

The UK's major urban areas

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Introduction

Nearly eight of every ten people in the United Kingdom lived in an urban area in 2001, according to the most recent definition of the term. Urban areas covered 8.9 per cent of the UK's land mass at that time.

Nearly 41 per cent of urban dwellers lived in one of the ten most populous urban areas. They accounted for 19,024,665 people or 32.4 per cent of the UK's population.

The ten most populous urban areas in the UK are:

- Greater London Urban Area
- West Midlands Urban Area
- Greater Manchester Urban Area
- West Yorkshire Urban Area
- Greater Glasgow
- Tyneside
- Liverpool Urban Area
- Nottingham Urban Area
- Sheffield Urban Area
- Bristol Urban Area.

These covered over a fifth of all urban land in the UK in 2001, or 4,375.9 km² with a population density of 4,347.6 people per km² compared to a density of 241.9 people per km² in the UK as a whole. Between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses the ten most populous urban areas grew by 660,060 people and 66.6 km².

Given that nearly one-third of the population lives in these ten most populous urban areas, an understanding of the characteristics of these populations is very important. This chapter begins by defining an urban area, before describing the size and location of the United Kingdom's most populous places. Census data are used to examine changes in the population and expanse of some urban areas between 1991 and 2001.

Finally, the chapter uses census data to compare some of the population characteristics of 2001's most heavily populated urban areas to see what, if anything, they have in common. This will enable conclusions to be drawn as to whether the people living in these places exhibit homogenous or heterogeneous traits. A more detailed analysis, accounting for variations between smaller areas within these urban areas, is beyond the scope of this chapter.

The 2001 Census is the most suitable data source for urban areas.¹ Urban areas do not stick to administrative boundaries. This makes more recent sources, such as the Labour Force Survey and the mid-year population estimates, less useful. Greater London Urban Area, for example, doesn't share a

border with the administrative boundary of the Government Office Region for London.

Key strengths of 2001 Census data are that they can be used to examine almost any geographic area and cover a wide range of variables based on information for the whole population. 2001 Census data include adjustments for undercoverage in the census, but they lack the smaller adjustments that were subsequently made to the mid-year population estimates.² Most of the analyses in this chapter are based on proportions, so the impact of the adjustments would be slight.

What is an urban area?

An area that is described as urban has a minimum population density and number of people. Such spaces are normally relatively built-up, with housing and industrial buildings or both. The people who live in urban areas also tend to be regarded as town or city dwellers. Outside the boundaries, housing, offices or factories become more thinly distributed and open spaces more common. Some houses or industrial buildings might be in areas not classified as urban.

Urban areas do not adhere to administrative boundaries; for example Greater Manchester Urban Area is 4.8 times larger than the local authority district of Manchester and the urban area's boundaries do not follow those of the former metropolitan county of Greater Manchester. Because boundaries are not static, the land area and urban population may change over time. Changes in land use can lead to a boundary change of an urban area. New houses built at the edge, changing the land use from non-urban to urban, would increase the size of that urban area. But an urban area can decrease in size if housing or industrial buildings at the edge of the area fall into disuse.

The definition of an urban area depends on the circumstance and experience of the wider area in which it is set. It is perfectly reasonable for different countries to have differing definitions of what makes an area urban and this is the case in the UK. The latest definition in England and Wales³ is an area with 10,000 people or more; in Scotland⁴ this is 3,000 people or more; while in Northern Ireland⁵ it is 4,500 people or more. These apparent differences do not prevent comparisons between the largest urban areas across the countries of the UK. But definitional issues need to be considered when discussing all the UK's urban areas.

For the Belfast area, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) use a broad definition of urban areas such that Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area includes nearby non-connected settlements. For comparability with the rest of the UK, these non-connected settlements have been excluded

from the definition of the urban area of Belfast and connected settlements which is used in this report.⁶

Data referring to urban areas in Scotland and England and Wales are aggregations of a best fit of Census Output Areas, the smallest building block of census data. The ways in which Census Output Areas were configured differed between Scotland, England and Wales. If made up of Census Output Areas subject to the England and Wales specification, it is likely that a Scottish urban area would comprise a smaller area and population than is currently the case. In any event, an urban area's definition depends upon the circumstance and

experience in the wider area. Urban areas in Northern Ireland are based on 100 metre grid blocks. NISRA argues that these more closely represent urban area boundaries, and so provide more accurate data. For more information see the appendix: Definitions of an urban area - differences within the UK.

The UK's most populous urban areas

Table 3.1 shows the 25 urban areas with the largest populations, according to results reported from the 2001 Census. They are spread throughout the UK.

Table 3.1

The 25 most populous urban areas in the United Kingdom: resident population and population density, 2001 Census

		All people	Area (km ²)	Density (number of people per km ²)
1	Greater London Urban Area	8,278,251	1,623.37	5,099.4
2	West Midlands Urban Area	2,284,093	599.72	3,808.6
3	Greater Manchester Urban Area	2,240,230	556.72	4,024.0
4	West Yorkshire Urban Area	1,499,465	370.02	4,052.4
5	Greater Glasgow	1,168,270	368.47	3,171.0
6	Tyneside	879,996	210.91	4,172.4
7	Liverpool Urban Area	816,216	186.17	4,384.3
8	Nottingham Urban Area	666,358	158.52	4,203.6
9	Sheffield Urban Area	640,720	162.24	3,949.2
10	Bristol Urban Area	551,066	139.78	3,942.4
11	Urban area of Belfast and connected settlements	483,418	161.67	2,990.2
12	Brighton/Worthing/Littlehampton	461,181	94.09	4,901.5
13	Edinburgh	452,194	120.11	3,765.0
14	Portsmouth Urban Area	442,252	94.52	4,678.9
15	Leicester Urban Area	441,213	101.64	4,340.9
16	Bournemouth Urban Area	383,713	108.15	3,548.0
17	Reading/Wokingham	369,804	93.17	3,969.1
18	Teesside	365,323	113.99	3,204.9
19	The Potteries	362,403	96.62	3,750.8
20	Coventry/Bedworth	336,452	75.56	4,452.8
21	Cardiff Urban Area	327,706	75.72	4,328.0
22	Birkenhead Urban Area	319,675	89.11	3,587.4
23	Southampton Urban Area	304,400	72.80	4,181.3
24	Kingston upon Hull	301,416	80.44	3,747.1
25	Swansea Urban Area	270,506	79.81	3,389.0

