

GMCVO

2011 Census

A brief overview of initial statistics presented at a *New Economy* briefing held on 16th August 2012

Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation

St. Thomas Centre
Ardwick Green North
Manchester M12 6FZ
www.gmcvo.org.uk

T 0161 277 1000
F 0161 273 8296
E gmcvo@gmcvo.org.uk



2011 Census – First Release Statistics

A brief overview of initial statistics presented at a *New Economy* breakfast briefing held on 16th August 2012

Generally speaking, there is a North-South split in terms of population growth, with the South outperforming Northern regions. The North West's population grew by 4.4% and the North East's population did not grow at all.

However, among the Core Cities (8 major cities outside of London), Manchester has experienced the largest growth in relative terms and the second-largest growth in absolute terms. Here, the population has grown by 19% since 2001. Also, relative to the city's absolute population share, its growth contributed more than expected to national population growth.

Within Greater Manchester, Salford, Trafford and Manchester have all experienced growth rates above the national average, which suggests greater population density at the core, rather than in the periphery. Overall population in Greater Manchester is at 2.68 million according to first release statistics.

The growing population of Greater Manchester, despite the recession, is a trend which has been greeted with much enthusiasm in light of the fact that it reverses Greater Manchester's population losses during the 70s and 80s. Also, if this current trend continued, this would mean that Manchester would reach its 1970 population record by 2014.

The drivers behind this higher than expected population growth are:

- International in-migration
- In-migration of students

The fact that these two groups have largely been the drivers also means that GM has faced a "Mini Baby Boom" in which the growth of the population aged 0-4 has been above the national average. Within Greater Manchester, only Rochdale, Oldham and Stockport have lower than double-digit growth in this age band. Similarly, Greater Manchester has also seen a growth of 25% in the 20-24 age group.

Whether or not this can be sustained in future remains unclear, in light of:

- Census data being a snapshot in time
- The impact of various factors on someone's decision to move to and then stay in the sub-region (ie government policy, job opportunities, welfare reform, tuition fees, the UK's international standing)

- Errors in data

Therefore, the briefing highlighted the need to refrain from using census data as the only dataset to inform decisions. Using a variety of data sets in addition to planning for different scenarios will be important for policy-makers.

Data also illustrate the ageing of the population in that growth in the 60+ cohort is higher. Naturally, this is not distributed evenly across boroughs, with Stockport, Bolton, Bury and Wigan having experienced higher growth in this cohort than other boroughs. Interestingly, the ratio of older females and males will become more balanced than it has been in the past.

Looking at how age groups are distributed across Greater Manchester will be important in order to make decisions about health plans and infrastructure and also in education (with demand for primary school places being quite intense in the core and demand for secondary school places higher in the periphery, for example).

The data throw up an unexpected question about the role of transport in growth. Interestingly, the fact that Stockport, possibly the best-connected borough, has lost population and Wigan, the worst-connected borough, has gained population might indicate that transport links are not as important as other factors, such as the availability of affordable housing.

Housing is a problem in that building rates are low despite the growth in population. Household composition in Greater Manchester is in line with national trends, with an increase in households due to more single-person households. Only in Oldham and Trafford, the number of households has not grown in line with the population, therefore producing a higher average household size for these boroughs.

□ The briefing session included two presentations – from New Economy and Oxford Economics – which can be seen via: <http://neweconomymanchester.com/stories/1523> (scroll down to ‘Past Breakfast Briefings’).

Susanne Martikke
Researcher
GMCVO
August 2012