

Population change in Brent

Key facts

August 2021



BUILDING A
BETTER BRENT

A decorative horizontal line consisting of four colored segments: green, blue, purple, and orange.

Headlines (1)

This briefing reviews the latest population data for Brent and considers the impact the pandemic has had on population trends. The analysis draws on the latest population estimates from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and population projections from the Greater London Authority (GLA).

Key points:

- **Population size:** The ONS estimates for mid-2020 suggest Brent is currently home to around 327,800 residents, this makes it the ninth largest borough in London. Brent has a population density of 7,580 people per square kilometre – the 14th highest density in England (and highest in Outer London).
- **Age:** In common with other London Boroughs, Brent has a relatively young population: the median age of the population is 36, four years lower than the England average (40). Women comprise almost half (49%) of the population but make up 61% of the very elderly population, aged 85 and over.
- **Population change:** Over the period 2000-2018, the Brent population grew by 25% - an additional 65,900 residents. The pace of growth in Brent was close to the London average (23%), though faster than the rate nationally (15%, England). However, population growth has been slowing in recent years, and has now stalled: ONS estimates suggest the population of Brent fell by around 0.9% between mid-2018 and mid-2020 (-3,000 residents). This period includes events like the Brexit transition, as well as the first 3 months of the pandemic lockdown.
- **Pandemic impacts:** GLA projections indicate that the Brent population is likely to have seen a further fall in the population over the pandemic year – a drop of around 0.5% (around 1,800 people) between mid-2020 and mid-2021. However, this fall is expected to be a short-term phenomenon – as the economy bounces back, the population is also expected to. After 2021, the Brent population is expected to continue growing, albeit it at a slower rate than previously predicted (pre-pandemic).

Headlines (2)

- **Brent projections:** Over the long-term, The Brent population is expected to grow by around 17% between 2020 and 2041. If realised, this would equate to an additional 56,900 residents by 2041. Pre-pandemic, projections had been suggesting higher growth of around 24%. This is consistent with changes to London-wide projections, which have been revised downwards as a result of the pandemic. These revisions mainly reflect pandemic impacts on migration flows (eg lower international immigration, fewer moves to London to work or study, and more moves out to the commuter belt).
- **Ageing population:** The population is ageing: over the period 2011-20 the median age of the Brent population rose from 33 to 36. This is likely to continue: between 2020-41, the number of residents aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 78% – an additional 33,000 older residents by 2041. In contrast, the child population (aged under 16) is expected to see little change over the same period (increasing only marginally by 1%).
- **Projections by ward:** Population growth is expected to be concentrated in the areas where significant housing development is planned. The wards of Tokyngton and Alperton are expected to see the fastest growth: considered together, they are projected to accommodate an additional 33,200 residents by 2041 (percentage rises of +85% and +84% in their respective populations).
- **Uncertainty:** It is widely acknowledged that population data are more uncertain than usual right now, so some caution is needed when interpreting the data. The pandemic has made it practically difficult for the ONS to measure recent population change effectively (using its usual methods). Also, population data tend to be at their least accurate the year before new Census results are due (current estimates still draw on the 2011 Census baseline). The release of 2021 Census results, expected in 2022, could well lead to significant revisions to future population data.

Population data - background



ONS mid-year population estimates (2020)

The mid-year estimates are the 'official' source of data about population size and relate to past trends. They provide an estimate of the population, based on data about births and deaths, and estimates of migration flows in and out of areas. The mid-2020 estimates reported here, were published in June 2021, and cover the period up to 30 June 2020.

The figures are estimates, with wide margins of error attached. This is due to the challenges of measuring migration flows at local authority level. Also, ONS advises that estimates for the year immediately prior to a census year are typically the least accurate, so particular caution is required when interpreting the data for 2020.