Source: 2001 Census – Office for National Statistics, General Register Office for Scotland and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

The areas have been ranked according to population size. Greater London Urban Area dwarfs the others. It has the highest population, greatest area and highest population density of all urban areas in the United Kingdom. Its population is over 3.6 times and its area over 2.7 times that of West Midlands Urban Area – the second most populous and largest. There are five urban areas with a population greater than one million people and a further five urban areas with a population between 500,000 and one million.

Northern Ireland is represented in the list of 25 most populous urban areas by the urban area of Belfast and connected settlements, which is ranked eleventh. Greater Glasgow, fifth, and Edinburgh, thirteenth, represent Scotland. Cardiff Urban Area, ranked twenty-first, and Swansea Urban Area, twenty-fifth, represent Wales. The remaining urban areas are in England.

Table 3.1 shows that the order of the ten most populous urban areas would have the same ranking if based on area rather than population, except that Nottingham Urban Area and Sheffield Urban Area would swap places. There is a relationship between the population size and the area of the ten most populous – as the population increases so does the area. This is not so among the urban areas ranked 11 to 25. Their population size does not relate directly to their area. This may be a consequence of these urban areas having relatively similar population sizes. As there is little variation in population between urban areas, there is little variation in area.

The population density of the 25 largest urban areas follows no discernible pattern, when compared in terms of either population or area. Greater London Urban Area has the highest population density, 5,099.4 people per km², and the urban area of Belfast and connected settlements the lowest with 2,990.2 people per km². The second lowest population density is in Greater Glasgow, 3,171.0 people per km².

The urban areas with the largest populations are not necessarily the most densely populated. Of the 25 most populous urban areas, the second most densely populated is Brighton/Worthing/Littlehampton, which has the twelfth-largest population. Greater Glasgow is fifth in terms of population but twenty-fourth by population density. A contributing factor to this disparity is the differing definitions used between the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) to construct Census Output Areas, which make up the urban area. Under the ONS definition, Greater Glasgow would include a reduction in area disproportionate to a reduction in population, increasing density.

Map 3.2 shows the location and boundaries of the 25 most populous urban areas in the UK. The boundaries do not keep to any administrative areas. At this large scale, urban areas appear to consist of a main body with arms shooting outward, for example Greater London Urban Area and Nottingham Urban Area. Urban areas are also interspersed with non-urban areas, appearing as holes in the wider urban area. The term 'urban conglomeration' seems particularly fitting to describe these places. Conglomeration means combining many different parts into a whole – bringing cities and towns into a larger urban area. Of the ten most populous urban areas: Greater London Urban Area dominates the south and south east of the United Kingdom; Liverpool Urban Area, Greater Manchester Urban Area, West Yorkshire Urban Area, Sheffield Urban Area and Nottingham Urban Area form a belt across the middle of the United Kingdom; while Bristol Urban Area, West Midlands Urban Area, Tyneside and Greater Glasgow are presented as regional centres. The remaining urban areas are loosely concentrated in the southern half of the UK.

