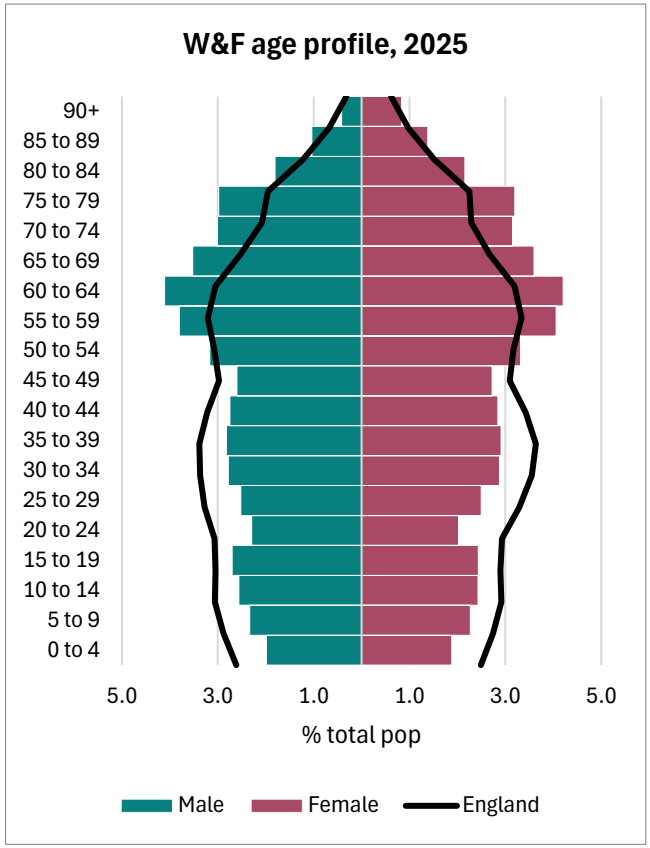


Source: ONS MYE 2025

Figure 2: Mid-2025 Population Pyramids







Source: ONS MYE 2025

Figure 3: Population by broad age-band - Cumbria

Cumbria						
	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Aged 0 to 15	40,381	16.0%	38,918	14.9%	79,299	15.4%
Aged 16 to 24	22,814	9.0%	20,621	7.9%	43,435	8.5%
Aged 25 to 49	71,523	28.3%	73,643	28.2%	145,166	28.3%
Aged 50 to 64	56,002	22.1%	58,035	22.3%	114,037	22.2%
Aged 65+	62,186	24.6%	69,527	26.7%	131,713	25.6%
All ages	252,906	100.0%	260,744	100.0%	513,650	100.0%

Figure 4: Population by broad age-band - Cumberland

Cumberland						
	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Aged 0 to 15	23,204	16.7%	22,553	15.7%	45,757	16.2%
Aged 16 to 24	12,530	9.0%	11,448	8.0%	23,978	8.5%
Aged 25 to 49	40,347	29.0%	41,609	29.0%	81,956	29.0%
Aged 50 to 64	30,373	21.8%	31,241	21.8%	61,614	21.8%
Aged 65+	32,642	23.5%	36,396	25.4%	69,038	24.5%
All ages	139,096	100.0%	143,247	100.0%	282,343	100.0%

Figure 5: Population by broad age-band - Westmorland & Furness

Westmorland & Furness						
	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Aged 0 to 15	17,177	15.1%	16,365	13.9%	33,542	14.5%
Aged 16 to 24	10,284	9.0%	9,173	7.8%	19,457	8.4%
Aged 25 to 49	31,176	27.4%	32,034	27.3%	63,210	27.3%
Aged 50 to 64	25,629	22.5%	26,794	22.8%	52,423	22.7%
Aged 65+	29,544	26.0%	33,131	28.2%	62,675	27.1%
All ages	113,810	100.0%	117,497	100.0%	231,307	100.0%

Source: ONS MYE 2025

Children (aged 0-15)

In Cumbria and both unitary areas there are fewer children than older adults (nationally the two groups are broadly similar in size). There are 79,299 children aged 0-15 years in Cumbria which is 15.4% of Cumbria's population. There are 45,757 children in Cumberland (16.2%) and 33,542 in Westmorland & Furness (14.5%). In England, 17.9% of the population is aged 0-15 years.

Working-age adults (aged 16-64)

Cumbria and both unitary areas have a lower proportion of working age (16-64 years) people than nationally. There are 302,638 residents aged 16-64 in Cumbria – 58.9% of the population. There are 167,548 residents aged 16-64 in Cumberland (59.3%) and 135,080 in Westmorland & Furness (58.4%). Nationally the proportion is 63.0%.

Alternative working-age adults (aged 18-66)

Although 16-64 is still the standard definition of working age, labour market policy makers increasingly look at the 18-66 age group as an alternative working-age cohort because it takes account of the rising state pension age and the requirement for young people to participate in education/training until they are 18.

There are 306,427 residents in Cumbria in this age group which is 59.7% of the population. There are 169,348 residents aged 18-66 in Cumberland (60.0%) and 137,079 in Westmorland & Furness (59.3%). At England level, 62.8% of the population is aged 18-66.

Older adults (aged 65+)

As a result of the lower proportions of children and working-age adults, Cumbria and both unitaries have a higher proportion of older residents than nationally. In Cumbria there are 131,713 older adults (25.6% of the population). In Cumberland there are 69,038 (24.5%) and in Westmorland & Furness there are 62,675 (27.1%). In England older adults make up 19.1% of the population.

Dependency Ratio

A dependency ratio is an age-population ratio of those typically not in the labour market (the dependent element) and those typically in the labour force (the productive element). It can be used to measure the pressure on the productive population.

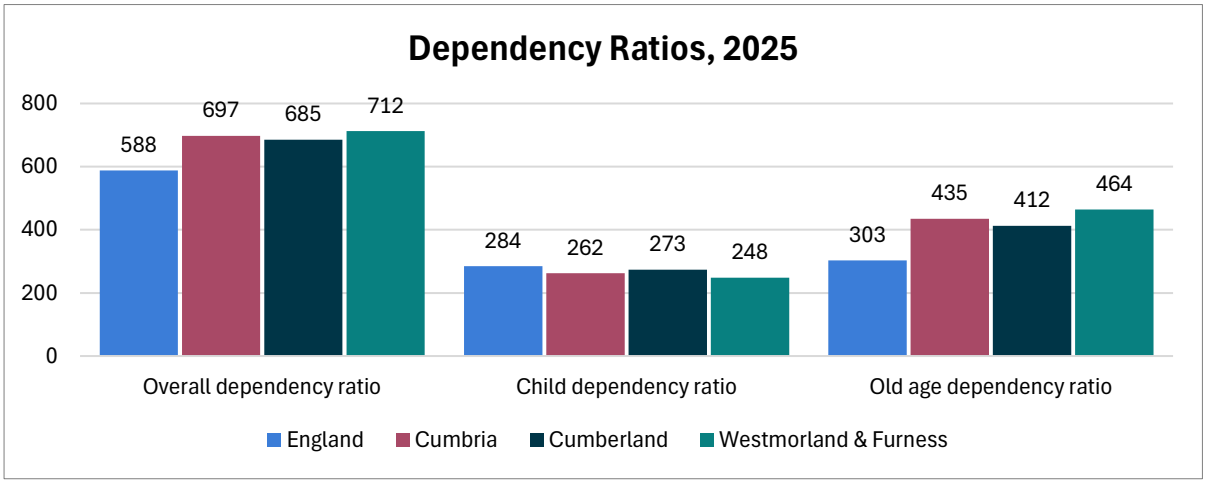
As well as an overall dependency ratio, there are two component parts – a child dependency ratio (ratio of those aged 0-15 to those aged 16-64) and the aged dependency ratio (ratio of those aged 65+ to those aged 16-64).

In 2025 there were 697 dependents per 1,000 working-age population in Cumbria, well above the England ratio of 588. In Cumberland the overall dependency ratio was 685 and in Westmorland & Furness it was 712.

The child dependency ratio in Cumbria was 262 in 2025, below the national average of 284. It was 273 in Cumberland and 248 in Westmorland & Furness.

The most significant variation was in the old age dependency ratio which was 303 in England but was considerably higher in Cumbria at 435. Cumberland's old age dependency ratio was 412 and Westmorland & Furness' was higher at 464.

Figure 6: Dependency ratios



Source: ONS MYE 2025

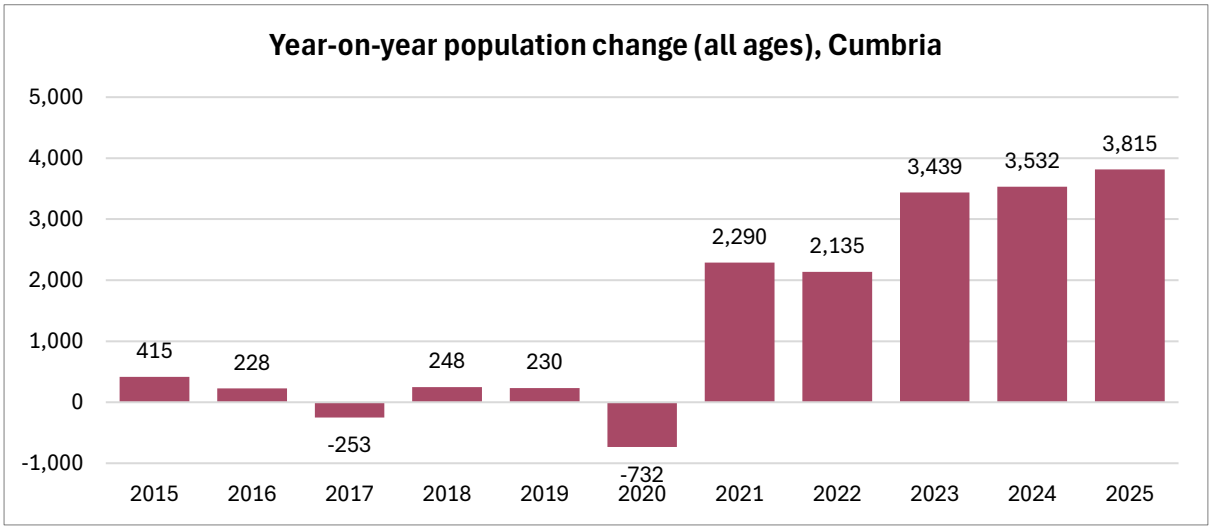
4 Population Change

Total population

Cumbria's total population in 2025 was estimated to have increased by 3,815 (+0.7%) from 2024 and by 14,932 from 2015 (+3.0%). This is a faster rate of growth than nationally over one year but slower over 10 years (England one year growth +0.4%, 10 year growth +7.3%). In the 5 years leading into the pandemic (2015-2020) population growth averaged 23 a year in Cumbria (-283 in Cumberland and +305 in Westmorland & Furness) but in the 5 years following the pandemic (2020-2025) total population growth averaged 2,413 per year in Cumbria (+1,556 in Cumberland and +858 in Westmorland & Furness). This represents a return to levels of population growth not seen since the early part of the millennium.

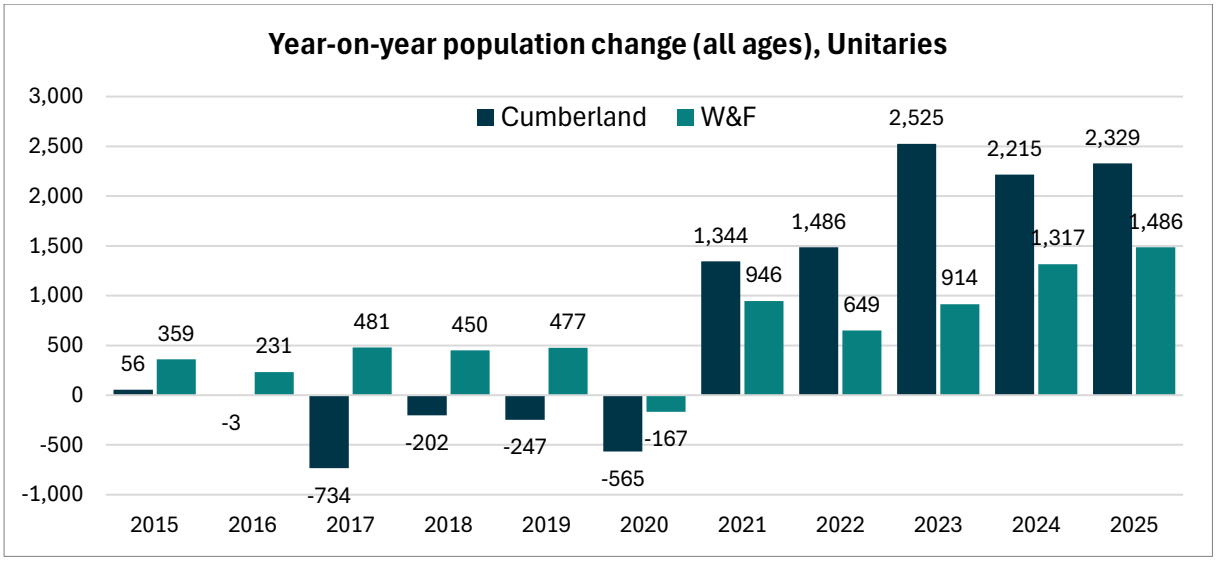
The factors influencing these changes are described in section 5.