GLA population projections (2019-based)

To provide insight on the size of the future population, projections are required. GLA projections are preferred, because unlike ONS projections, they consider the scale, and location, of planned housing developments across London. The particular variant used here is the 'Borough Preferred Option' for Brent, which draws on the latest development data, provided by the Council.

Projections are subject to considerable uncertainty, especially in the context of the pandemic. In effect, the figures are a scenario of what might happen if certain assumptions are made about future trends in births, deaths and migration flows. The projections have been informed by recent [GLA research](#) about pandemic impacts.



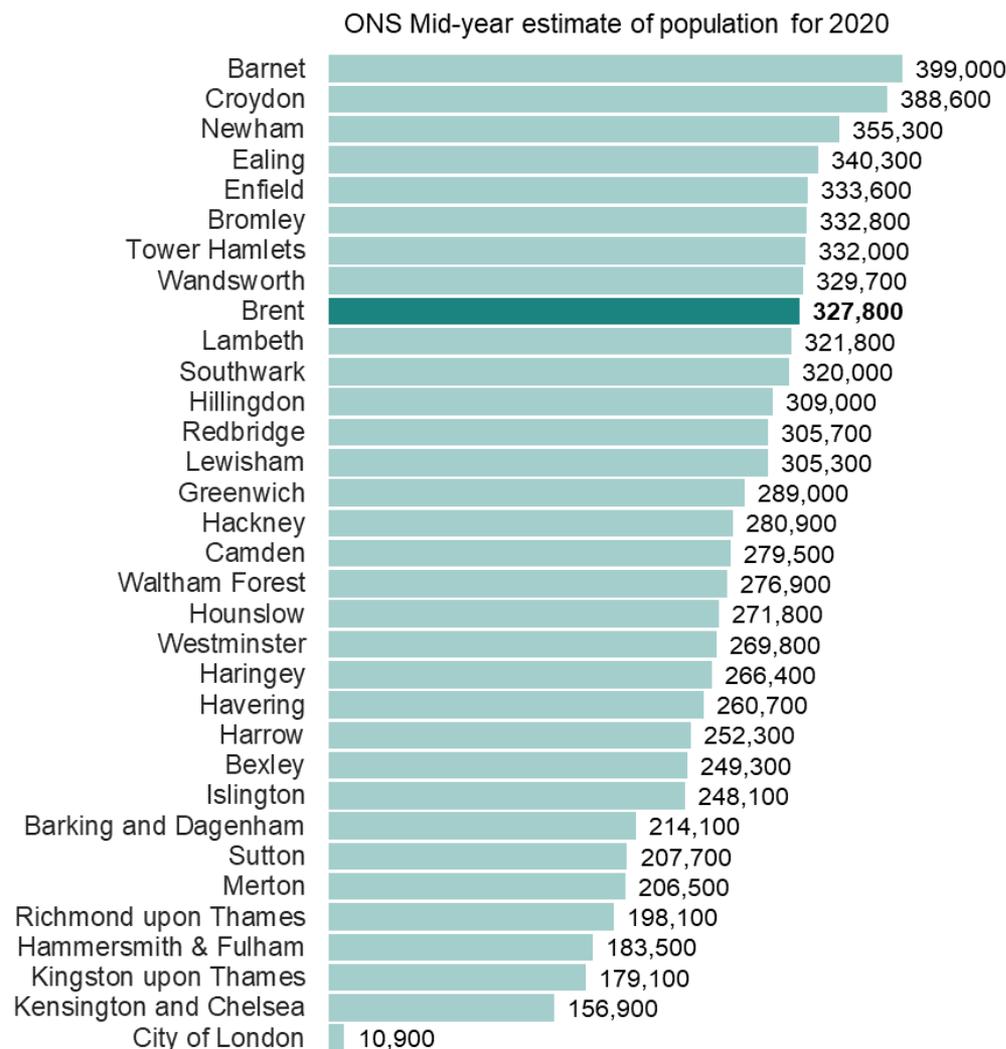
Differences between the ONS and GLA figures

Here, ONS data are used to profile the population as at 2020, and GLA projections are used to profile future population trends. The GLA 2019-based projections use the 2019 ONS population estimates as their baseline, and pre-date the recent release of the 2020 ONS population estimates. For this reason, the projection for Brent for the year 2020 is different to the ONS 2020 estimate (331,900 vs. 327,800).