Changes since 1991

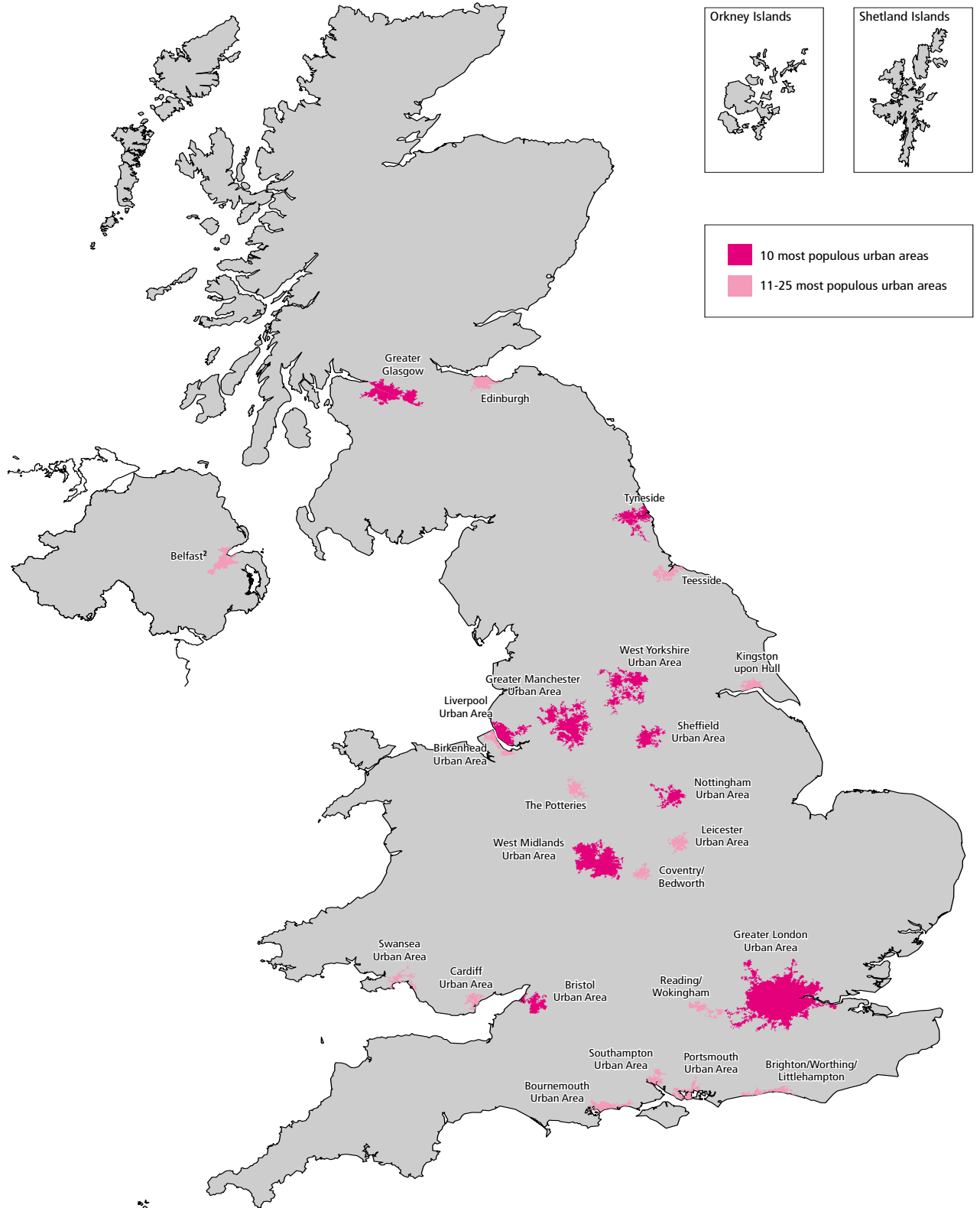
Urban areas, especially the larger ones discussed here, change over time in both their population and the area they cover. They expand when people occupy new developments on the fringes and decline when people move away. If population density declines, the land may cease to be urban. The population may change due to rates of births and deaths and migration into and out of the area. These dynamics can be explored by comparing a snapshot of the urban area and population as recorded by the 1991 Census with another as recorded by the 2001 Census.

Data are reported from the census for sub-divisions of major urban areas. These provide recognisable areas within larger urban areas that often follow the boundaries of local authorities existing before the 1974 re-organisation in 1974, current authority boundaries, well-defined localities, or previously separate urban areas. (Prior to 1974, there were two-tiered administrations based on counties and a mixture of sub-administrations including municipal boroughs, county boroughs, rural districts and urban districts with Greater London separate.) The boundaries of the sub-divisions are broadly adhered to between censuses, making it possible to make comparisons with previously published census results.

One should be careful when making comparisons between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses. They operated under different definitions and assumptions. The principal impact on this analysis relates to the comparison of urban area sub-divisions that can have quite small populations. The identification of small urban areas in the 1991 Census was less precise than in

Map 3.2

The 25 most populous urban areas in the United Kingdom, 2001



1 The boundaries shown are for the extent of urban land as defined by Ordnance Survey (GB) and the DOE PPlanning Service (NI), rather than those of the Output Areas (GB) or 100m grids (NI) fitting the urban land.
 2 Urban area of Belfast and connected settlements used in this report includes the connected areas of Belfast Urban Area, Castlereagh Urban Area, Greenisland Urban Area, Holywood Urban Area, Lisburn Urban Area, Newtownabbey Urban Area and Milltown (Lisburn LGD).

Source: 2001 Census - Office for National Statistics, General Register Office for Scotland and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

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the 2001 Census. The biggest difference in method is that the distance for merger of areas of urban land increased from 50 to 200 metres. So a gap between two urban areas of 150 metres would be deemed as two separate urban areas in 1991 and as one in 2001. When considering sub-divisions, comparisons for areas with a population fewer than 2,000 people are not advisable and comparisons of areas of fewer than 5,000 should be made with caution. Census data for urban areas are reported on a best fit of Census Output Areas in 2001 and 1991's Enumeration Districts. There are more Census Output Areas than Enumeration Districts, meaning that 2001 data are likely to be more closely aligned to the boundary of the urban area. Another point to keep in mind is that the 2001 Census was designed to allow for people who didn't return the census form, while the 1991 Census was not. This means that if the 2001 methodology was used in 1991, the counts would have been higher.

Figure 3.3 portrays the population change of the ten most populous urban areas between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses. The top ten are the same; the only difference is that Nottingham Urban Area moved up one place, to eighth in 2001, at the expense of Sheffield Urban Area which fell to ninth.

Nottingham Urban Area experienced the largest proportional increase in population (8.6 per cent). This was primarily due to the inclusion of Ilkeston (a separate urban area in 1991) and growth in West Bridgford. The second largest proportional increase in population was in Greater London Urban Area at 8.2 per cent, a result of population growth in existing areas and the envelopment of urban areas that were separate in

1991. The third largest was Bristol Urban Area with a 5.4 per cent increase mainly due to the annexation of Almondsbury, a separate urban area in 1991.

The Greater Glasgow population fell by 2.6 per cent – the largest proportional decline. Definitional differences mean that 1991 Census data for Greater Glasgow reported here are based on the 2001 geographic boundaries, while the 1991 England and Wales Census data are based on 1991 boundaries. The area of Greater Glasgow is therefore represented as constant between censuses in Table 3.4. The population of Scotland has declined by 0.80 per cent between 1991 and 2001. The population decline in Greater Glasgow is greater than that of Scotland as a whole.