Figure 7: Year-on-year population change - Cumbria



Source: ONS MYE 2025

Figure 8: Year-on-year population change - Unitaries



Source: ONS MYE 2025

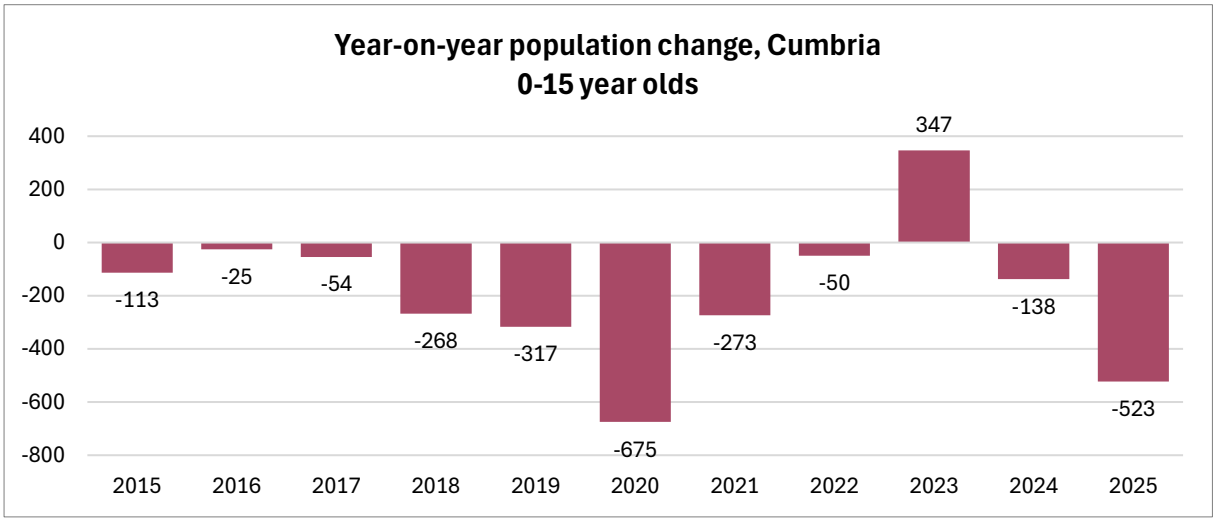
Children (aged 0-15)

The number of 0-15 year olds resident in Cumbria in 2025 fell by 523 (-0.7%) between 2024 and 2025 to 79,299. The scale of fall was greater in Westmorland & Furness (-287; -0.8%) than in Cumberland (-236; -0.5%). However, in all 3 areas, the one-year fall was lower than for England where there was a decline of -0.9%.

The picture was somewhat different over 5 years (2020-2025). At Cumbria level the number of 0-15 year olds fell by 637 (-0.8%) compared to minor growth nationally (+0.1%) but Westmorland & Furness experienced a decline of 2.7% (-922) which was only partially offset by growth in Cumberland of 0.6% (+285).

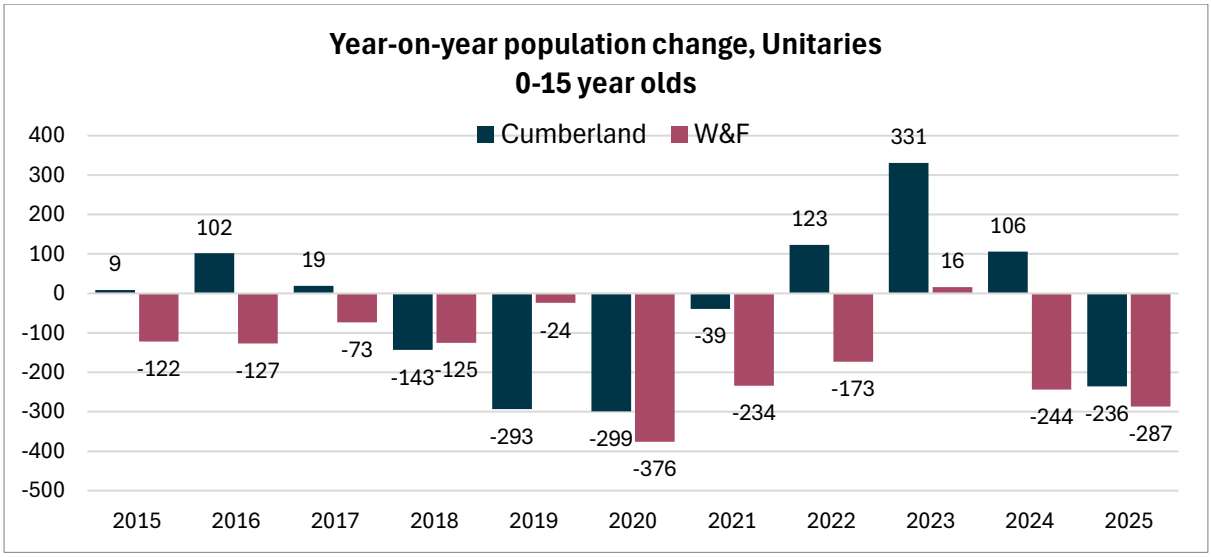
Within this age band, trends also differed between the two unitary areas. In Cumberland the number of 0-4 year olds fell by 5.1% and the number of 5-9 year olds fell by 2.8% while the number of 10-15 year olds increased by 7.7%. In Westmorland & Furness, all three age groups declined by 7.3%, 0.2% and 1.4% respectively.

Figure 9: Year-on-year population change, Cumbria - 0-15 year olds



Source: ONS MYE 2025

Figure 10: Year-on-year population change, Unitaries - 0-15 year olds



Source: ONS MYE 2025

Working-age adults (aged 16-64)

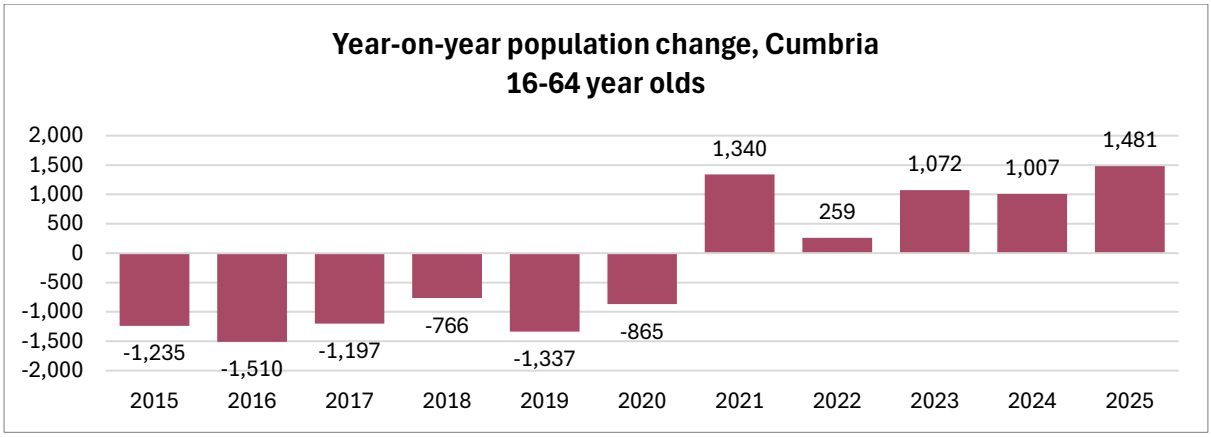
The number of working-age adults resident in Cumbria rose by 1,481 (+0.5%) to reach 302,638 in 2025. This is the fifth consecutive year of growth in this age group after 6 consecutive years of decline leading into the pandemic and is higher one year growth than nationally (+0.3%). The increase was higher in Cumberland (+0.6%) than Westmorland & Furness (+0.3%)

Compared to 5 years ago (2020-2025) Cumbria's working-age population rose by 1.7% (+5,159) which is lower growth than nationally (+4.5%). Once again, growth was stronger in Cumberland (+2.1%) than in Westmorland & Furness (+1.3%).

Compared to 10 years ago (2015-2025), Cumbria's working-age population is slightly smaller (-516; -0.2%), in contrast to national growth of 6.5%. However, the unitary position is reversed over this longer period with Westmorland & Furness experiencing minor growth (+0.7%) and Cumberland a decline (-0.9%).

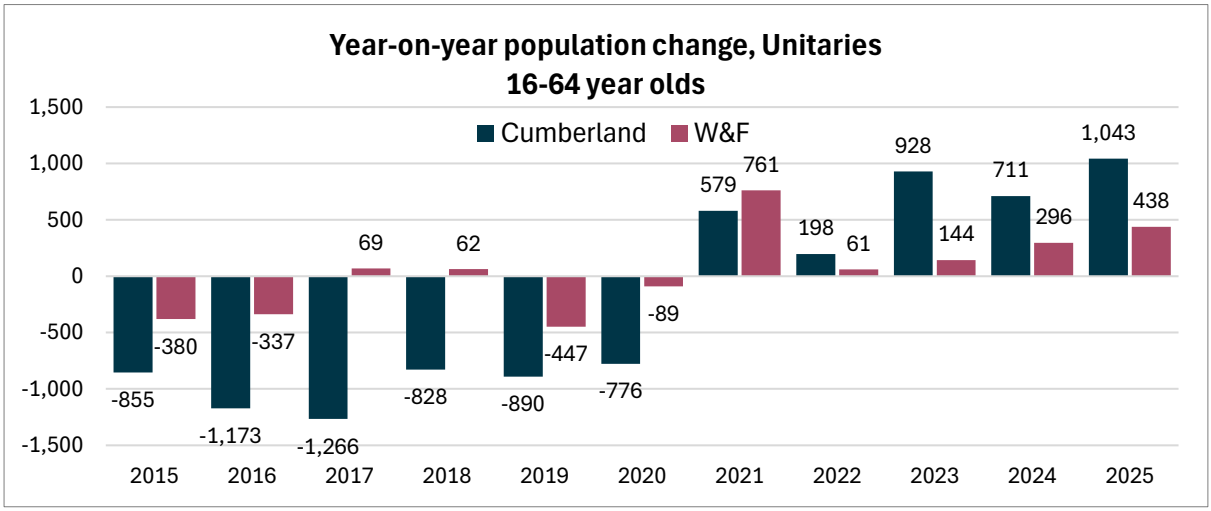
Within the working-age population, there was growth between 2024 and 2025 in the 16-24 age group (+893; +2.1%) and the 25-49 age group (+1,690; +1.2%) but a fall in the 50-64 age group (-1,102; -1.0%) which is a similar picture to that seen in England. Over 5 years, all 3 age groups grew in Cumbria with the strongest growth in the 25-49 age group (+2.9%).

Figure 11: Year-on-year population change, Cumbria - 16-64 year olds



Source: ONS MYE 2025

Figure 12: Year-on-year population change, Unitaries - 16-64 year olds



Source: ONS MYE 2025

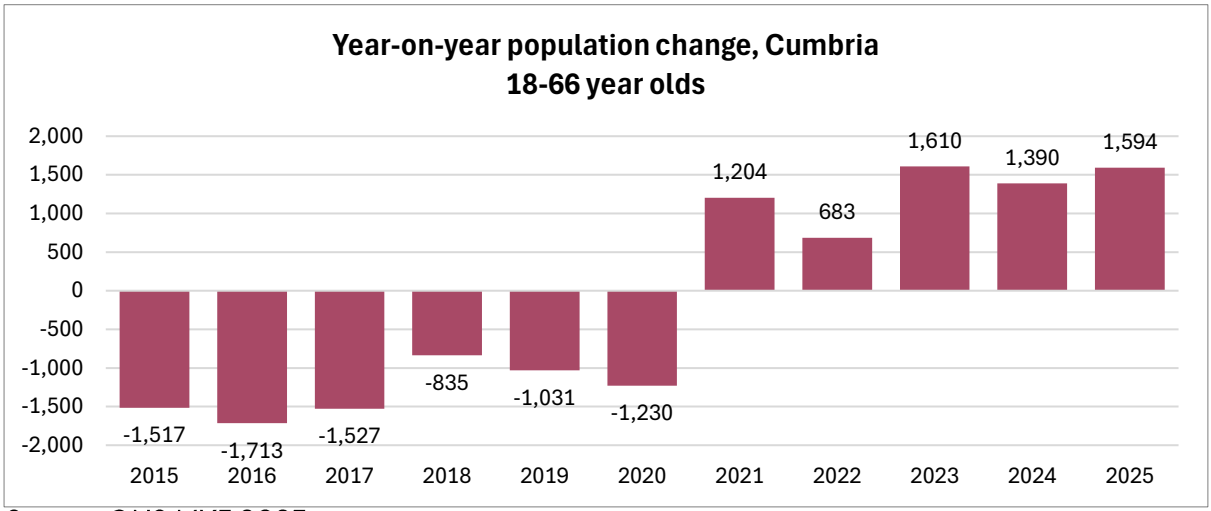
Alternative working-age adults (aged 18-66)

As noted earlier, some commentators now use 18-66 as an alternative definition of working age. Using this definition, the number of working-age adults rose by 1,594 (+0.5%) to reach 306,427 in 2025. The trend of decline prior to the pandemic and strong growth following it, was evident, similar to that seen for the standard working age definition of 16-64 years. The increase was higher in Cumberland (+0.6%) than Westmorland & Furness (+0.4%)

Compared to 5 years ago (2020-2025) Cumbria's alternative working-age population rose by 2.2% (+6,481) which is lower growth than nationally (+4.5%). Once again, growth was stronger in Cumberland (+2.5%) than in Westmorland & Furness (+1.8%).