Population size – 2020

- The Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates the resident population of Brent to be around **327,800 as at June 2020** – this is the latest ‘official’ estimate of the size of the population.
- In terms of population size, Brent is the **9th largest** London Borough.
- In common with many London Boroughs, Brent is densely populated – with a population density of 7,580 people per square kilometre – **the 14th highest population density** in England and the highest in Outer London.

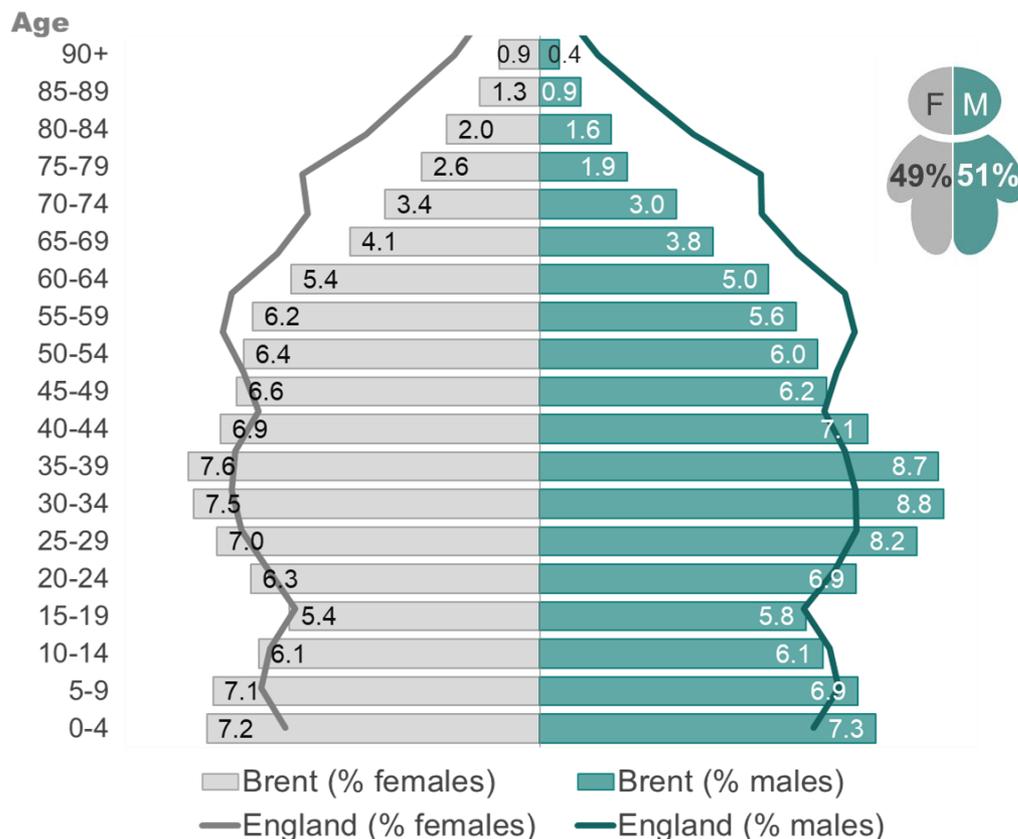
ONS mid-year population estimates, London boroughs & the City, 2020