Along with Greater Glasgow there were four more urban areas that experienced a decrease in population. They were:

- Liverpool Urban Area (2.6 per cent fewer people)
- Greater Manchester Urban Area (1.6 per cent fewer)
- Tyneside (0.7 per cent fewer)
- West Midlands Urban Area (0.5 per cent fewer).

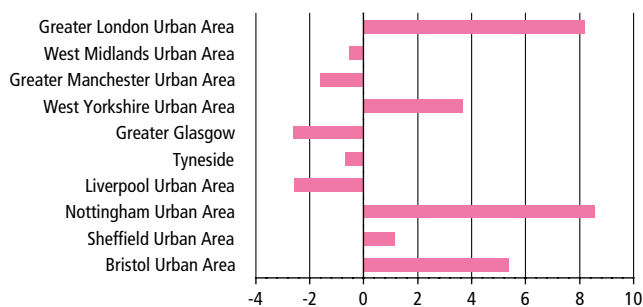
Of the ten, only West Yorkshire Urban Area and Greater London Urban Area increased in population, area and population density between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses. Population density tells us how concentrated the population is in each area. If the population of an area increases at a greater rate than its size, the population density increases. Conversely, if the size of the urban area increases at a greater rate, then the population density falls. Table 3.4 provides a snapshot of the population, area and population density as at Census day 1991 compared to Census day 2001. Of the ten urban areas, only Greater London Urban Area, Sheffield Urban Area and West Yorkshire Urban Area saw an increase in population density between censuses. West Midlands Urban Area was the only one to record a decrease in area, population and population density. Sheffield Urban Area also registered a decrease in area but experienced an increase in population size and, by extension, population density. Five urban areas recorded a decrease in population size.

Greater London Urban Area experienced the highest proportional increase in population density between the censuses, with Sheffield Urban Area the second highest. Both the population and area of West Midlands Urban Area decreased by a similar proportion, meaning that the population density has remained fairly constant between censuses.

Figure 3.3

Population change between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses, 2001

Percentages



Source: 2001 and 1991 Census – Office for National Statistics, General Register Office for Scotland

Table 3.4

Population, area and density change between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses

	Population (people)			Area (km ²)			Density (people per km ²)		
	1991	2001	Percentage change	1991	2001	Percentage change	1991	2001	Percentage change
1 Greater London Urban Area	7,651,634	8,278,251	8.2	1,617.2	1,623.4	0.4	4,731.3	5,099.4	7.8
2 West Midlands Urban Area	2,296,180	2,284,093	-0.5	602.3	599.7	-0.4	3,812.4	3,808.6	-0.1
3 Greater Manchester Urban Area	2,277,330	2,240,230	-1.6	531.4	556.7	4.8	4,285.3	4,024.0	-6.1
4 West Yorkshire Urban Area	1,445,981	1,499,465	3.7	360.6	370.0	2.6	4,009.7	4,052.4	1.1
5 Greater Glasgow ¹	1,199,629	1,168,270	-2.6	368.5	368.5	0.0	3,255.7	3,171.0	-2.6
6 Tyneside	885,981	879,996	-0.7	206.8	210.9	2.0	4,285.1	4,172.4	-2.6
7 Liverpool Urban Area	837,998	816,216	-2.6	185.4	186.2	0.4	4,520.4	4,384.3	-3.0
8 Nottingham Urban Area	613,726	666,358	8.6	145.5	158.5	9.0	4,218.6	4,203.6	-0.4
9 Sheffield Urban Area	633,362	640,720	1.2	163.3	162.2	-0.6	3,879.7	3,949.2	1.8
10 Bristol Urban Area	522,784	551,066	5.4	128.4	139.8	8.9	4,072.5	3,942.4	-3.2

¹ 1991 Greater Glasgow data are based on 2001 boundaries; as such, there is no change in area shown between censuses.

Source: 2001 and 1991 Census – Office for National Statistics, General Register Office for Scotland

Case Studies: Change in size and population of three urban areas over time

Commentaries follow on how Greater Manchester Urban Area, Nottingham Urban Area and Bristol Urban Area have changed between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses. Maps depicting the change in urban area boundaries between 1991 and 2001 for the three urban areas are provided. The 2001 sub-division names can be seen at the centre of each sub-division and should not be confused with place names that share the title. Sub-divisions are referred to where possible, as these allow a rough comparison of areas within the larger urban area between censuses.

Three colours are discernible on the maps. These refer to land which was part of the urban area; in:

- 1991 and 2001
- 1991 and not in 2001
- 2001 and not in 1991

Only urban areas that were part of the larger urban area are shown in each map. For example an urban area close to but separate to Greater Manchester Urban Area in both 1991 and 2001 does not appear. The 1991 and 2001 boundaries refer to the extent of urban land, as defined by Ordnance Survey. The census data in this chapter are based on best fit Enumeration Districts (1991) and Census Output Areas (2001) which may be smaller in area but more likely larger than the boundaries depicted in the maps.

Greater Manchester Urban Area

Greater Manchester Urban Area extends from Whitworth in Lancashire to the north, Longdendale in Tameside to the east, Wilmslow/Alderley Edge in Cheshire to the south, and Hindley, near Bolton, to the west. Greater Manchester Urban Areas includes the centres of Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, Oldham, Stockport and Sale.

Sub-divisions of the larger urban area do not adhere to existing administrative boundaries; for example the sub-divisions of Manchester, Bolton and Stockport do not equate to the local authority districts of Manchester, Bolton and Stockport. Sub-divisions are broadly adhered to between censuses, making it possible to make comparisons with previously published census results.