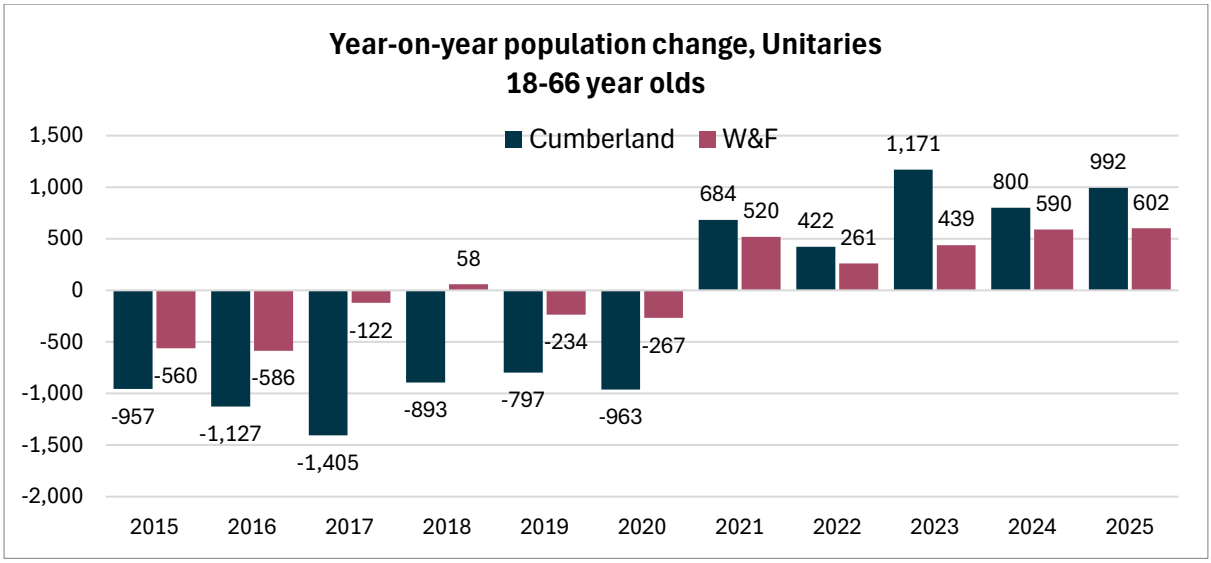
Compared to 10 years ago (2015-2025), Cumbria's alternative working-age population is marginally higher (+145; 0.0%), in contrast to stronger national growth of 6.4%. Westmorland & Furness experienced growth (+0.9%) but Cumberland experienced a decline (-0.7%).

Figure 13: Year-on-year population change, Cumbria - 18-66 year olds



Source: ONS MYE 2025

Figure 14: Year-on-year population change, Unitaries - 18-66 year olds



Source: ONS MYE 2025

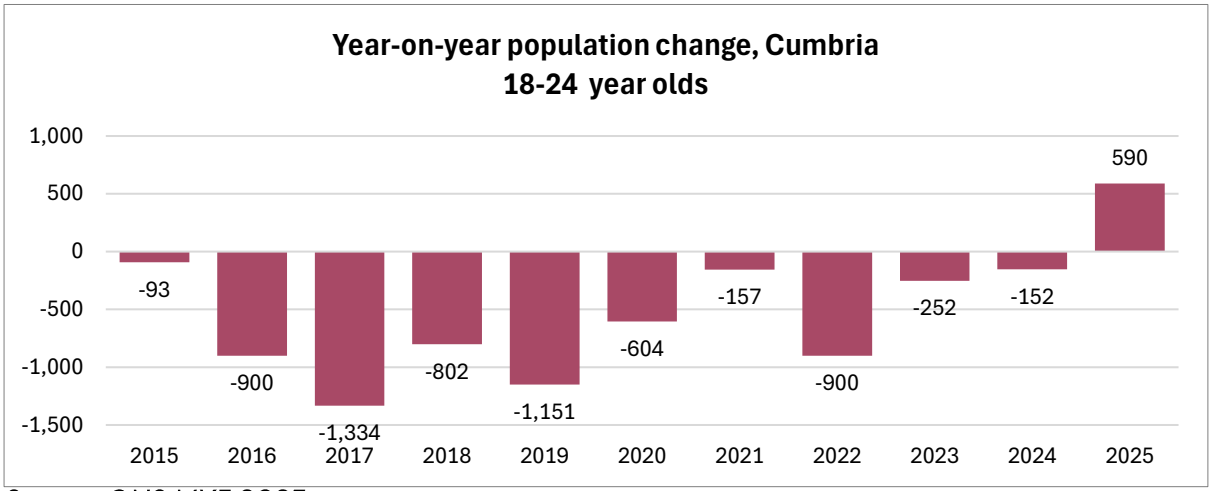
18-24 year olds

Within the working-age population group, there is always considerable interest in 18-24 year olds as this is an age group where there is always a lot of movement geographically as young people pursue their options after leaving compulsory education.

In 2025 there were 31,953 18-24 year olds resident in Cumbria, an increase of 590 (+1.9%) from 2024. This was the first increase in this age group since 2012 and occurred in both unitary areas (Cumberland +314; +1.8%, Westmorland & Furness +276; +2.0%).

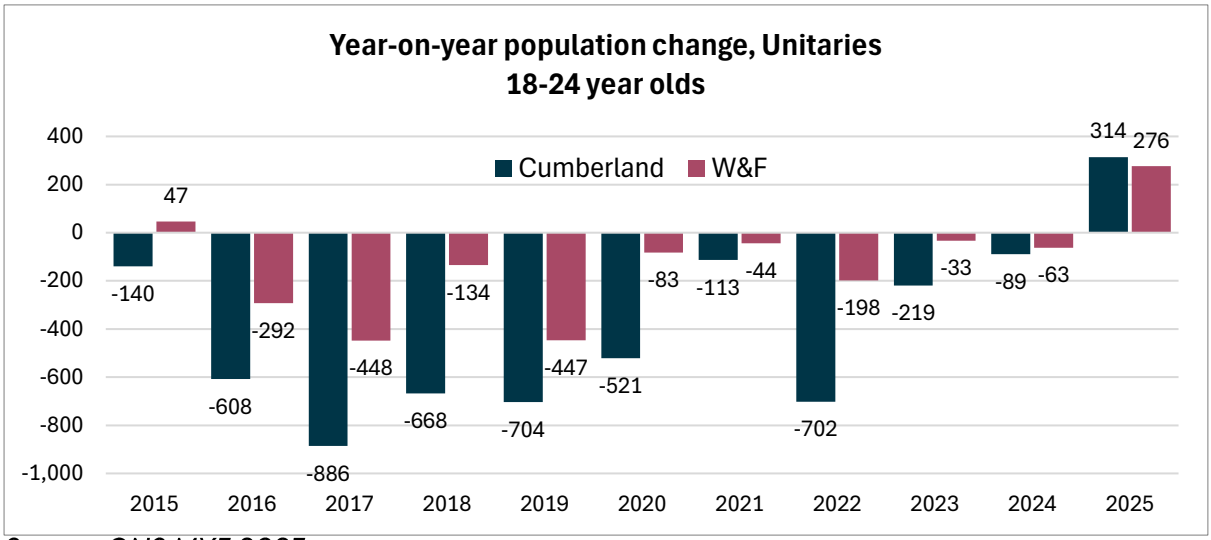
However, there were 871 fewer 18-24 year olds than 5 years ago (-2.7%) and 5,662 fewer than 10 years ago (-15.1%). The medium and long term decline was more pronounced in Cumberland (5 years -4.4%, 10 years -19.2%) than in Westmorland & Furness (5 years -0.4%, 10 years -9.3%).

Figure 15: Year-on-year population change, Cumbria - 18-24 year olds



Source: ONS MYE 2025

Figure 16: Year-on-year population change, Unitaries - 18-24 year olds



Source: ONS MYE 2025

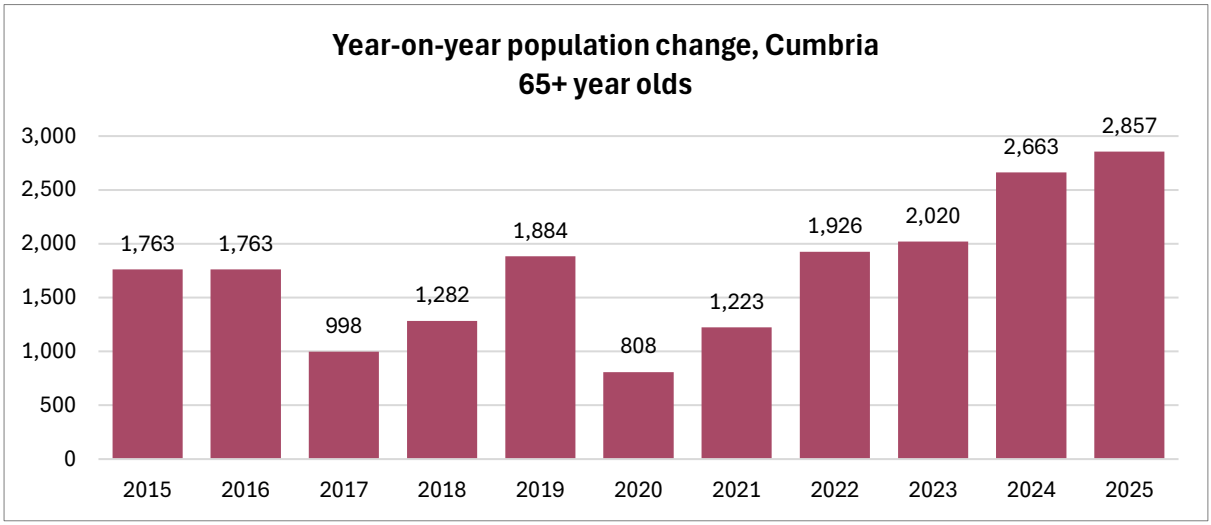
Older adults (aged 65+)

In contrast to other age groups, the 65+ group has grown year-on-year throughout the last decade. In 2025 there were 131,713 residents over 65, an increase of 2,857 (+2.2%) from 2024. The increase was similar in both unitary areas – +2.3% in Cumberland and +2.2% in Westmorland & Furness. In both cases, this is above the England increase of +2.0%.

Compared to 5 years ago, there are 10,689 (+8.8%) more residents aged 65+ in Cumbria which is similar to the England growth rate of +8.7%. It varied between the two unitaries – Cumberland recorded growth of 9.8% over 5 years compared with 7.8% growth in Westmorland & Furness.

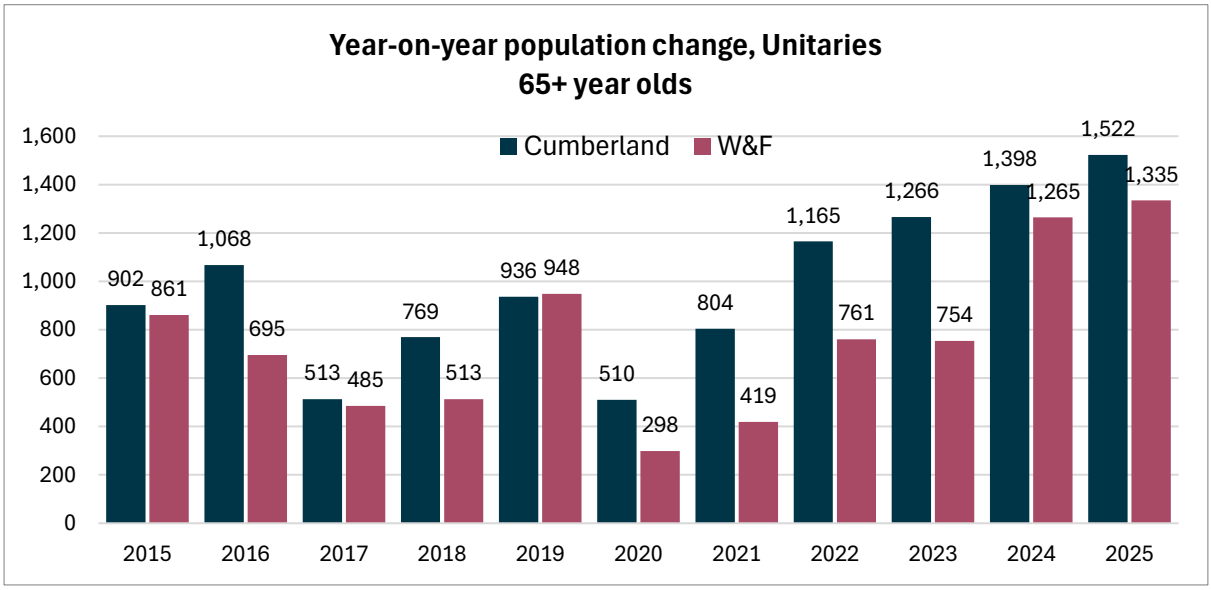
Compared to 10 years ago, growth in the population aged 65+ in Cumbria as a whole was slightly lower than nationally – +15.2% compared to 16.3% for England. Over this longer period, Cumberland (+16.8%) again saw higher growth than Westmorland & Furness (+13.5%).

Figure 17: Year-on-year population change, Cumbria - 65+ year olds



Source: ONS MYE 2025

Figure 18: Year-on-year population change, Unitaries - 65+ year olds



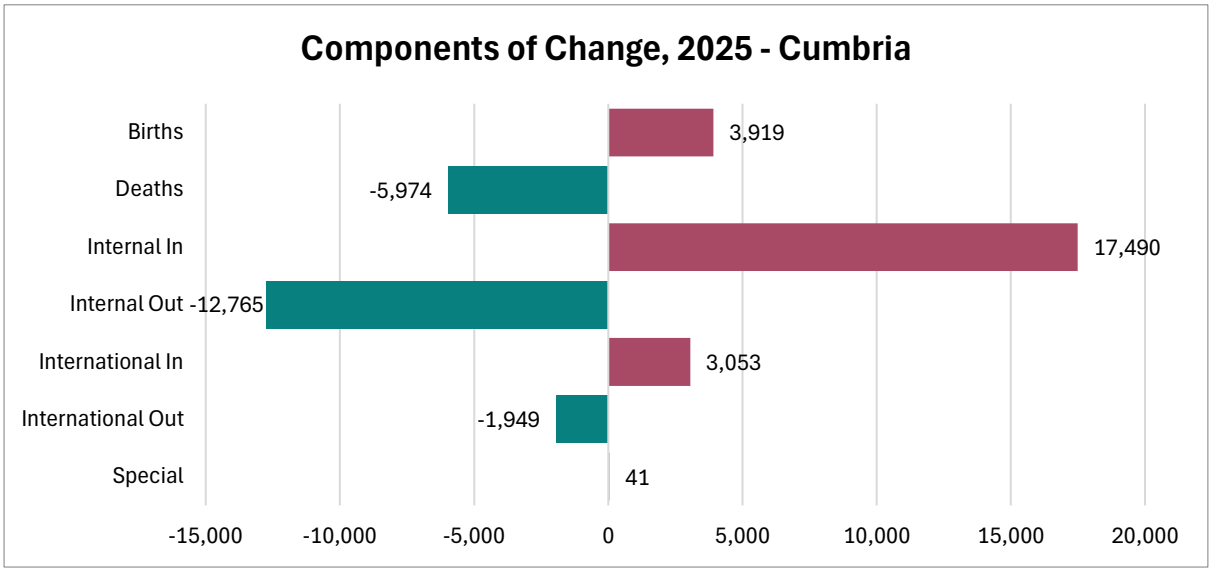
Source: ONS MYE 2025

5 Components of change

Components of change are the factors influencing population change. The components which have the biggest impact are births and deaths, migration to/from other parts of the UK and migration to/from overseas. **Natural change** is the difference between births and deaths and **net migration** is the difference between movements into an area and out of it. In both cases, these can be described as numerically positive or negative.