Population by age and gender

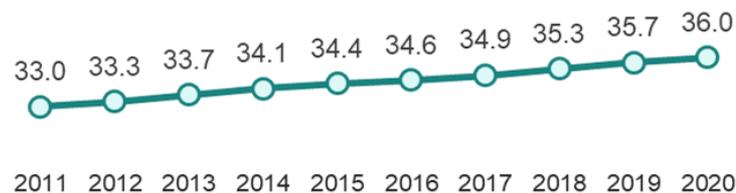
- In common with other London Boroughs, Brent has a younger population than England. The median age of the Brent population is 36, the same as London, but four years lower than the England average (40).
- Brent has proportionately fewer over 50s than England (30% vs. 38%), and more more adults aged 25-44 (31% vs. 26%). Brent also has a higher proportion of children aged under ten compared with England (14% vs. 12%).
- Women comprise almost half (49%) of the population but make up 61% of the very elderly population (aged 85 and over).
- The population is ageing: the median age of the Brent population has increased from 33 to 36 between 2011 and 2020.

Population by age and gender, Brent & England, 2020



Median age Brent

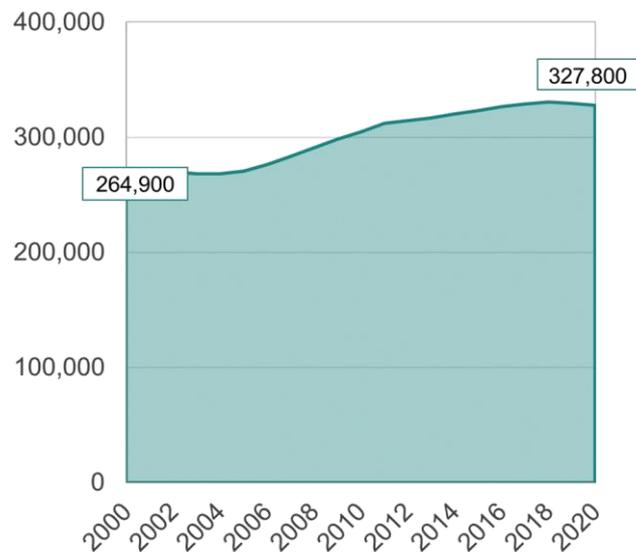
2011-2020



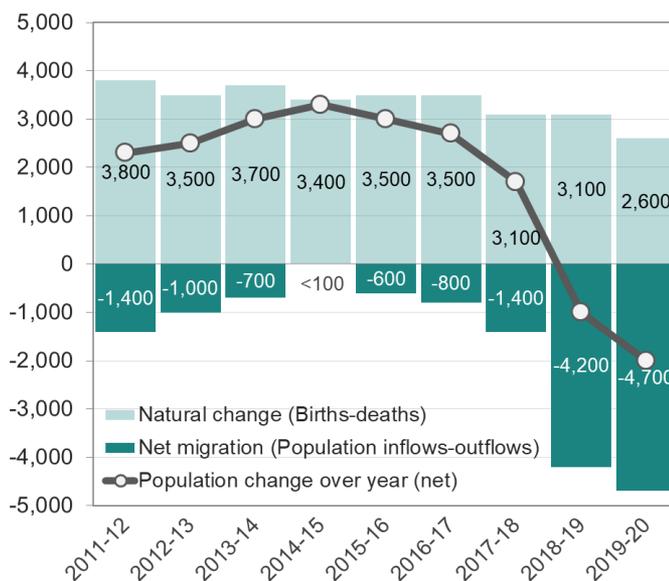
Population change – historical trends

- Over the period 2000-2018, the Brent population grew by 25% (an additional 65,900 residents). This rate of growth was close to the London average (23%), but faster than the rate across England (15%). However, population growth has been slowing in recent years, and has now stalled. ONS estimates suggest that the Brent population fell by around 0.9% between mid-2018 to mid-2020 (a drop of 3,000). This period includes events like the Brexit transition, as well as the first 3 months of the pandemic lockdown.
- The population fall over this period mainly reflects lower net migration flows – that is, more people leaving Brent than the number coming. During 2019/20, the number of deaths was also higher than usual, which contributed to the fall that year – this is likely to reflect the additional Covid-19 related deaths in the period up to 30 June 2020.