The most populous sub-division of Manchester forms the centre of the wider urban area. It extends to Middleton in the north and includes Manchester Airport to the south. The population decreased by 2.1 per cent between censuses and the area increased by 2.2 per cent. The increase in area was primarily due to the development of a spur of urban land south west of Manchester Airport. The second most populous sub-division was Bolton and the third was Stockport near to the centre of the wider urban area. Bolton and Stockport have similar populations with a difference of only 3,321 people, 1.2 per cent of their combined populations. The population and area of Stockport remained fairly constant between 1991 and 2001. The population increased by 2.5 per cent and the area

increased by 1.5 per cent resulting in a 0.9 per cent increase in density to 4,612.9 people per km².

The population density of Greater Manchester Urban Area decreased from 4,285.3 people per km² in 1991 to 4,024.0 in 2001, the largest decrease of the ten most populous urban areas. The primary driver of this decrease was the increase in area of Bolton, up 48.6 per cent between 1991 and 2001, with little increase in population, up 0.3 per cent. The extra area was primarily the result of the industrial use of land at Cutacre for mining purposes.

Two sub-divisions of Greater Manchester Urban Area in 1991 were independent urban areas in 2001. They were Mossley and Buckton Vale situated to the east of Greater Manchester Urban Area.

The smattering of pale pink and, in particular, grey throughout **Map 3.5** portrays the non-uniform change of urban land area over a period of time. There are no concentrated areas of

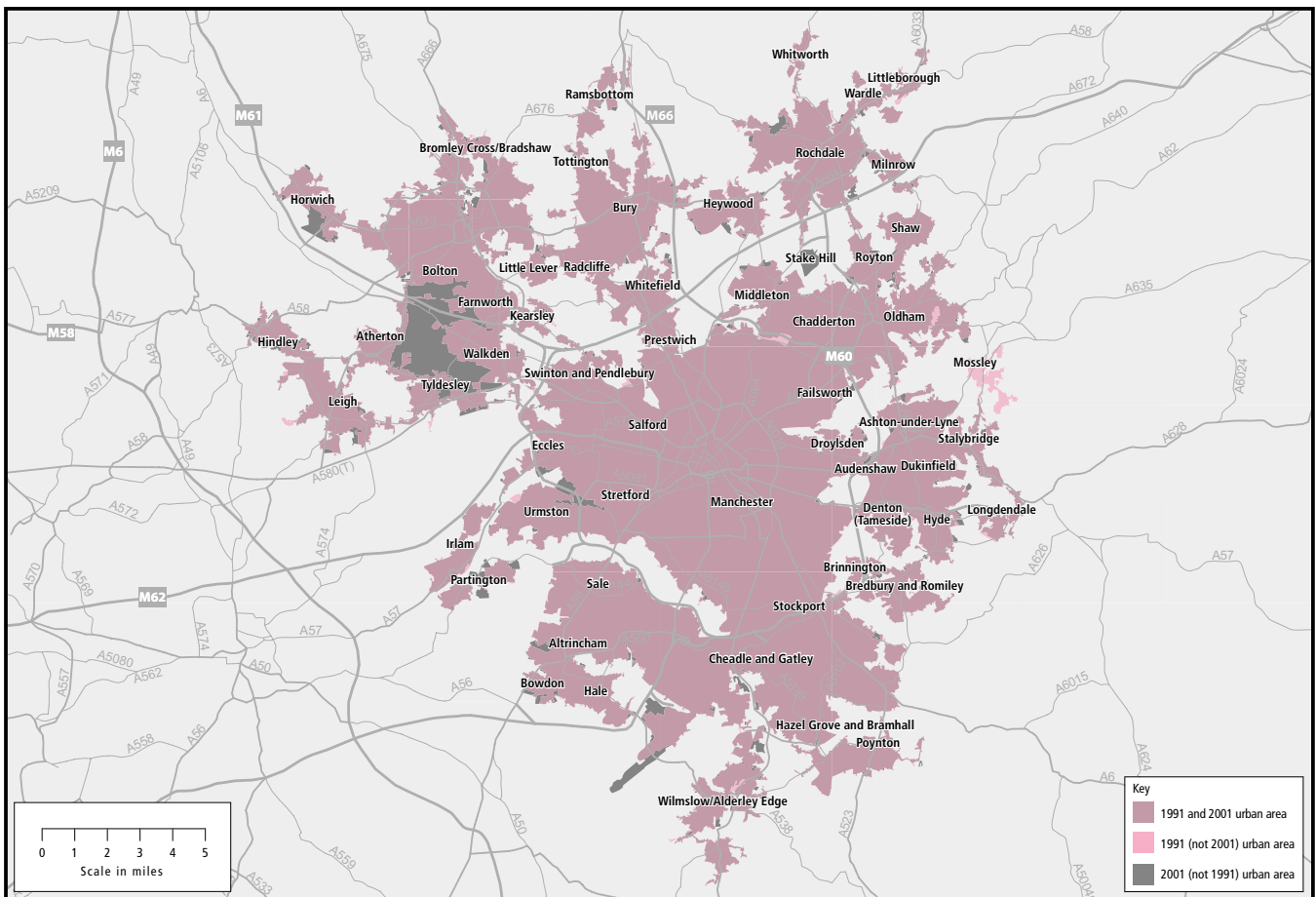
urban land expansion or reduction; rather these can be found throughout Greater Manchester Urban Area.

Nottingham Urban Area

Nottingham Urban Area is dominated by the sub-division Nottingham at its centre. A swathe of urban land extends from the north west of Nottingham including the sub-divisions of Kimberley and Eastwood in Nottinghamshire, to Heanor and on to Ripley in Derbyshire. The outermost points of Nottingham Urban Area are found in the sub-divisions of Carlton to the east, Ruddington to the south east, Long Eaton to the south west, and Ripley to the north west. Sub-divisions do not correspond with administrative geographic boundaries; the subdivision of Nottingham does not equate to Nottingham Unitary Authority.

