

# POPULATION PROJECTIONS HIGHLAND 2004-2024

## Summary

- Highland's population is projected to increase by 3.6% by 2024
- Highland's population continues to age as previously projected
- By 2024 there is expected to be 16,029 more people of retirement age in Highland and 5,507 fewer children than in 2004

## Highland's projected population

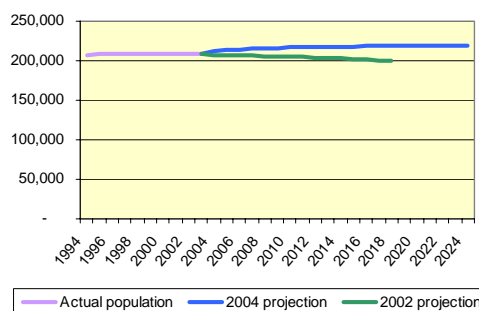
Highland's population is set to reach 218,894 by 2024 according to the latest population projections (2004-based) released by the General Registers Office for Scotland (GROS). This represents an increase of 3.6% (7,554 people) from the current population of 211,340.

This is a more optimistic projection than those previously released by GROS (2002-based) which suggested a small decline in Highland's population to 2018. This change is largely due to recent and projected migration trends in Highland.

It is important to remember from the outset that these results are based on past trends and do not take account of any policy initiatives which may influence the demographic profile of Highland in the future. They do however represent a useful baseline against which to measure our demographic change.

Figure 1 shows the actual and projected population (both the 2004-based and 2002-based projections) for Highland between 1994 and 2024.

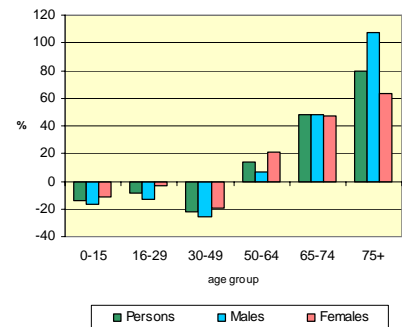
Figure 1: Actual and projected population 1994-2004 (GROS)



## Projected population age structure

More certainty can be expressed about the future shape of the population structure than the actual size of the population over time. Despite the projected rise in population over the next 20 years, the pattern of continued population ageing outlined in previous projections is again the key point to note. The implication of this for service providers and policy makers in Highland remains unchanged.

Figure 2: Population change (%) by age-group and sex, 2004-2024

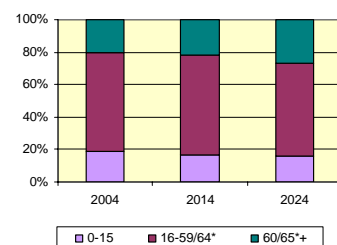


Figures 2 and 3 show the projected population change by age-group between 2004 and 2024. They show very clearly that Highland is projected to see significant population declines in the number of children and young people in the area. This includes the 16-29 and 30-49 age groups which contain the key family formation/fertile years which are so important to the long term sustainability of Highland's population.

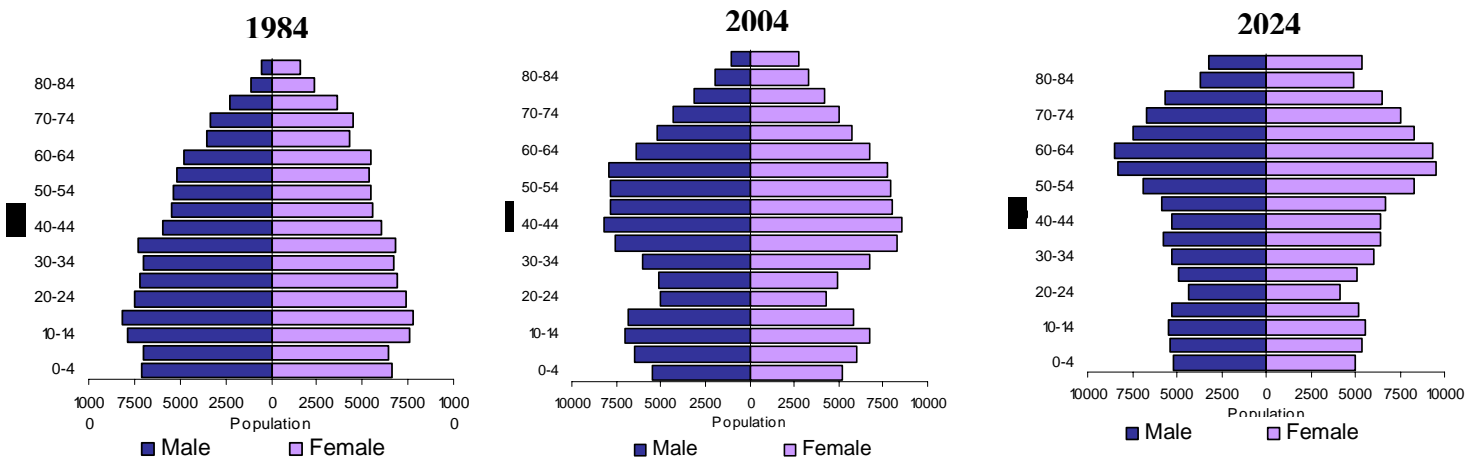
In 2024 Highland is projected to:

- have 5,507 (13.9%) fewer children (aged 0-15) than in 2004;
- have 2.3% (2,968 people) less people of working age (aged 16-59/64\*);
- have 16,029 (37.0%) more people of retirement age (60/65+\*) than in 2004

Figure 3: Proportion of population by age band 2004 and 2024 (GROS)



**Figure 4: Change in the actual and projected population age/sex profile of Highland’s population, 1984, 2004 and 2024**



**Changing population profile of Highland**

Figure 4 demonstrates how the age/sex profile of Highland’s population has already changed over the past 20 years, and how it is projected to carry on changing over the next 20 years. There were 14,132 people living in Highland in 1984 than there were in 2004, and the age profile was bottom heavy. This is because birth rates were still relatively high, the ‘baby boomers’ of the 1960s were in their teens/early twenties and mortality rates were higher.

The current (2004) position shows the effect of our declining birth rate (for example in 2004 there were 419 fewer births in Highland than there were in 1984). This, along with improvements in mortality rates and the ageing on of the ‘baby boomers’ has resulted in a narrowing in the base of the pyramid and a generally older population. This is exacerbated by the high number of young adults who leave Highland every year to access further and higher education, resulting in the ‘waisted’ appearance of the pyramid.

The top heavy 2024 pyramid shows the inevitable ageing of our current (already older) population. Continued improvements in mortality, the older age profile of our in-migrants, and the ongoing decline in birth rates will contribute to a considerably older population than that seen in 2004.

**Components of population change**

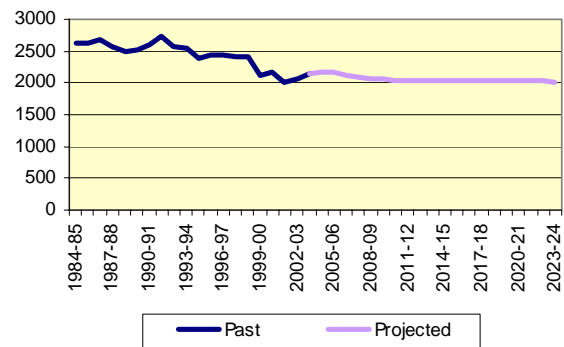
There are three elements which influence population change:

**1. Fertility/Births**

Fertility and birth rates have been declining for a number of years. This has resulted in the average completed family size in Scotland falling from

2.08 children per woman for women born in 1950 to a predicted 1.71 for women born in 1970, and 1.60 for women born in 2000. Highland has a slightly higher fertility rate than Scotland as a whole, but birth rates are expected to continue to fall, as shown in Figure 5.

**Figure 5: Number of births in Highland, 1993/4-2023/4**



**2. Mortality**

Expectation of life at birth in Scotland is projected to increase from 74.3 in 2003/04 to 78.3 in 2023/24 for males; and from 79.4 in 2003/04 to 82.8 in 2023/24 for females. Highland has slightly lower mortality rates than Scotland as a whole.

**3. Migration**

Given that there are consistently more deaths than births in Highland every year, the growth in population experienced recently, and that projected to 2024, is heavily reliant on in-migration from other parts of the UK/abroad. Increasing migration is a key aim of the Highland Community Plan which seeks a net migration of 700 per annum.

The migration assumptions used by GROS in these projections are higher than those used in previous projections and reflect the increased levels of migration experienced by Highland in the past 3 years. The net-migration assumptions used in the

2004 projections are: 2,100 for 2004/05, 1,600 for 2005/06, 1,050 for 2006/07 and 700 per annum for the remainder of the projection to 2024.