Population change in Brent 2000-2020



Annual population change, Brent Components of change, 2011-2020

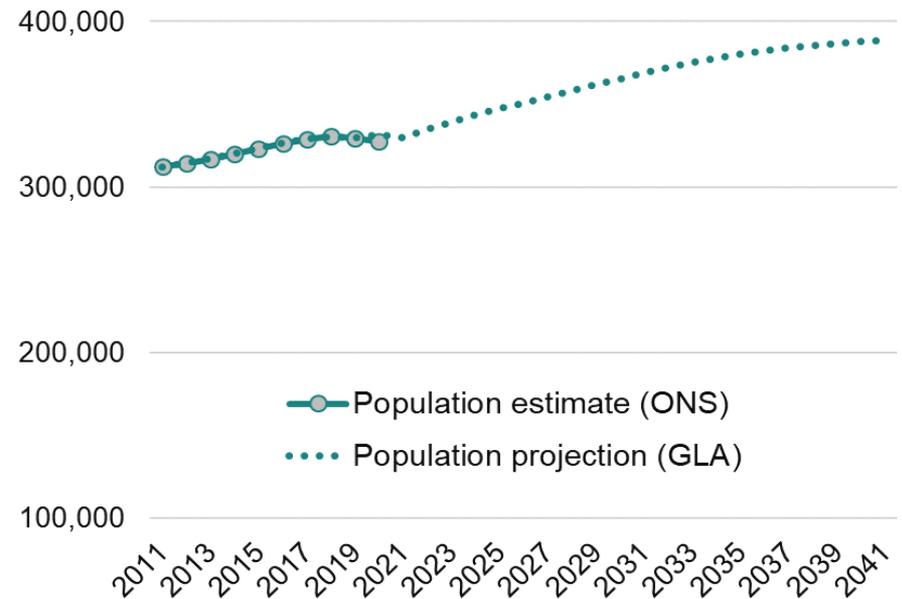


		Annual change	
	Population	Change	%
2011	312,200	2,300	0.8%
2012	314,600	2,500	0.8%
2013	317,100	3,000	0.9%
2014	320,100	3,300	1.0%
2015	323,400	3,000	0.9%
2016	326,400	2,700	0.8%
2017	329,100	1,700	0.5%
2018	330,800	-1,000	-0.3%
2019	329,800	-2,000	-0.6%
2020	327,800		

Population change - projections

- GLA projections suggest that, post pandemic, the Brent population will continue growing, though at a slower rate than was predicted previously. This reflects the impact the pandemic has had on population movements, births and deaths. In the short term, the pandemic is thought to have led to lower international immigration, fewer moves to London to work or study, and more moves out to the commuter belt.
- The projections suggest the Brent population is likely to have fallen by around 0.5% over the pandemic year (between mid-2020 and mid-2021), around 1,800 fewer people. However, from 2021 onwards, the population is expected to continue growing.
- The population is expected to grow by 17% over the period 2020-2041. If realised, this would mean an additional 56,900 residents. Pre-pandemic, the last round of projections were predicting higher growth of 24% over the period 2020-41.