The proportional increases in population (8.6 per cent) and area (9.0 per cent) in Nottingham Urban Area between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses were the largest of the ten most populous urban areas.

Map 3.5
Greater Manchester Urban Area, 1991 and 2001

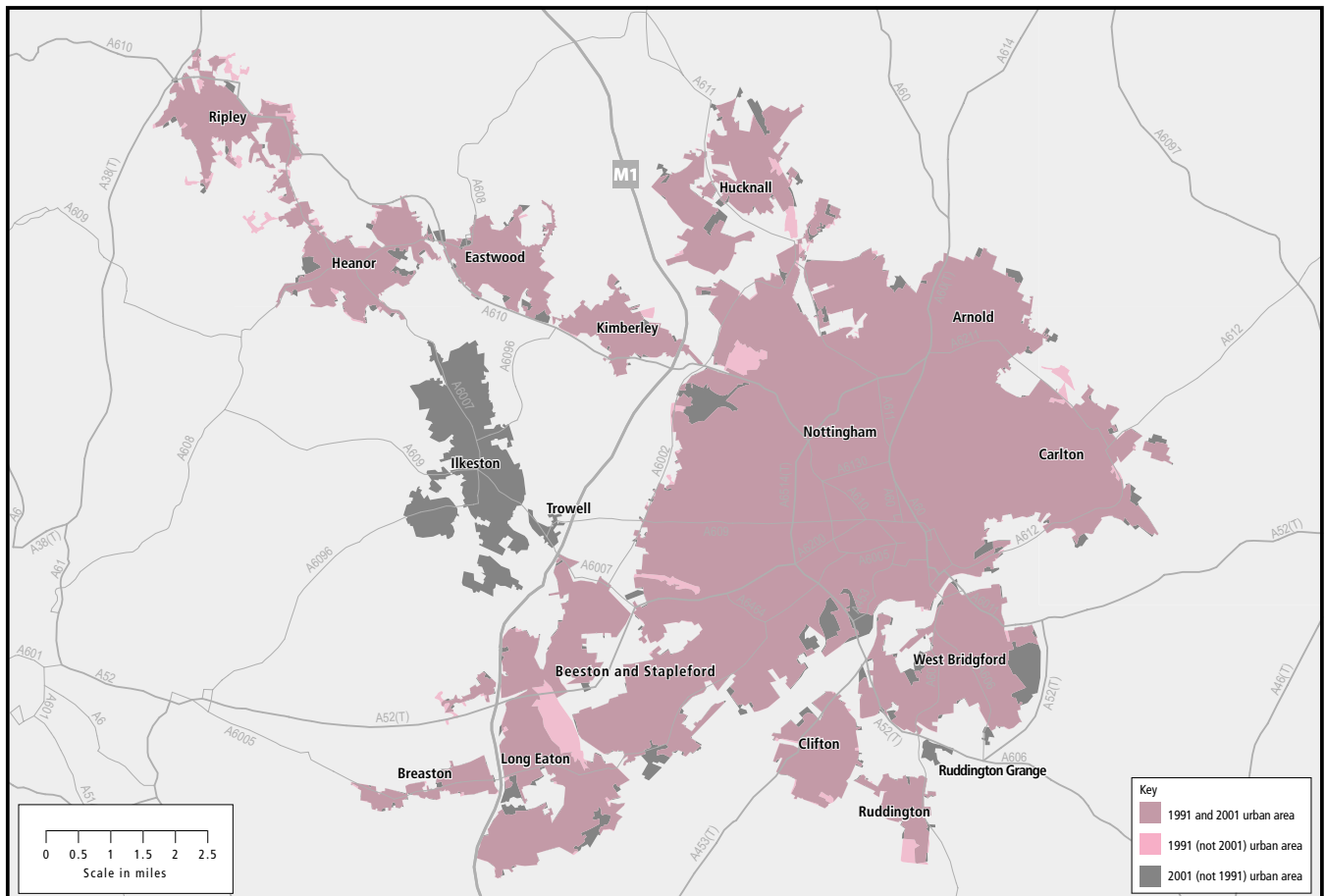


The boundaries shown are for the extent of urban land as defined by Ordnance Survey, rather than those of the Output Areas (2001) or Enumeration Districts (1991) fitting the urban land. Place names shown refer to the centre of each sub-division of the urban area. Sub-divisions are areas within larger urban areas that often follow the boundaries of local authorities existing before the re-organisation in 1974, current authority boundaries, well-defined localities, or previously separate urban areas.

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Map 3.6

Nottingham Urban Area, 1991 and 2001



The boundaries shown are for the extent of urban land as defined by Ordnance Survey, rather than those of the Output Areas (2001) or Enumeration Districts (1991) fitting the urban land. Place names shown refer to the centre of each sub-division of the urban area. Sub-divisions are areas within larger urban areas that often follow the boundaries of local authorities existing before the re-organisation in 1974, current authority boundaries, well-defined localities, or previously separate urban areas.

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Data sourced from Ordnance Survey, Office for National Statistics and UK Borders (EDINA).

The only change in the top ten urban areas based on population between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses was Nottingham Urban Area, moving up one place to eighth whilst Sheffield Urban Area dropped to ninth.

The main source of the population and area increase in Nottingham Urban Area was the inclusion of the sub-division of Ilkeston, which had a population of 37,270 people and an area of 9.1km² in 2001. Ilkeston was reported in the 1991 Census results as an independent urban area. It has since been subsumed by Nottingham Urban Area through a bridge of urban land stretching from Nottingham to Beeston and Stapleford, and through Trowell.