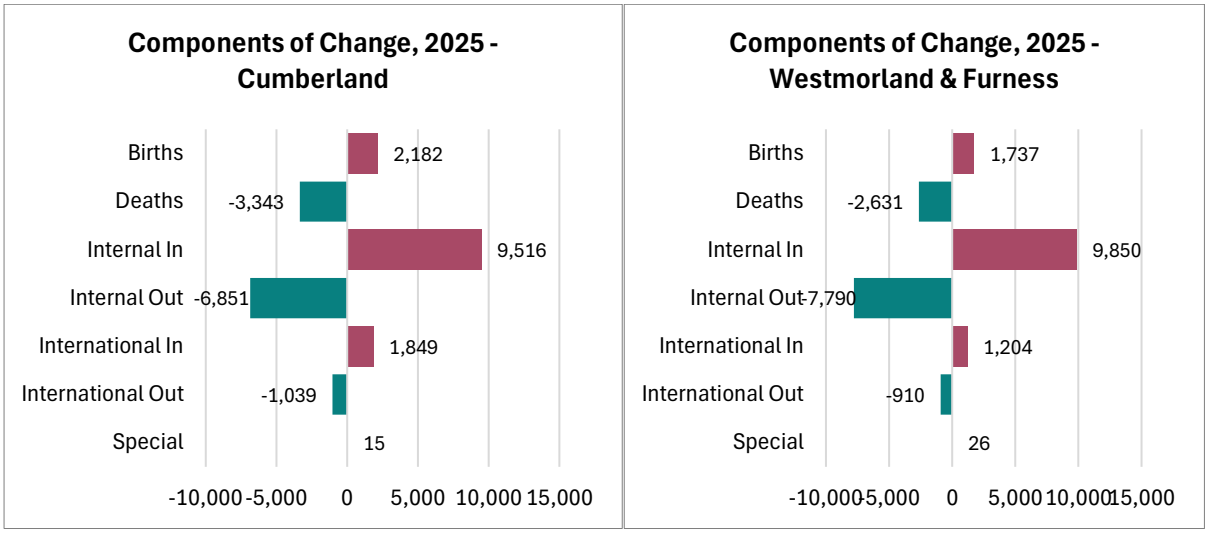
The contribution of the different components of change in 2025 is shown in the following figures. Movements into Cumbria from other parts of the UK accounted for the largest proportion of positive change to the population (71.4%) followed by births which accounted for 16.0% and movements in from overseas which accounted for 12.5%. Movements out of Cumbria accounted for the largest proportion of negative change (61.7%) followed by deaths (28.9%) and movements to overseas (9.4%).

Figure 19: Components of Change, 2025 - Cumbria



Source: ONS MYE 2025

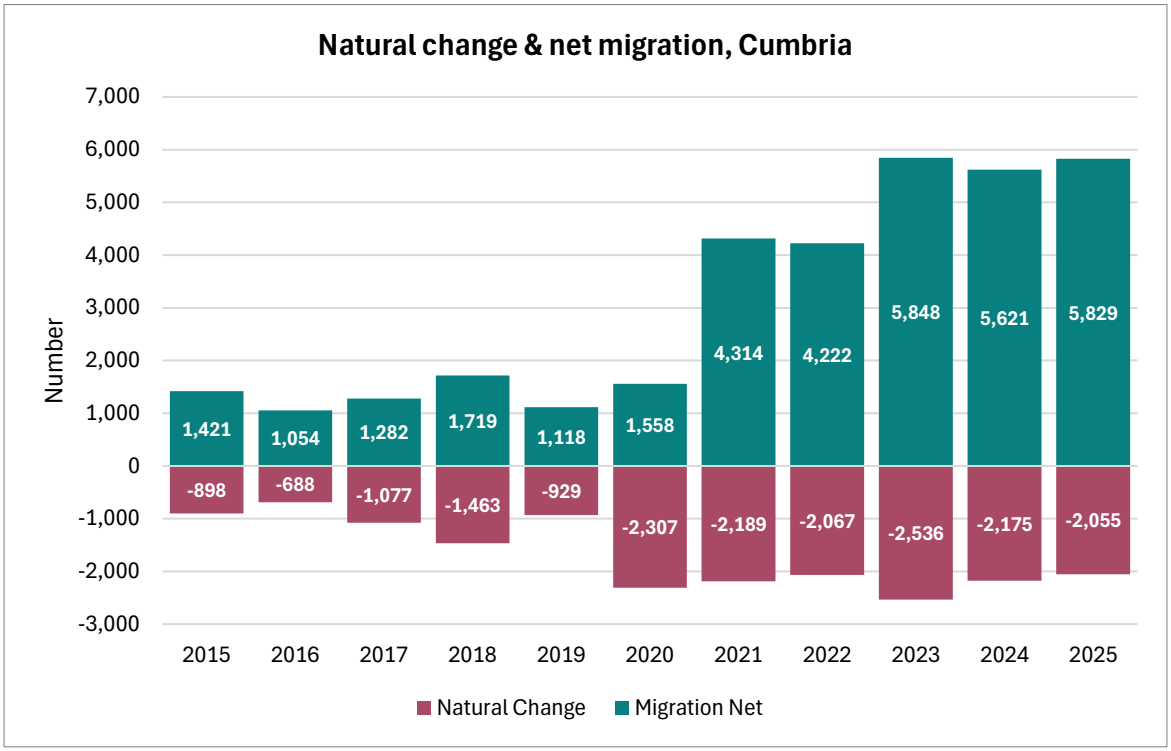
Figure 20: Components of Change, 2025 - Unitaries



Source: ONS MYE 2025

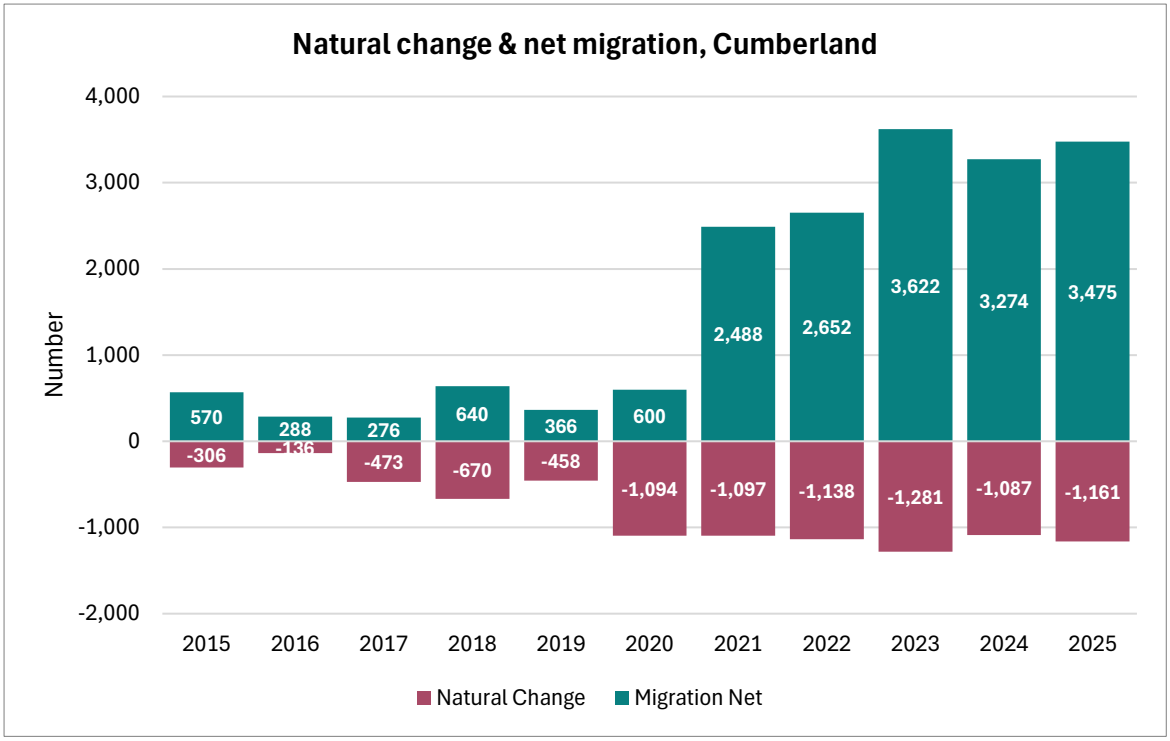
Throughout the past decade, net migration has offset the negative impact of natural change (the difference between births and deaths) but the degree to which this has happened increased significantly in 2021 and has continued to increase since then.

Figure 21: Natural change & net migration, Cumbria



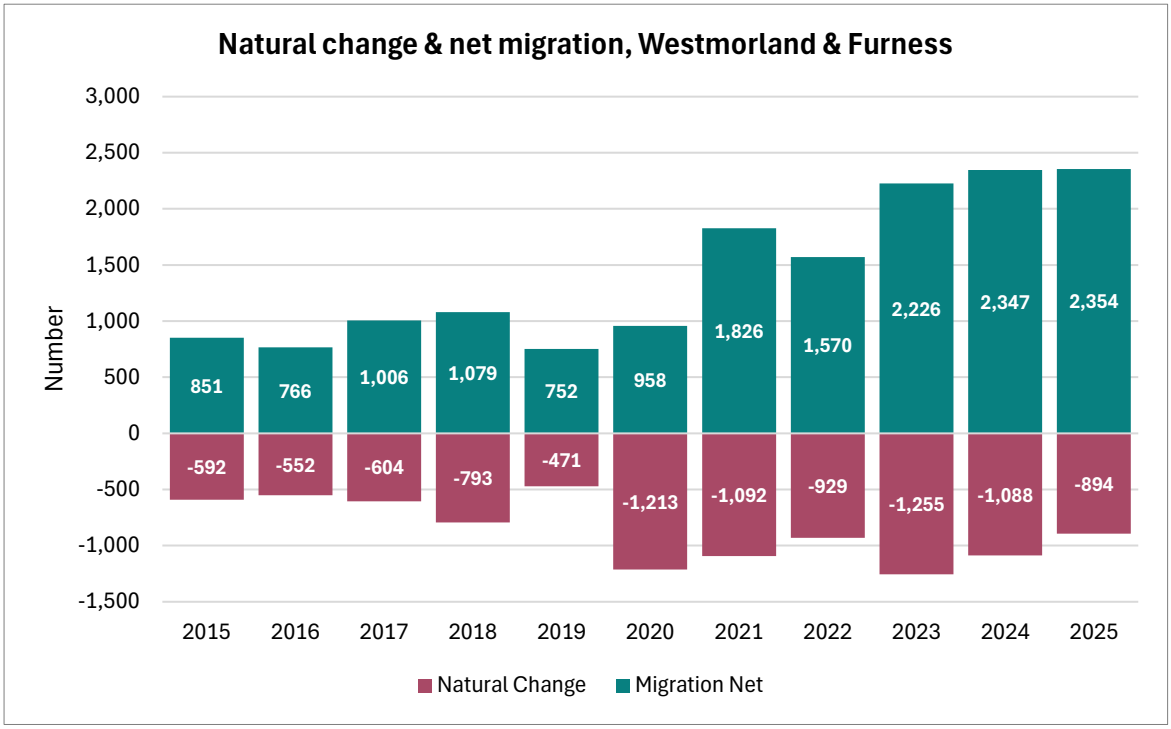
Source: ONS MYE 2025

Figure 22: Natural change & net migration, Cumberland



Source: ONS MYE 2025

Figure 23: Natural change & net migration, Westmorland & Furness

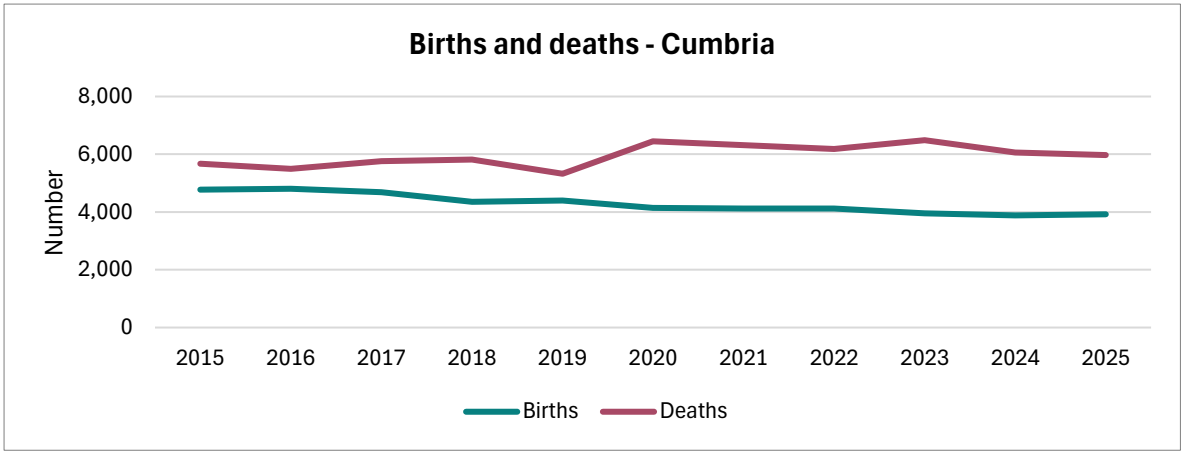


Source: ONS MYE 2025

5.1 Births & Deaths

Cumbria recorded 3,919 births in 2025 and 5,974 deaths resulting in negative natural change of -2,055 people. The number of deaths has exceeded births in every year in the past decade, reflecting the area's older age profile and declining number of births. Consequently, any population growth in Cumbria is increasingly dependent on positive net migration. In contrast, England has seen more births than deaths in every year in the past decade.

