The Office for National Statistics (ONS) recently published mid-year population estimates for 2017, providing estimates for England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, regions and local authorities. This note summarises the main points arising from the data, beginning with a look at population change over the 12-month period 2016-17, before going on to look at longer-term trends between 2007 and 2017.

**POPULATION CHANGE FROM 2016-17**
The population of England & Wales in 2017 was 58.7million, translating to an increase of 360,000 (0.6%) when compared with the 2016 estimate. More than 40.0% of this rise was accounted for by the growing number of people aged 65+ (156,000). Those aged 0-15 accounted for 31.0% of the rise, increasing by 111,000. The number of people aged 16-64, a traditional proxy for the working age population, accounted for the smallest share of the rise at 27.0% – increasing by 96,000 from 2016-17.

At a regional level, London’s population increased the most in absolute terms between 2016 and 2017, rising by 55,000 (0.6%) to just over 8.8million. In relative terms, the East Midlands saw the highest growth – with a population increase of 1.0% (46,000 additional people) from 2016-17. All regions experienced growth over the 12-month timeframe, with the North East seeing the smallest rise in both relative (0.3%) and absolute (8,000) terms.

**POPULATION CHANGE OVER THE LAST DECADE**

### National Change

Over the last decade the population of England & Wales has risen by 4.4million, equating to an annual change of 0.8%. The main driver of change has been the increase in people aged 65+, with this cohort accounting for more than 2.0million of the overall growth in total population between 2007 and 2017. Those aged 16-64 accounted for around 1.5million of the growth, with people aged 0-15 accounting for the remaining 821,000. On an annual basis, the number of people aged 65+ increased by 2.1% from 2007-17, well above the increases of 0.4% p.a. and 0.8% p.a. for those aged 16-64 and 0-15 respectively.

### Regional Change

In absolute and relative terms, London experienced the largest population increase of any region from 2007-17, with the number of people growing by 1.1million (1.4% p.a.). Its growth was driven predominantly by substantial increases in the number of people aged 0-15 (growth of 291,000, or 1.8% p.a.) and 16-64 (675,000, or 1.2% p.a.). The annual percentage rise in the number of people aged 16-64 over the last decade in London was three times higher than any other region in England & Wales.

All regions saw an increase in their populations between 2007 and 2017, although as Figure 1 shows, the level of change varies significantly.

### Local Authority Change

At a local authority level, the main points to note in terms of population change between 2007 and 2017 are as follows:

- Of the 348 districts in England & Wales, the five fastest growing areas in relative terms are all London boroughs. The total population of the borough of Tower Hamlets has grown the fastest year-on-year at 3.2% since 2007, equating to 82,700 more people.
- There are 13 districts which saw their total populations decline between 2007 and 2017, including Kensington & Chelsea, Barrow-in-Furness, Ceredigion, Copeland and Blackpool.
- Around one in four districts experienced stagnant or negative growth in the number of people aged 0-15. This includes Barrow-in-Furness, High Peak, and the Welsh district of Powys.
- In the 16-64 age band, while Birmingham saw the largest absolute population increase between 2007 and 2017 (72,700 additional people in this cohort), the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets (3.4% p.a.) and Newham (3.1% p.a.) saw the biggest year-on-year growth in percentage terms. Outside London, Coventry was the fastest growing district, seeing growth of 2.0% in its population aged 16-64 (43,500 more people).
- With the exception of Barking & Dagenham, every district in England & Wales saw growth in its population aged 65+ from 2007-17. Daventry in the East Midlands had the highest relative growth at 4.2% per annum over the timeframe.
The increase in the number of people aged 65+ over the last decade has been significant and ONS projections indicate that elderly people will account for an increasing share of total population in the future. This will have a number of implications, including putting pressure on the social care system and the type of housing required in areas. The role played by assisted living and extra scheme schemes in meeting future housing need is likely to become prominent.

London and the South East have been the main drivers of population growth in England over the last decade. Other parts of the country will need to see higher levels of growth if the Government’s aim of rebalancing the economy is to be achieved. This has implications in terms of housing and employment land requirements and ensuring that future provision in areas fully reflects economic development objectives.

Should you wish to discuss the population data for an area in more detail, please contact a member of the Economics Team. ONS released population projections data in May 2018. Pegasus Group released a briefing paper on the projections, which can be accessed by clicking here.

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