For more detailed discussions on recent migration trends see Briefing Note No. 6 'Migration in Highland' and Briefing Note No. 1 'Mid year population estimates'.

**Highland’s position in Scotland**

Scotland’s population is expected to rise from 5.08m in 2004 to 5.13m in 2019 before falling to 5.07m in 2031 and 4.86m in 2044.

This represents an increase of 0.8% between 2004 and 2024 for Scotland as a whole.

The population in 15 of Scottish local authorities are projected to increase while 17 are projected to decrease, as demonstrated in Figure 6 and Figure 7 (overleaf). The Councils which are expected to experience the largest increases are West Lothian (20.6%), Scottish Borders (15.0%) and East Lothian (12.5%). The authorities with the greatest projected decreases are Aberdeen City (-23.7%), Dundee City (-14.9%) and Eilean Siar (-14.6%).

As there are wide differences in projected size of the population for different areas, so there are differences in the projected age structures of different areas.

**Child population**

There is a projected decline of -12.4% across Scotland as a whole in the 0-15 age group - a smaller decline than that seen in Highland (-13.9%). The number of children is expected to decrease in all local authority areas other than

Scottish Borders (7%), with the largest decrease expected in Aberdeen City (-42.9%).

**Working age population\***

The number of people of working age\* is projected in increase in 14 local authority areas by 2024 with the largest increase in West Lothian (19.7%); and to decrease in the remaining 18 local authority areas with the largest decrease in Aberdeen City (-27.8%). The Scottish average is -1.0% compared with the Highland figure of -2.3%.

**Retirement age\* population**

The population of those of retirement age\* is projected to increase in all but 2 local authority areas by 2024 (Glasgow City and Dundee City are expected to fall by -13.3% and -5.5% respectively). The greatest increase is expected in Aberdeenshire (58.2%). The Scottish average is 19.3% compared with the Highland figure of 37.0%.

**Further information**

Detailed figures are available from the GROS website ([www.gro-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk)) or from the Policy & Information team. Work is underway to produce equivalent population projections for Highland Council Areas and results will be available early in 2006.

*\*these figures include the change in women’s state pension age from 60 to 65 from 2010*

*Figure 6: projected population change (%) by local authority, 2004-2024*

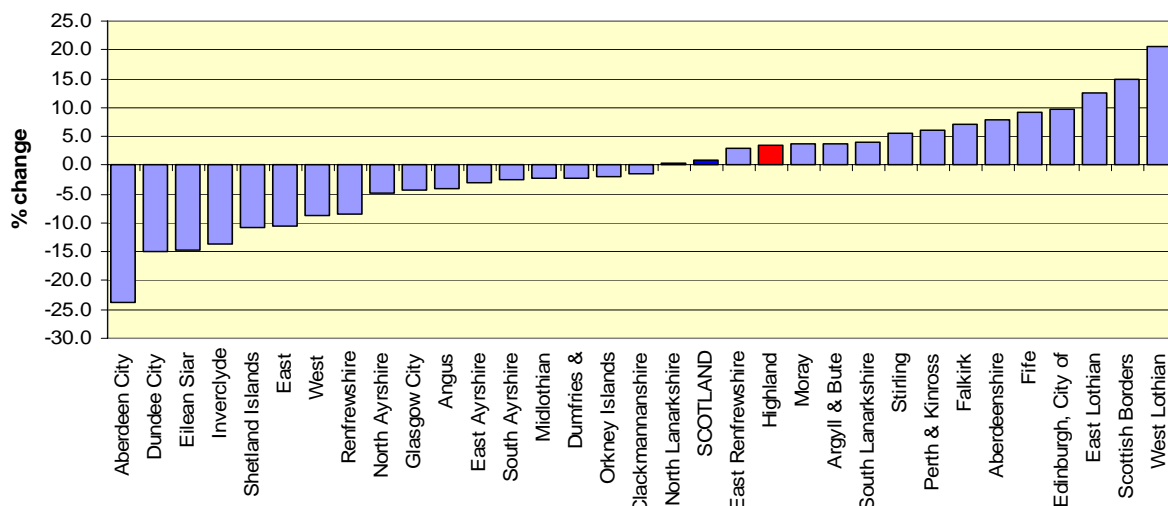


Figure 7: Projected change in population (%) 2004-2024 by local authority (GROS)