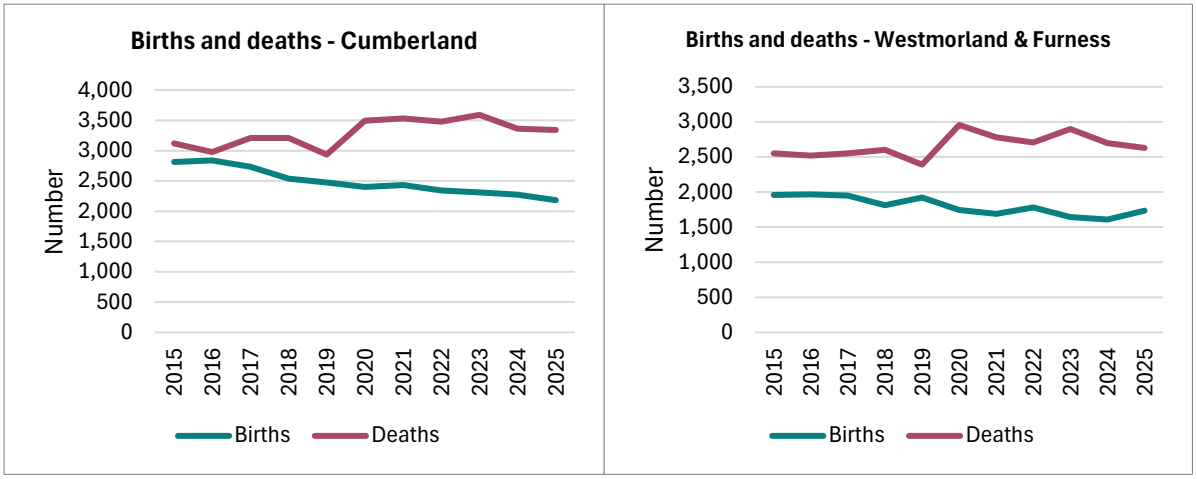
Figure 24: Births & deaths, Cumbria



Source: ONS MYE 2025

Cumberland had 2,182 births in 2025 and 3,343 deaths, resulting in negative natural change of -1,161. This natural change gap has widened significantly since 2019 as a result of more deaths and fewer births. Westmorland & Furness had 1,737 births and 2,631 deaths in 2025, resulting in negative natural change of -894.

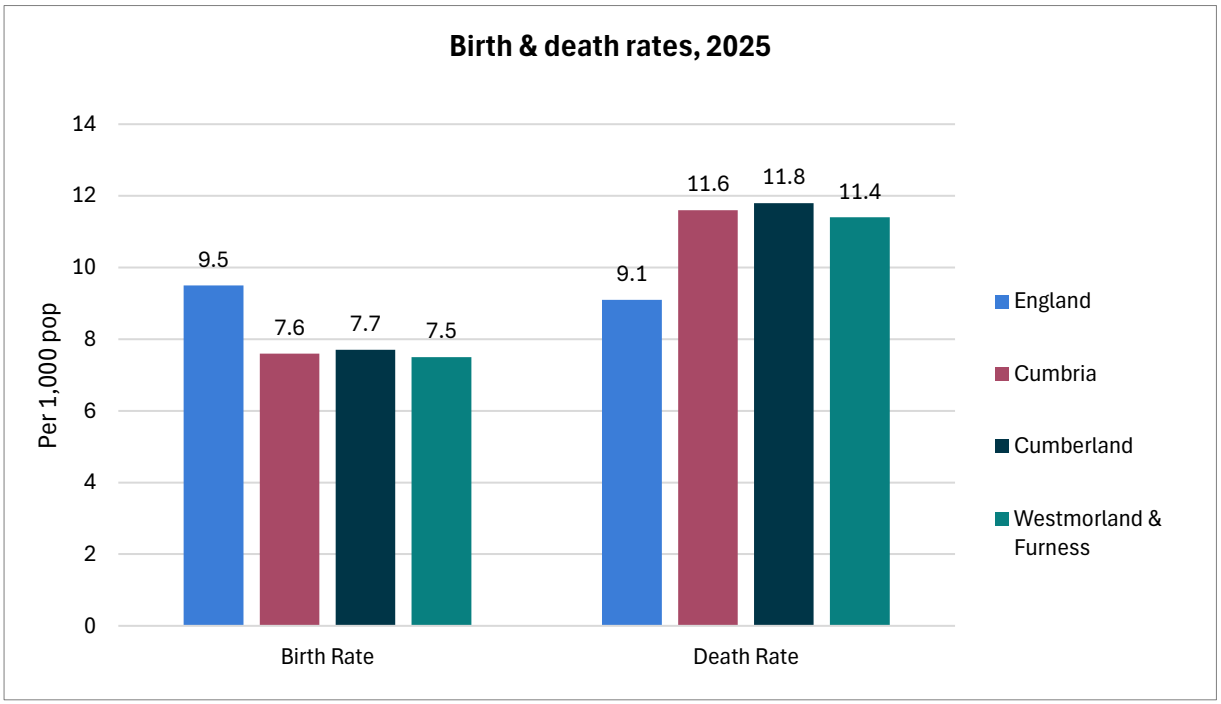
Figure 25: Births & deaths, Unitaries



Source: ONS MYE 2025

Cumbria and both unitaries had lower birth rates than the England average and higher death rates which is not unexpected in light of the demographic profile of the population. In Cumbria there were 7.6 births per 1,000 residents in 2025 compared to 9.5 for England (Cumberland 7.7, Westmorland & Furness 7.5). There were 11.6 deaths per 1,000 residents in Cumbria in 2025 compared to 9.1 for England (Cumberland 11.8, Westmorland & Furness 11.4). **Note:** these are "crude" birth/death rates which do not remove the distortion caused by differences in the age and sex structure of the population, as age-standardised rates would be.

Figure 26: Birth & death rates, 2025



Source: ONS MYE 2025

5.2 Migration

Important notes:

Migration is one of the main components of population change and includes both internal migration (moves between local authorities) and international migration (moves between the UK and other countries). International migration refers to people moving between countries for 12 months or more. The statistics measure the movement of people rather than their nationality, citizenship or country of birth, so international migration figures should not be interpreted as representing the number of foreign nationals moving into or out of an area.

Since 2020, international migration to the UK has been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, the end of EU free movement following Brexit, growth in international student recruitment, increased overseas recruitment to address labour shortages, humanitarian routes for people from Ukraine, Hong Kong and Afghanistan, and more recent restrictions on work and study visas. Together these factors contributed to record levels of net migration in 2022 and 2023, followed by a substantial decline from 2024 onwards.

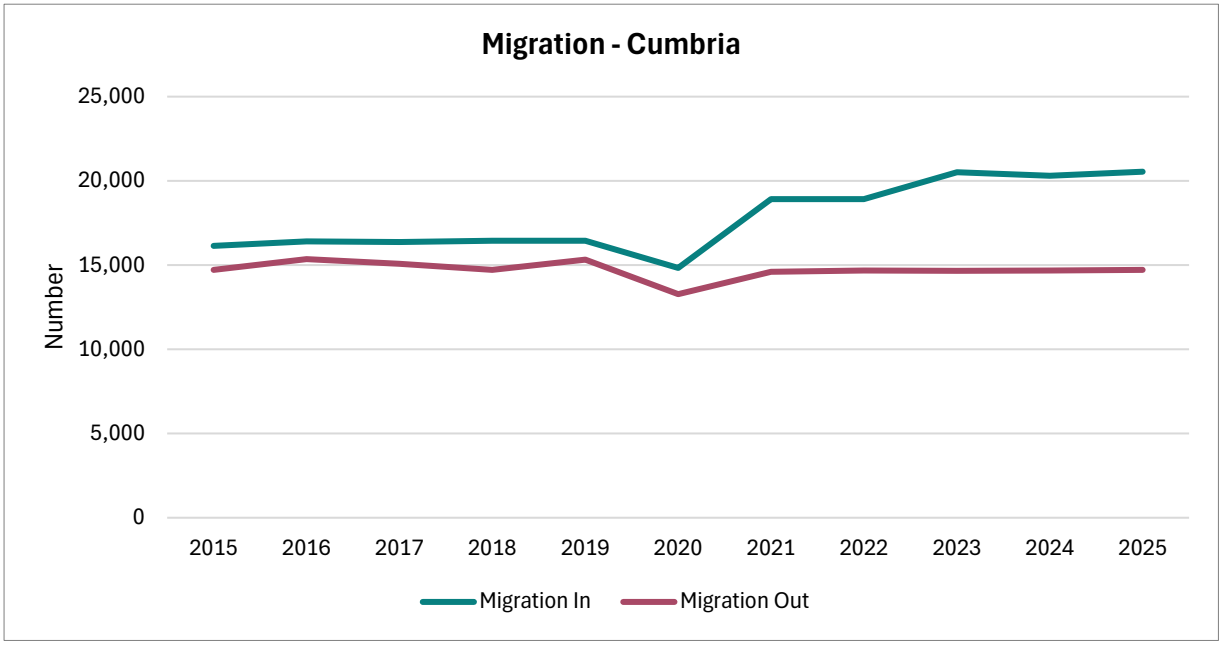
At Cumbria level, internal migration estimates exclude moves between Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness because these represent redistribution of population within Cumbria rather than migration into or out of the area. In contrast, migration estimates for the individual unitary authorities include moves between the two authorities, as these contribute to population change within each local authority.

5.2.1 Migration overview

Cumbria recorded 20,543 movements into the area (from other parts of the UK and from overseas) in 2025 and 14,714 movements out of the area, resulting in a positive net migration of 5,829 people. The number of people moving in has exceeded those moving out in every year since 2013 and has become more significant since 2021 as a result of an increasing number moving into the area alongside little change in the number moving out.

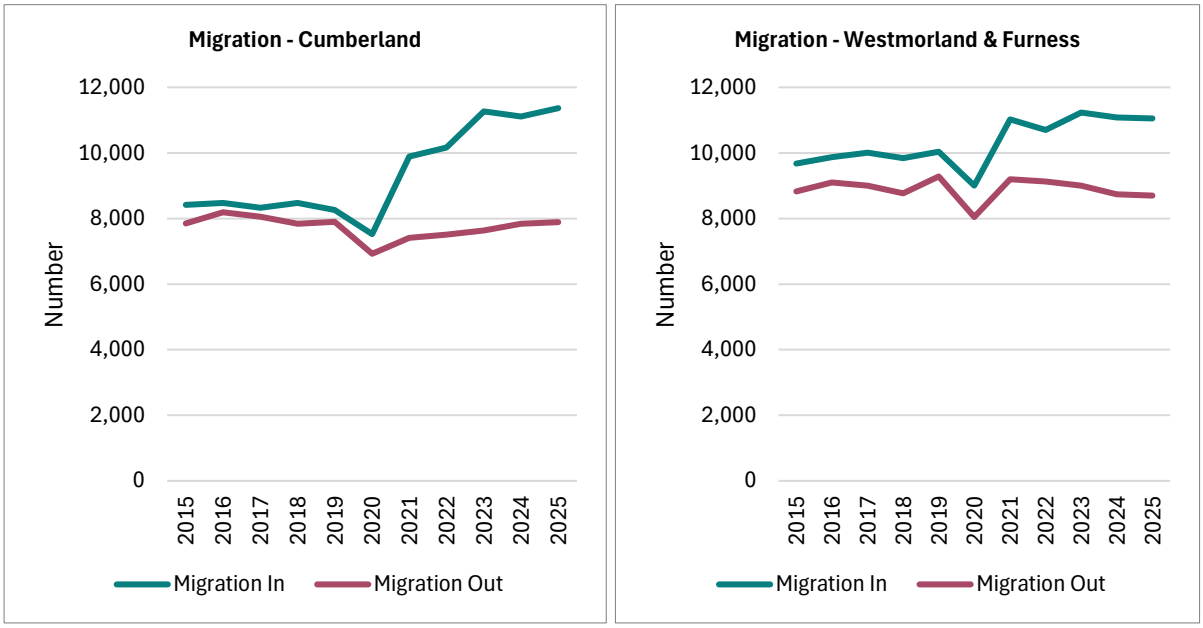
The same general trend has been experienced in both unitaries, although the increase in movements into Cumberland is more pronounced than in Westmorland & Furness (+35.0% increase since 2015 in Cumberland compared to a +14.2% increase in Westmorland & Furness).