Population estimates and projections Brent, 2011-2041



■ Projection

2020	331,900
2030	365,400
2041	388,800

Projected change 2020-2041

Year	Number	% change
2020-30	↑33,500	↑10%
2020-41	↑56,900	↑17%

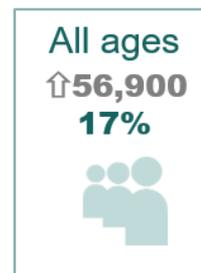
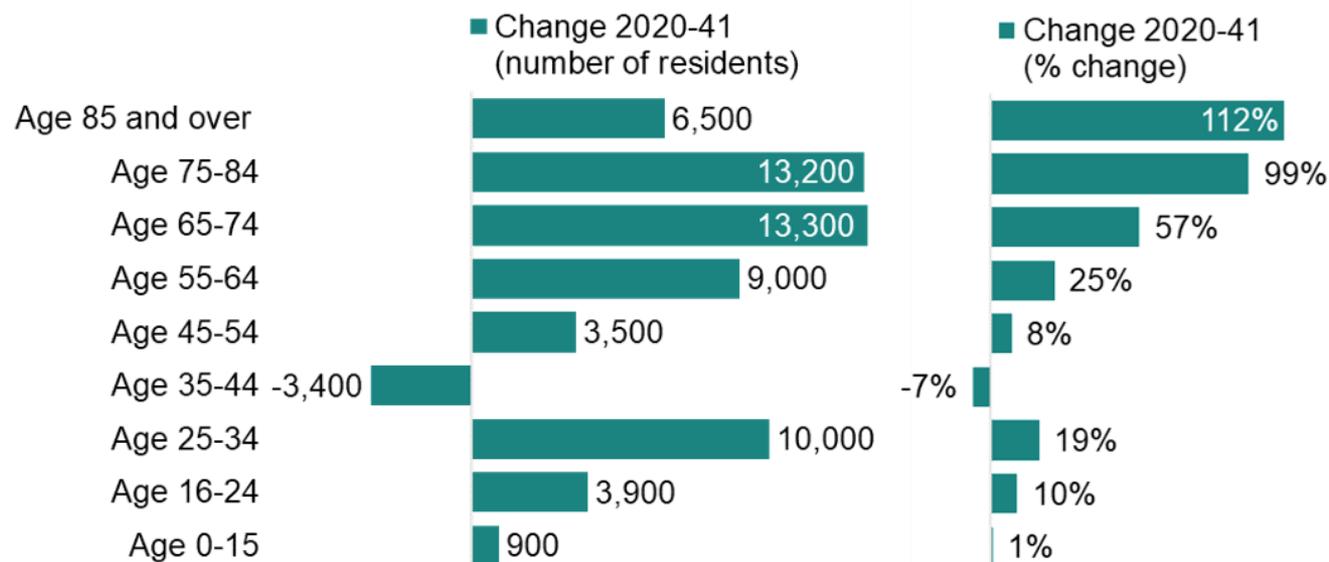


Technical note: The GLA projections are '2019-based' – this means they use the 2019 ONS population estimates as their baseline, that is, they pre-date the recent release of the 2020 ONS estimates. For this reason, the GLA projection for the 2020 population is different to the recently published ONS estimate for 2020 (331,900 vs. 327,800). Nevertheless, the GLA projections remain the best available source for projections of future rate of change.

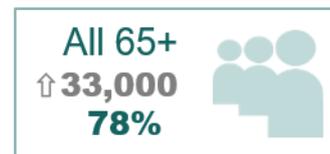
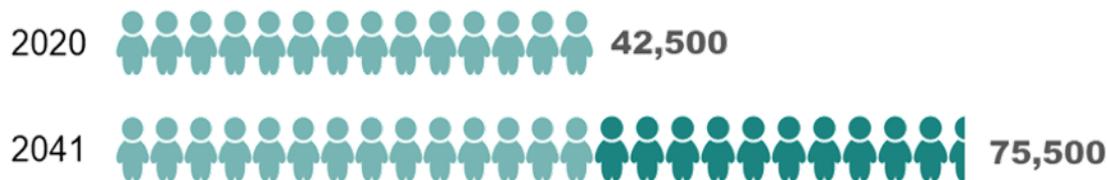
Population projections by age – 2020-41

In line with national trends, the borough’s population is expected to continue ageing. Over the long term (2020-41), the number of residents aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 78% – an additional 33,000 older residents. Over the same period, the child population, aged under 16, is expected to see little change over the same period, increasing by just 1% – this is likely to reflect the assumed impact of the pandemic on net migration flows (and consequently births), which has primarily affected projections for younger age groups.