West Bridgford experienced large proportional growth in population and area between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses. The population rose by 28.2 per cent to 43,395 people and the area rose by 28.7 per cent to 10.5km². The small settlement of Ruddington Grange between Ruddington and West Bridgford was not referred to in 1991 and consisted of 117 people in 2001.

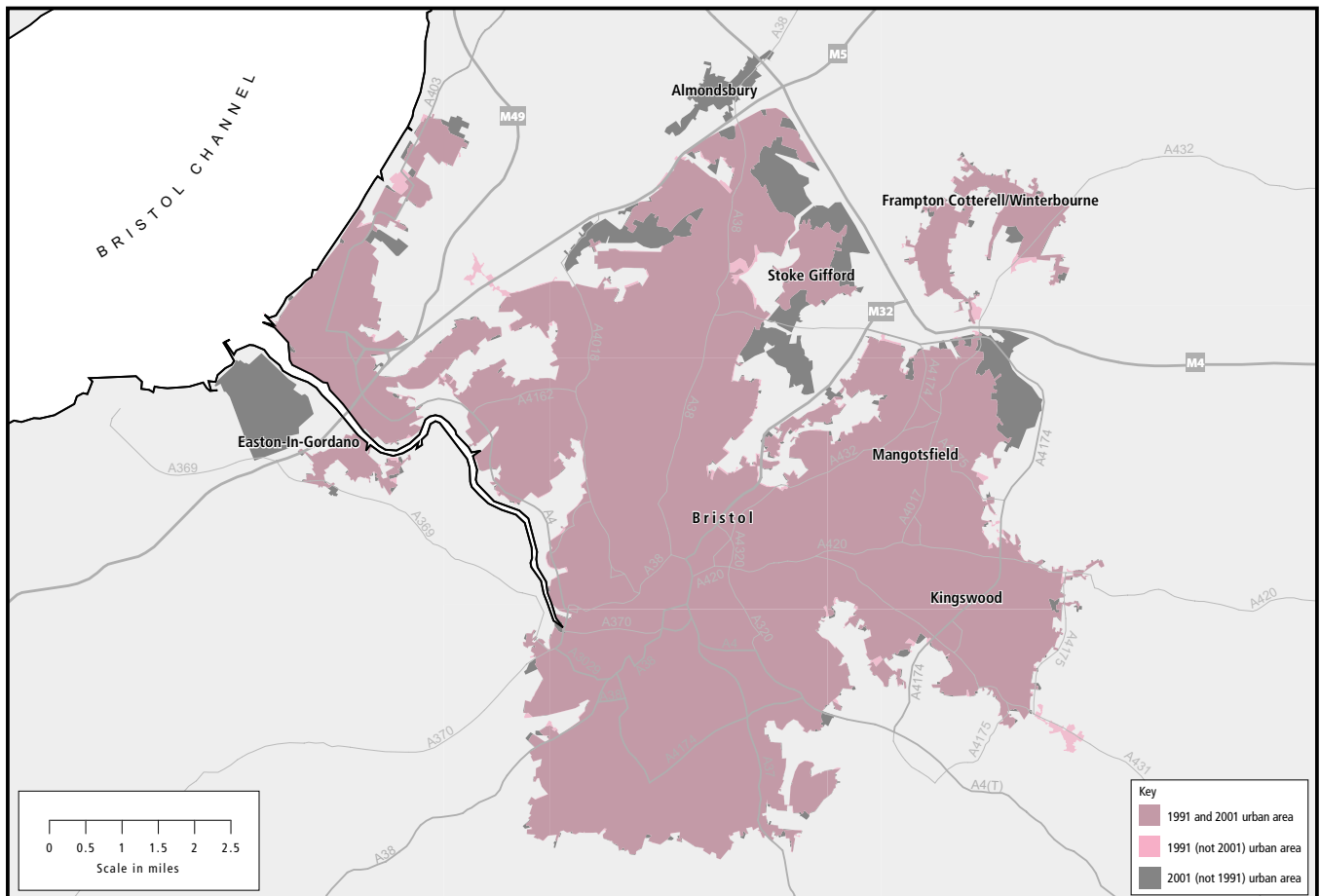
Bristol Urban Area

Bristol Urban Area extends from the sub-division of Almondsbury in the north, Kingswood to the east, Bristol to the south and Easton-in-Gordano in the west. The sub-division Bristol, which does not equate to the City of Bristol Unitary Authority, includes more than three out of every four Bristol Urban Area residents and a similar proportion of the area.

The population increase in Bristol Urban Area between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses did not keep pace with its expansion in terms of size. The sub-division Easton-in-Gordano contributed greatly to the expansion of area between censuses. This area can be seen coloured in grey on [Map 3.7](#) in western Bristol Urban Area. It is important to remember that there are small definitional differences between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses. The industrial area that is home to The Royal Portbury Dock and now part of Easton-in-Gordano would have been separate in 1991. The inclusion of this large area of industrial land means that the population density of Bristol Urban Area as a whole decreased between 1991 and 2001.

Map 3.7

Bristol Urban Area, 1991 and 2001



The boundaries shown are for the extent of urban land as defined by Ordnance Survey, rather than those of the Output Areas (2001) or Enumeration Districts (1991) fitting the urban land. Place names shown refer to the centre of each sub-division of the urban area. Sub-divisions are areas within larger urban areas that often follow the boundaries of local authorities existing before the re-organisation in 1974, current authority boundaries, well-defined localities, or previously separate urban areas.