Figure 27: Migration, Cumbria



Source: ONS MYE 2025

Figure 28: Migration, Unitaries

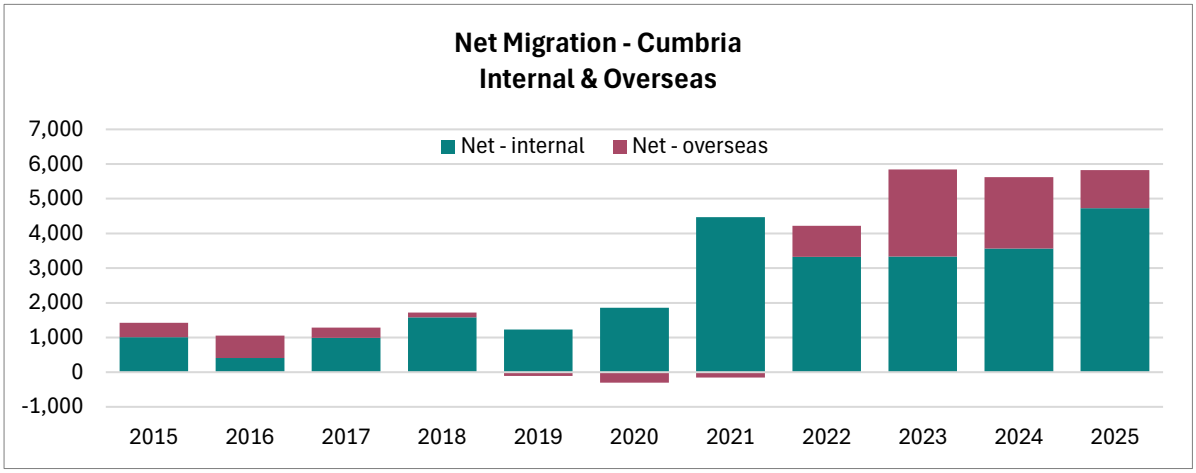


Source: ONS MYE 2025

5.2.2 *Internal and Overseas migration*

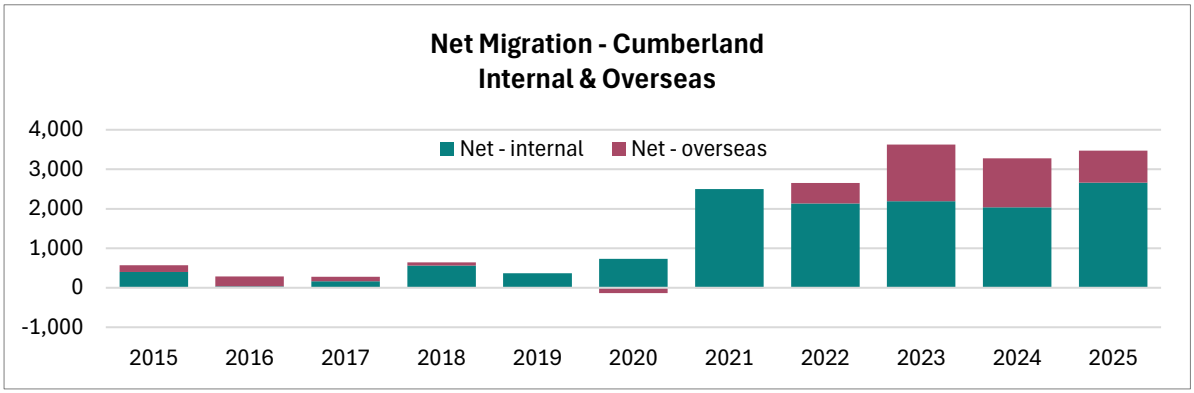
Migration to/from other parts of the UK is responsible for the majority of net migration in Cumbria. Net migration from other parts of the UK increased significantly in 2021, fell back slightly in 2022-2024 but increased again in 2025. Net overseas migration was negative in 2019-2021 before increasing in 2022 and particularly in 2023, before falling in 2024 and again in 2025. The same general trend was evident in both unitaries.

Figure 29: Net migration, internal & overseas - Cumbria



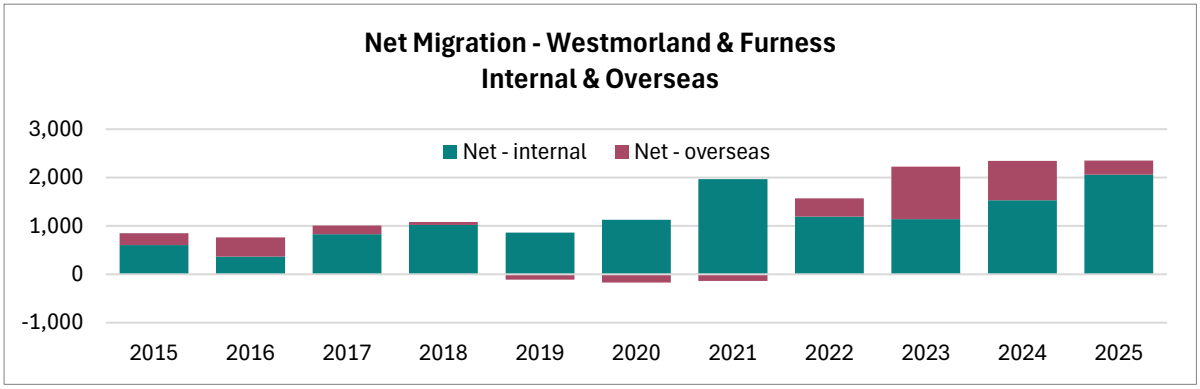
Source: ONS MYE 2025

Figure 30: Net migration, internal & overseas - Cumberland



Source: ONS MYE 2025

Figure 31: Net migration, internal & overseas - Westmorland & Furness



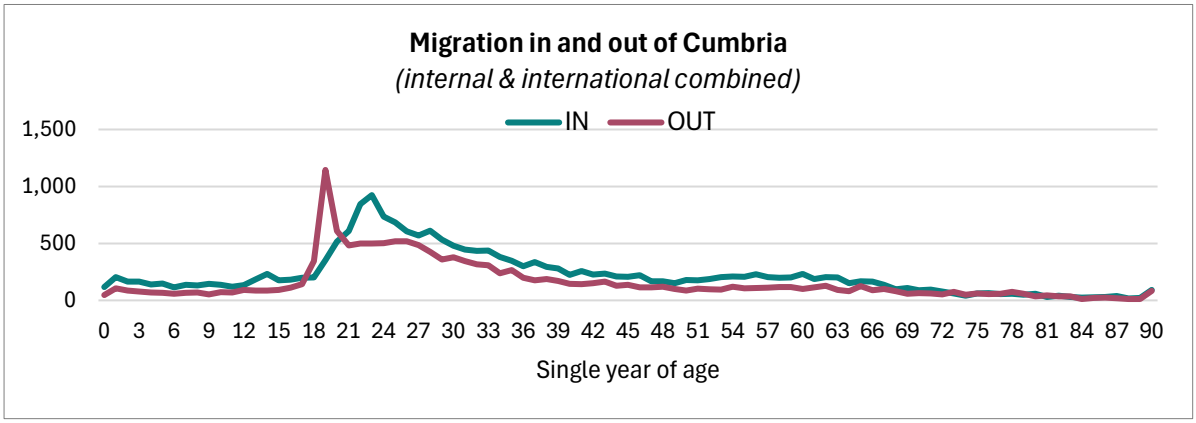
Source: ONS MYE 2025

5.2.3 Migration by age

Single year of age

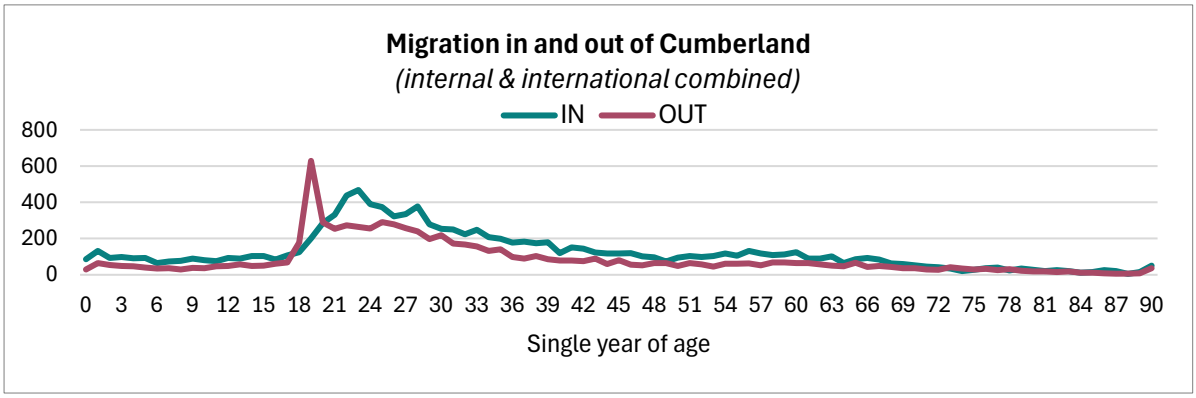
The highest volumes of outward movements are made by those aged 19-28 and the highest volumes of inward movements are made by those aged between 20 and 29. This is highly influenced by young adults leaving the area for higher education and other opportunities after leaving compulsory education and by those entering the area for the same reasons or returning after higher education study.

Figure 32: Migration in and out of Cumbria by single year of age, 2025



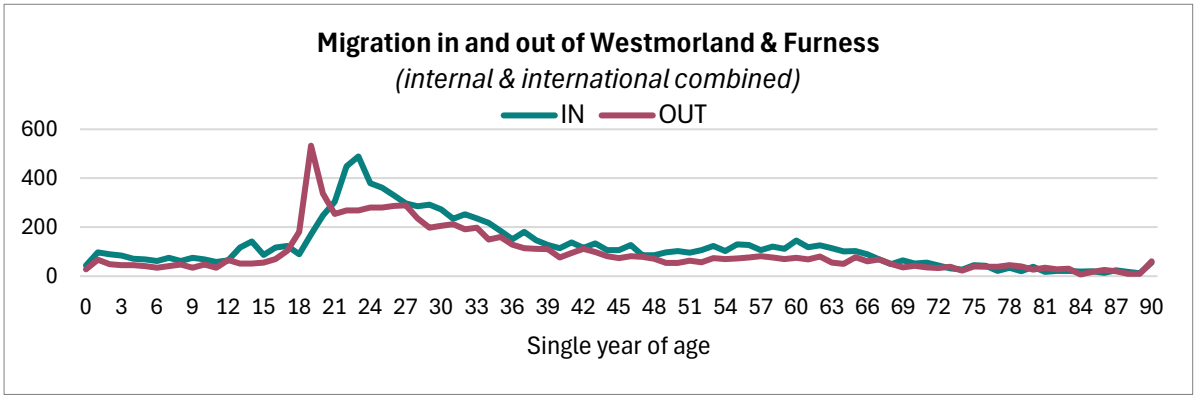
Source: ONS MYE 2025

Figure 33: Migration in and out of Cumberland by single year of age, 2025



Source: ONS MYE 2025

Figure 34: Migration in and out of Westmorland & Furness by single year of age, 2025



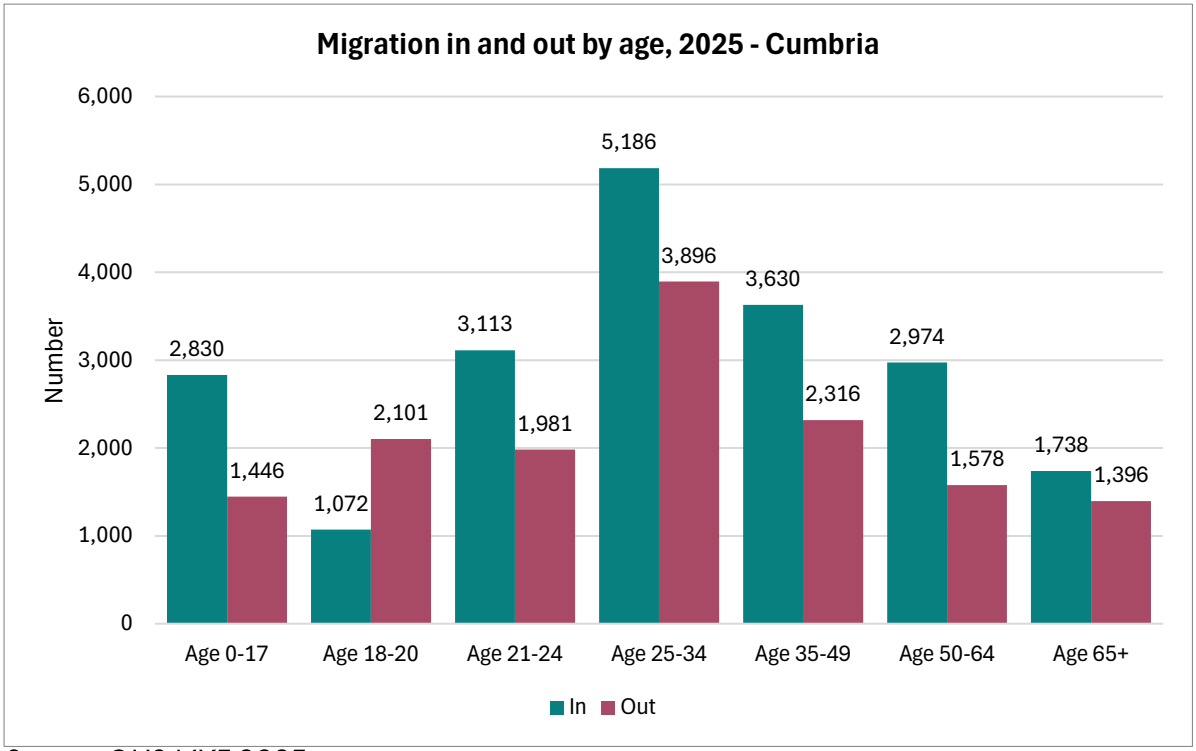
Source: ONS MYE 2025

Broad age groups

The 18-20 age group is the only one where there were more outward movements than inward ones in 2025. Of potential significance for Cumbria's labour market, inward migration exceeded outward migration across all other age groups up to and including 50-64. This is contributing to the recent reversal of the pre-pandemic decline in Cumbria's working-age population.