Projected growth in population by age, Brent, 2020-41



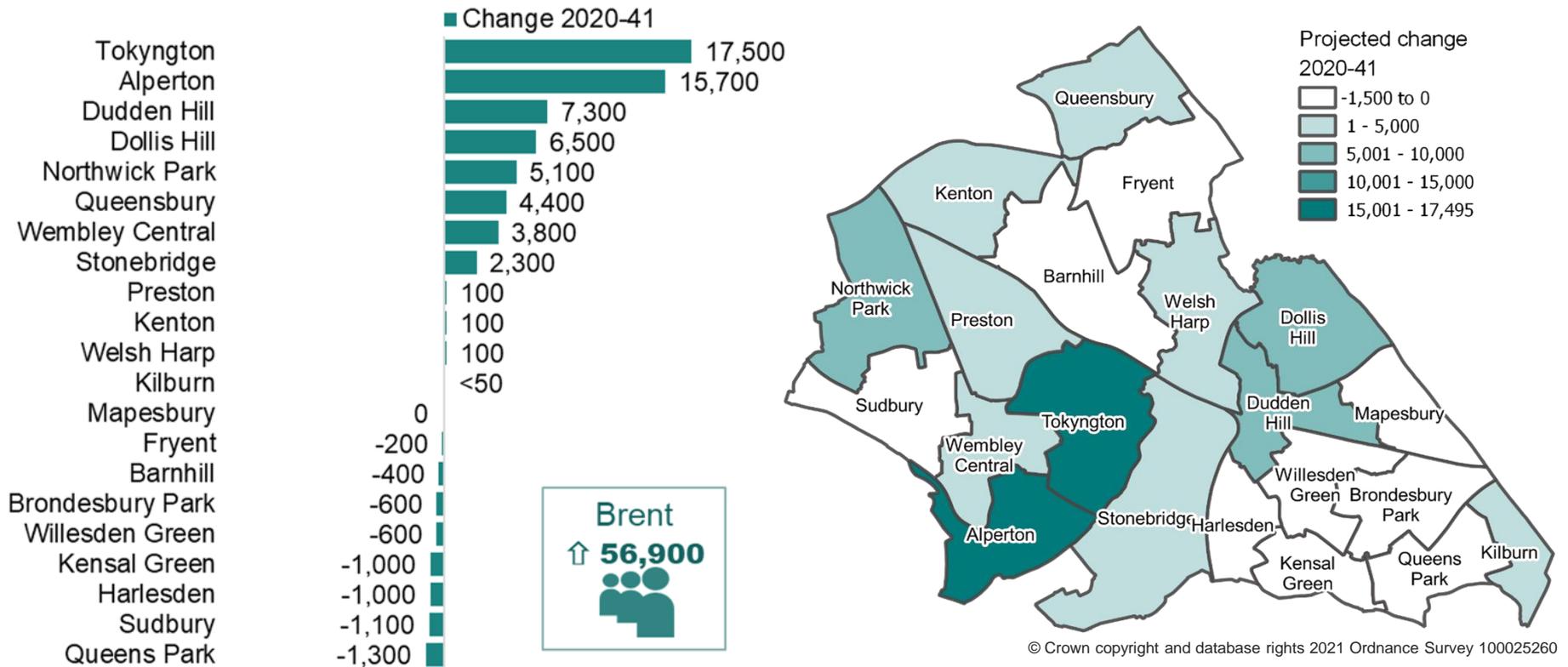
Projected size of population aged 65 and over Brent, 2020-41



Population change by ward 2020-41 (numbers)

Population growth is expected to be concentrated in the areas where significant housing development is planned. The two wards likely to see the fastest growth are Tokyngton and Alperton. Considered together, they are projected to accommodate an additional 33,200 residents by 2041 (58% of the total growth across Brent).