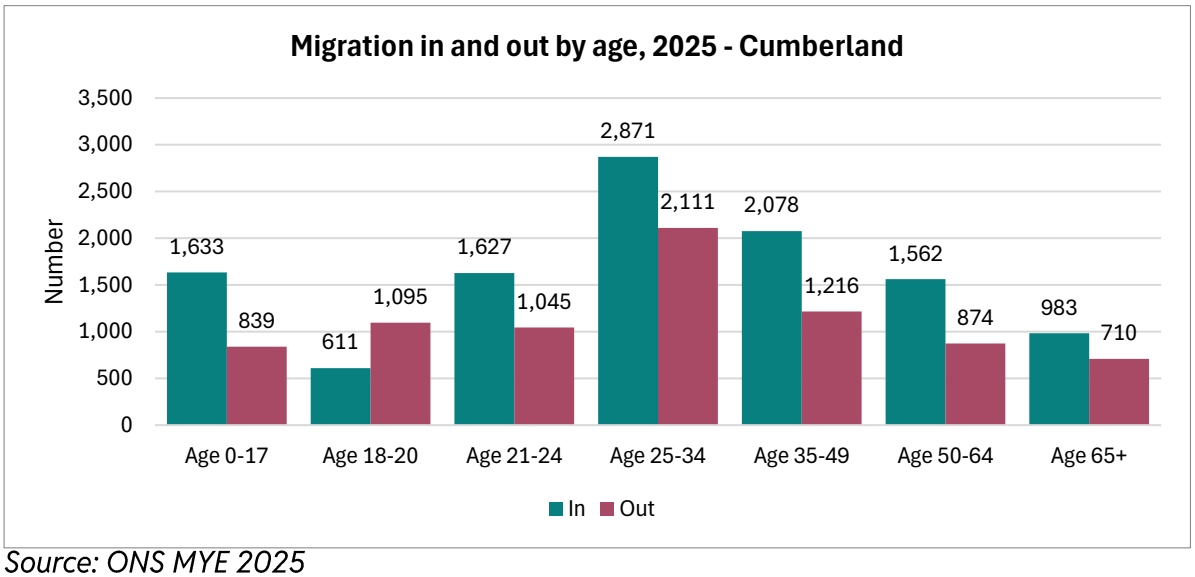
The same trend was evident in both unitaries although it was more pronounced in Cumberland than in Westmorland & Furness.

Figure 35: Migration in and out of Cumbria by broad age group, 2025



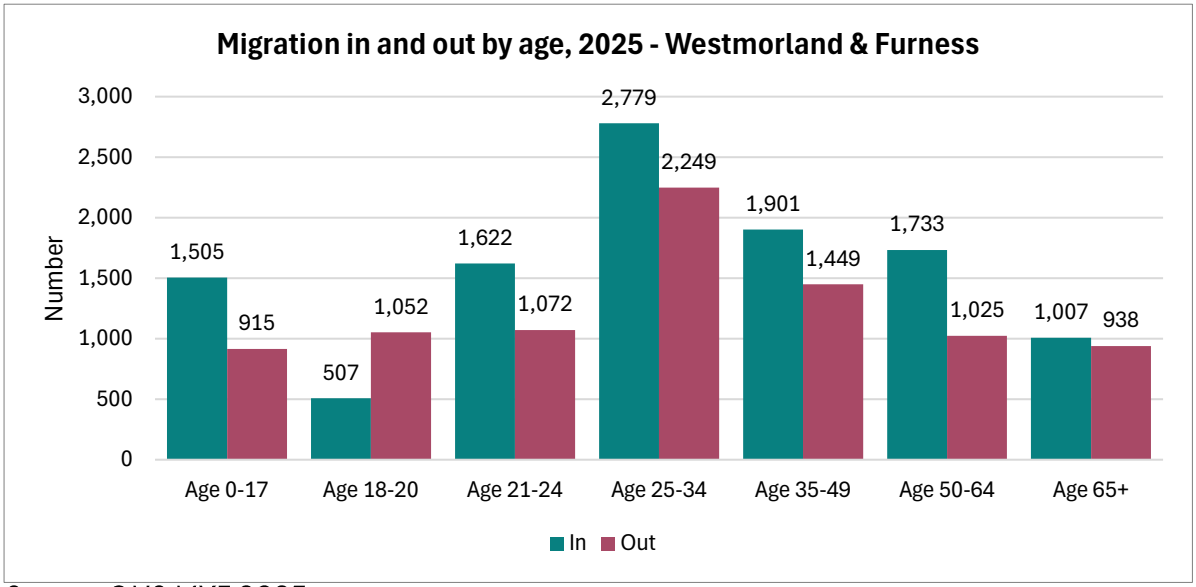
Source: ONS MYE 2025

Figure 36: Migration in and out of Cumberland by broad age group, 2025



Source: ONS MYE 2025

Figure 37: Migration in and out of Westmorland & Furness by broad age group, 2025



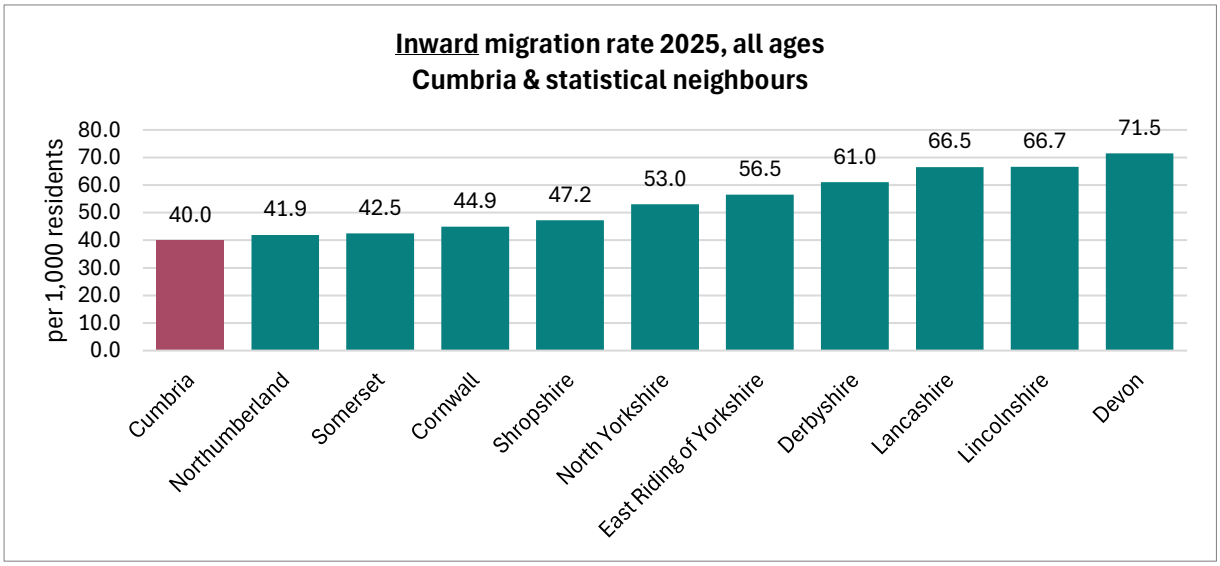
Source: ONS MYE 2025

Migration rates

A migration rate measures the number of people moving into or out of an area relative to the size of the relevant population, allowing migration levels to be compared between areas and age groups.

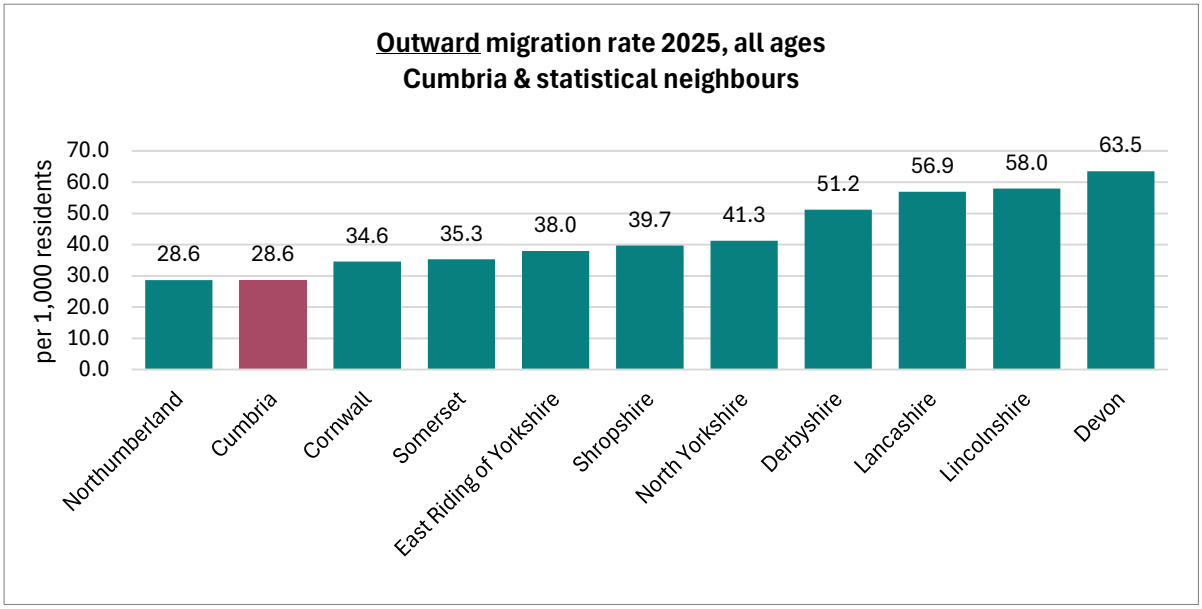
In 2025, the inward migration rate to Cumbria was 40.0 people per 1,000 and the outward migration rate was 28.6. These rates are both low when compared to Cumbria's 10 statistical neighbours, indicating a comparatively low overall rate of population movement than in similar economies. However, Cumbria's inward migration rate was 1.4 times as high as its outward migration rate in 2025. In other words, for every 10 people who moved out, around 14 moved in. This was the second-highest inward-to-outward ratio among statistical neighbours.

Figure 38: Inward migration rate 2025, all ages



Source: ONS MYE 2025

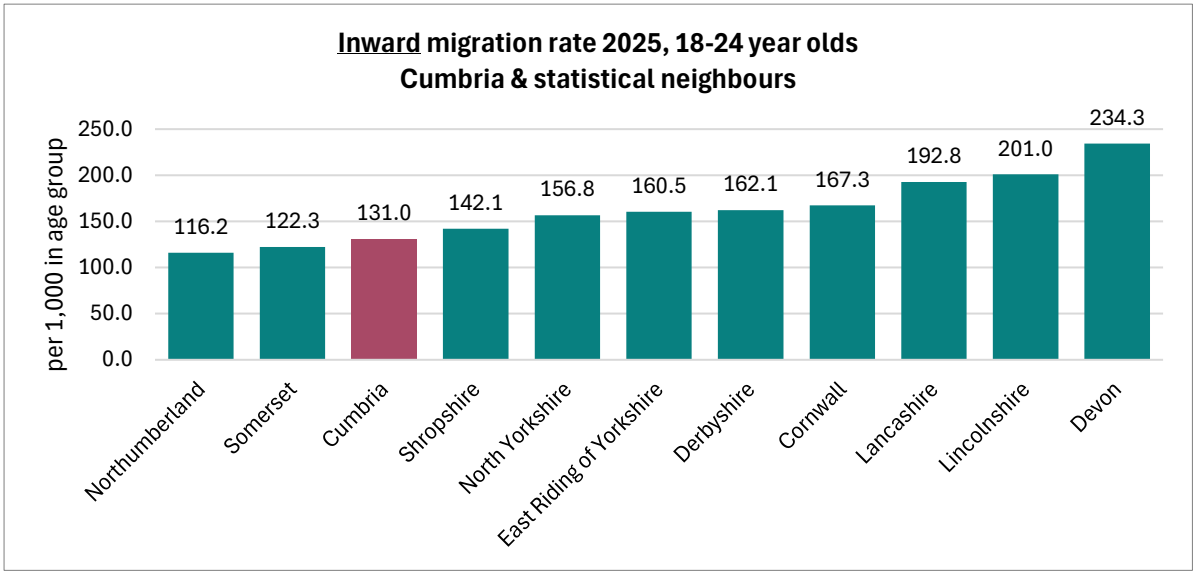
Figure 39: Outward migration rate 2025, all ages



Source: ONS MYE 2025

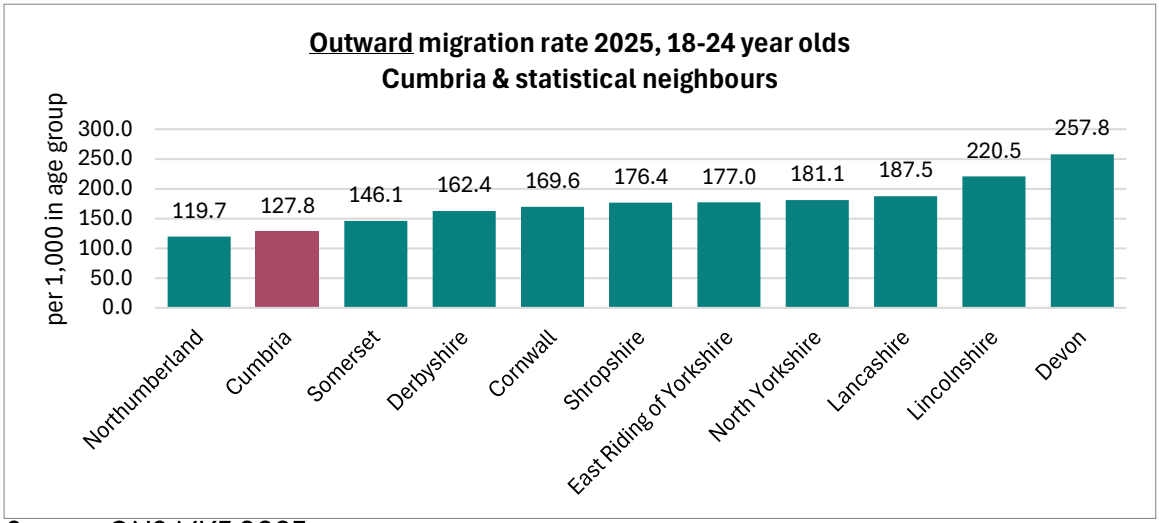
Of particular relevance for Cumbria's future labour supply is that the outward migration rate of 18-24 year olds is the second-lowest among statistical neighbours at 127.8 per 1,000. However, the inward migration rate, at 131.0 per 1,000, was also relatively low and was the third-lowest among the statistical neighbours.