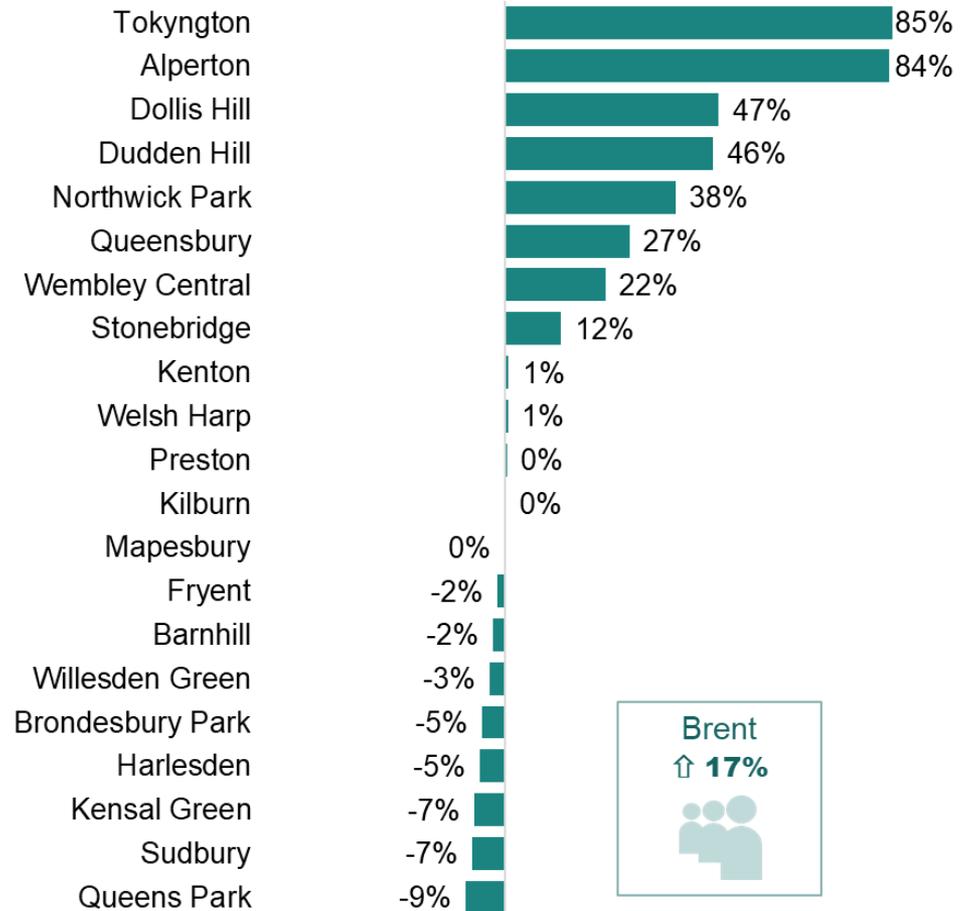
Projected growth in population by ward, Brent, 2020-41



Population change by ward 2020-41 (% change)

- The population in Tokyngton and Alperton is expected to almost double over the period 2020-41 (rises of 85% and 84% respectively).
- Other wards set to see a significant rise in population include Dudden Hill, Dollis Hill, Northwick Park (rises of 38-47%).
- Some wards are expected to see a fall in the size of their populations: this includes Queens Park, Sudbury and Kensal Green (-7% to -9%).

Percentage change in projected growth in population by ward, Brent, 2020-41



Further information

Further information about this report

This report was produced by Brent Council's Business Intelligence team. For more information please email the team at: open.data@brent.gov.uk

Pandemic impacts

For more information about pandemic impacts on population trends, see the GLA's research on the [impact of the pandemic on London's population](#).

GLA projections

The GLA's population projections data (Borough Preferred Option for Brent) have been made available on the Council's open data [site](#).

Mid-year estimates

The mid-year estimates of population can be found on the [ONS website](#)

Brent Open Data

For more facts and figures about the borough of Brent please see the [Brent Open Data website](#).