Figure 40: Inward migration rate 2025, 18-24 year olds



Source: ONS MYE 2025

Figure 41: Outward migration rate 2025, 18-24 year olds



Source: ONS MYE 2025

Where do people move to/from

The majority of movements into and out of Cumbria involve areas in Scotland, the North East and the North West. The following table shows the top 10 most common origins and destinations identifiable in the available data for Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness (including movements between the two areas).

Figure 42: Top 10 areas people moved to/from in 2025

Movements into/out of Cumberland			
Into Cumberland from		**Out From Cumberland to**	
Westmorland and Furness	1,086	Westmorland & Furness	782
Scotland	879	Scotland	587
Newcastle upon Tyne	281	Newcastle upon Tyne	319
County Durham	264	County Durham	267
Liverpool	227	Liverpool	187
Northumberland	219	Manchester	186
Manchester	214	Preston	185
Preston	189	Leeds	171
Lancaster	185	Lancaster	169
Leeds	180	Northumberland	164
Movements into/out of Westmorland & Furness			
Into Westmorland & Furness from		**Out From Westmorland & Furness to**	
Cumberland	782	Cumberland	1,086
Lancaster	706	Lancaster	879
Scotland	456	Scotland	360
North Yorkshire	308	North Yorkshire	293
Liverpool	255	Preston	219
Manchester	227	Manchester	208
Leeds	227	Liverpool	197
County Durham	196	County Durham	195
Preston	187	Newcastle upon Tyne	180
Newcastle upon Tyne	181	Leeds	160

Source: ONS MYE 2025

6 Comparison with projections

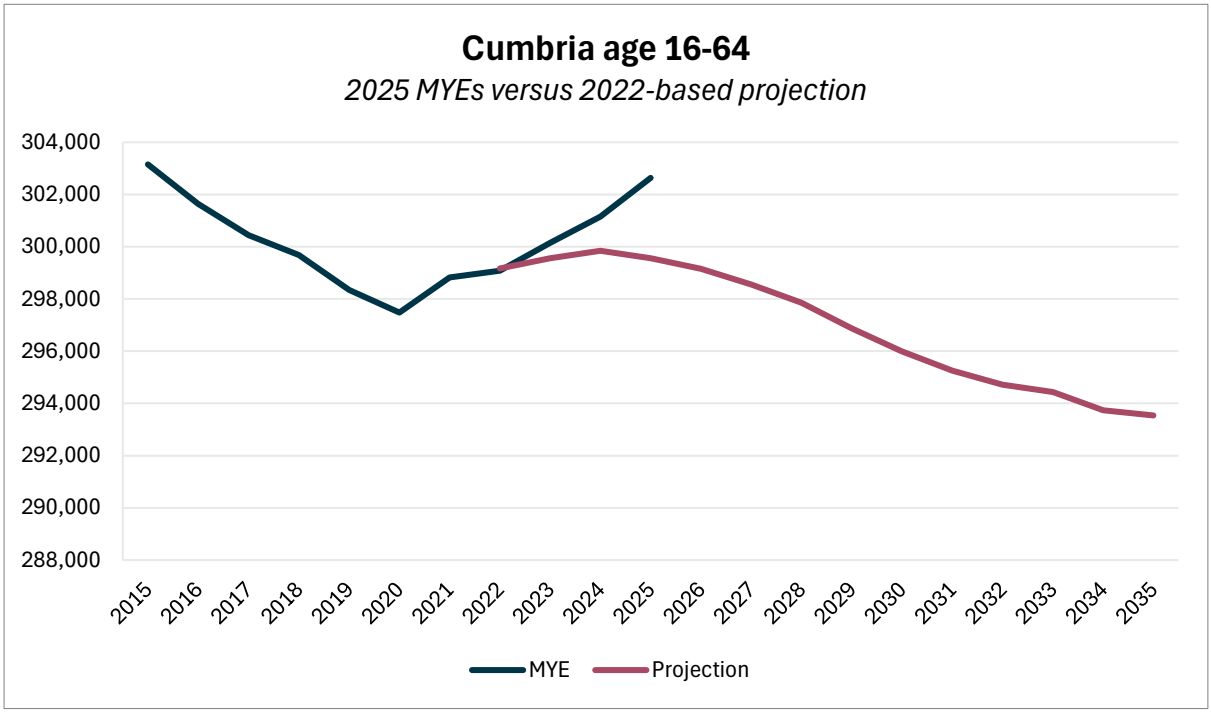
As noted earlier, the most recent subnational population projections from ONS are 2022-based. The recommended Migration Category Variant from these projections uses data from the previous 5 years on births, deaths and internal migration, together with modified assumptions on international migration which aligned with data available at the time.

The use of 5 years' data is particularly important as Cumbria's demographic trajectory has changed in recent years. As a result, the 2022-based SNPPs may not fully capture the implications of the recent period of growth and future population change could be higher than projected if recent migration patterns and population gains are sustained.

The extent to which the earlier projections differ from the latest population estimates varies by age group but is particularly evident for the working-age population which has shown a reversal in trend locally since the pandemic. The divergence is more pronounced in Cumberland than in Westmorland & Furness.

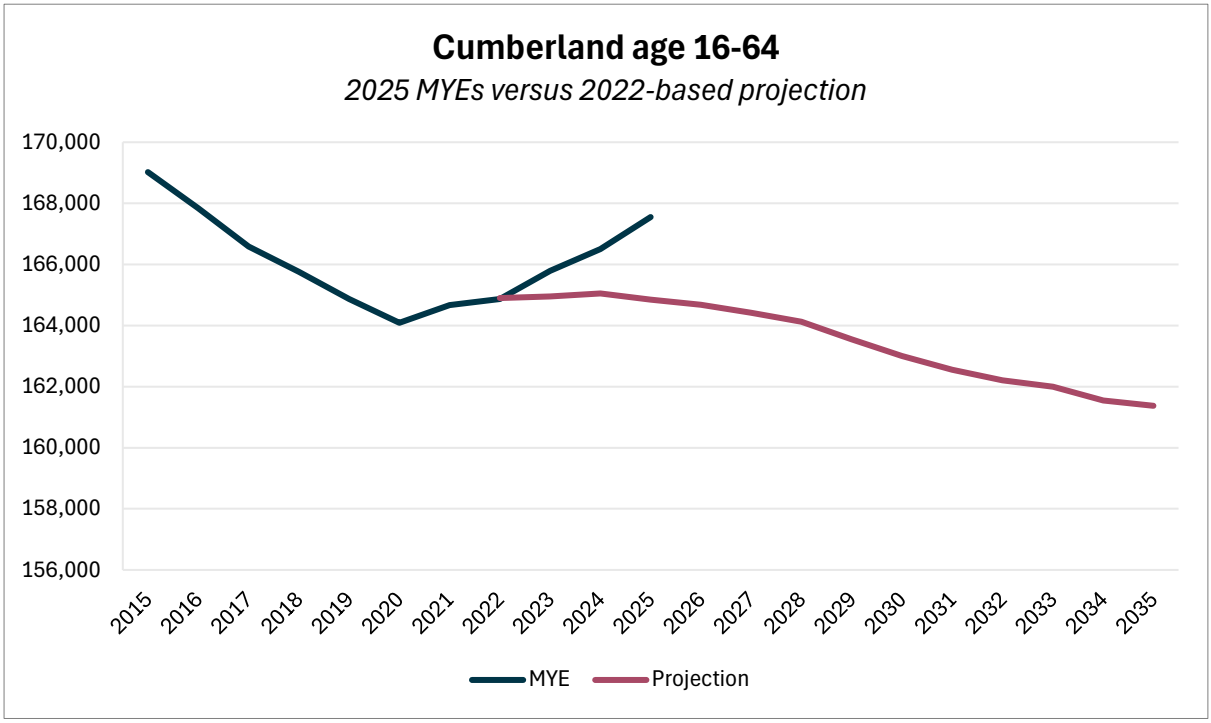
The 2022-based projections should therefore be used with caution, particularly when considering the future working-age population, as their trend assumptions do not fully reflect the population growth recorded since 2022.

Figure 43: Working-age projection versus latest estimates, Cumbria



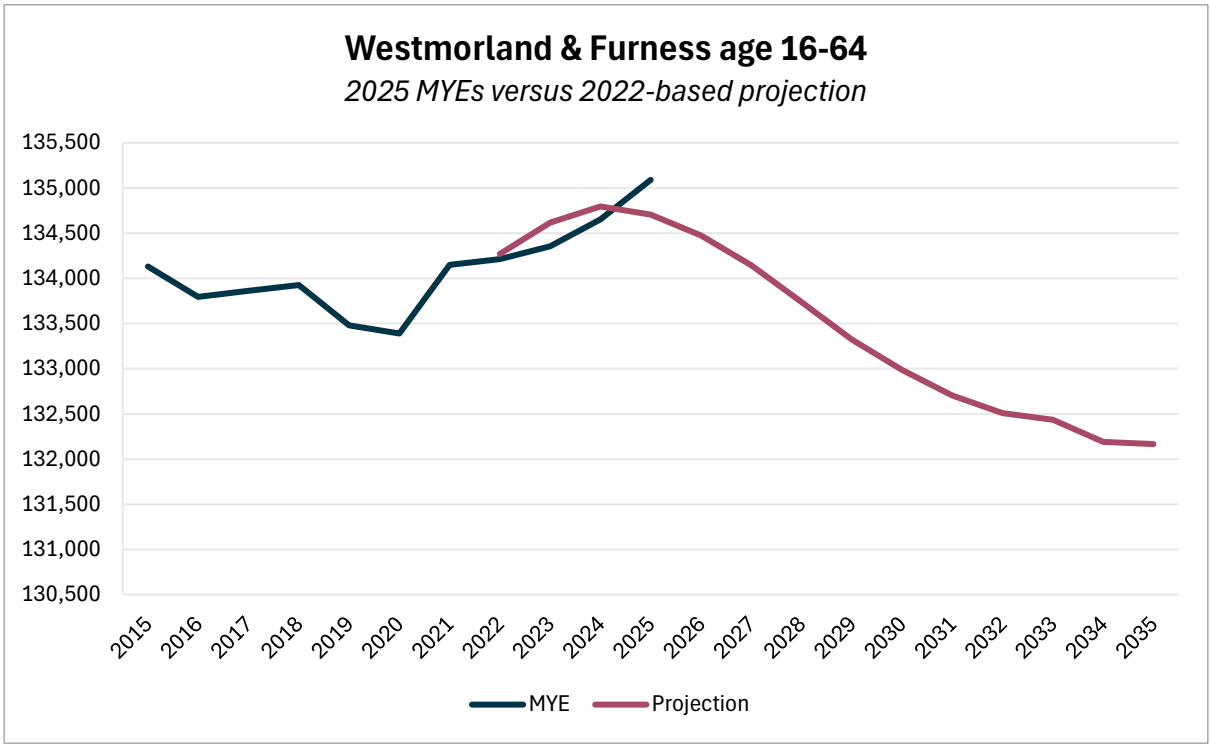
Source: ONS 2022-based sub-national projections / ONS MYE 2025

Figure 44: Working-age projection versus latest estimates, Cumberland



Source: ONS 2022-based sub-national projections / ONS MYE 2025

Figure 45: Working-age projection versus latest estimates, Westmorland & Furness



Source: ONS 2022-based sub-national projections / ONS MYE 2025

7 Methodology & Further Information

Mid-Year Population Estimates

Mid-year population estimates are calculated using a cohort component method which updates the previous year's population using three major components of population change – natural change, migration and special populations.

- The previous year's population estimate by sex, age and local authority of usual residence is moved forward by one year.
- The number of births between the two mid-year points is added into the population at age zero years.
- Deaths between the two mid-year points are removed.
- Net flows of international and internal (within-UK) migration are then added along with changes resulting from special populations (armed forces, prisoners).

Mid-year population estimates are modelled estimates, not direct counts (such as those from a census) and rely on assumptions and statistical methods. Migration estimates rely on a range of assumptions about how people move into, from and within the UK. International migration is particularly hard to measure and reliability can be affected by changes in visa systems, border controls and data sources.

Mid-year estimates use the 2021 Census as a benchmark and roll forward the data each year. These rolled-forward estimates become increasingly uncertain the further from the census they are. At the time of the next census, the data are reconciled and the back series is revised. Therefore, it is important always to use the most recently published estimates.

Population Projections

Population projections are calculated by taking a base year mid-year estimate (currently the most recent is 2022), aging this on by a year, applying local fertility and mortality rates to calculate the number of projected births and deaths and then adjusting for migration into and out of each local authority.

Population projections are not forecasts and take no account of local development aims, policies on growth, capacity to accommodate population change, or economic factors that could affect the population in the future. They also do not try to predict any potential demographic consequences of future political or economic changes.

The assumptions used in the subnational population projections are based on past trends. However, demographic behaviour is inherently uncertain and so projections become increasingly uncertain the further they are carried forward. This is particularly so for smaller geographical areas and detailed age and sex breakdowns.

Useful Links

Cumbria Intelligence Observatory: Cumbria Observatory – Welcome to the Cumbria Intelligence Observatory

Mid-Year Population Estimates release including interactive LA tool: Population estimates for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics

Mid-Year Population Estimates local authority spreadsheet tool: Analysis of population estimates tool for UK - Office for National Statistics

Subnational Population Projections: Subnational population projections: 2022-based - Office for National Statistics

Nomis: Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics

8 Table of figures