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Contributing to the increase in the physical size of Bristol Urban Area was the annexation of a previously separate urban area, together with the expansion of existing urban areas, mainly in the north. Almondsbury, situated to the north of the M5 motorway, was a separate urban area in 1991. The area of Mangotsfield increased by 35.4 per cent and the population by 21.2 per cent. Pockets of new urban land can be seen in northern Mangotsfield and a large area of new urban land in the north-west.

The area of Stoke Gifford increased significantly between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses, by 78.5 per cent, and the population by 72.4 per cent. Map 3.7 shows that the nearby part of Bristol also increased in area. Small areas of land which were urban in 1991 and not in 2001 can also be seen, particularly offshoots of land from south eastern Kingswood and north western Bristol.

For more information about the urban areas not included as a case study, see the appendix.

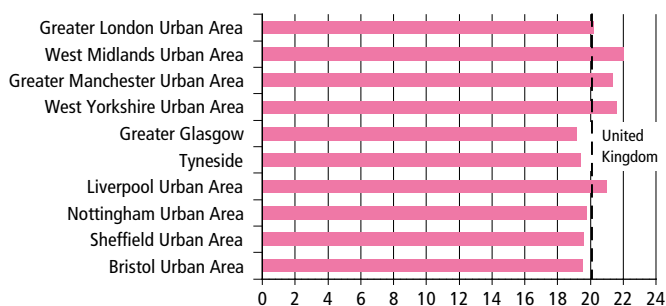
Top ten urban areas compared

The fundamental characteristics of a group of people include their age, sex, recent migration and their ethnic group – how they identify themselves. A comparison of these four characteristics provides the opportunity to observe differences between groups of people based on their place of residence. Analysis of these four variables will allow us to examine whether the populations of large urban areas, or conglomerations, are homogenous. We will ascertain whether the populations of these burgeoning swathes of urban land are interchangeable, or whether these populations are distinct.

Age

Five urban areas contained higher proportions of people under 16 years than the UK as a whole (20.2 per cent). The urban area with the largest proportion of people under 16 years was West Midlands Urban Area with 22.0 per cent. The second largest proportion was in West Yorkshire Urban Area with 21.6 per cent. The lowest proportion was found in Greater Glasgow,

Figure 3.8
Percentage of the population aged 0 to 15 years, 2001



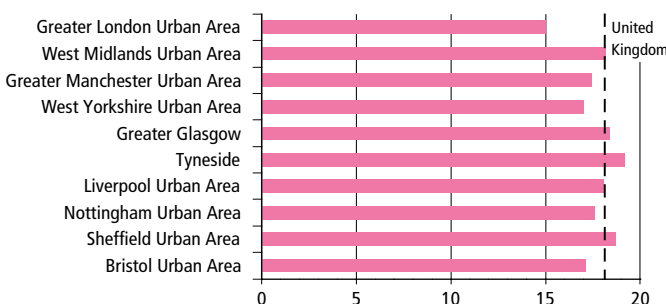
Source: 2001 Census – Office for National Statistics, General Register Office for Scotland and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

19.2 per cent, and the second lowest in Tyneside with 19.4 per cent. Figure 3.8 portrays the range of experience amongst the ten most populous urban areas.

Three urban areas had higher proportions of the population of pensionable age (65 years and above for males and 60 years and above for females) than the UK as a whole (18.4 per cent). They are Greater Glasgow, Tyneside and Sheffield Urban Area. Greater London Urban Area was home to the lowest proportion of people of pensionable age (15.0 per cent) of the ten most populous urban areas. Tyneside had the highest proportion with 19.2 per cent. Sheffield Urban Area was second largest at 18.7 per cent. The urban area with the second lowest proportion of people of pensionable age was West Yorkshire Urban Area with 17.0 per cent. Figure 3.9 reveals the varied experience amongst the ten most populous urban areas in the UK.

Greater London Urban Area includes the highest proportion of people of working age, 64.8 per cent. This corresponds to 5,368,165 people. West Midlands Urban Area includes the smallest proportion at 59.8 per cent. The working age population includes all people aged between 16 and pensionable age.

Figure 3.9
Percentage of the population of pensionable age, 2001



Source: 2001 Census – Office for National Statistics, General Register Office for Scotland and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

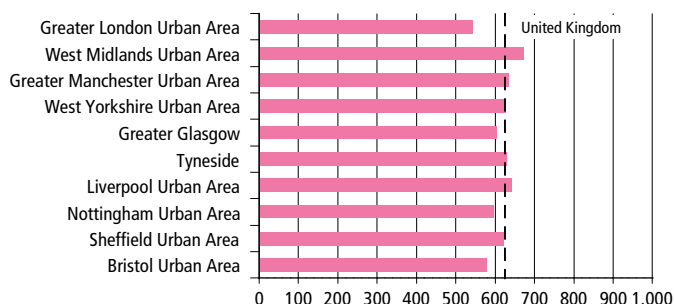
The dependency ratio is the number of people in dependent age groups, zero to fifteen years and those of pensionable age, divided by the number of people of working age (16 to pensionable age).⁷ West Midlands Urban Area was home to the population with the highest dependency ratio of the top ten urban areas. There were 672 dependants per 1,000 people of working age. Greater London Urban Area had the lowest ratio with 542. The urban areas ranked three to six in terms of the magnitude of the dependency ratio were closely grouped with between 622 and 633 dependants per 1,000 people of working age. A difference of 130 between the urban area with the highest dependency ratio compared to the lowest indicates a variety of experience amongst the urban areas, shown in Figure 3.10.

The proportion of the population of working age is higher than the UK average for six of the ten most populous urban areas. This indicates that the population structure of these largest of urban areas is not consistent. The four urban areas with a dependency ratio higher than that of the UK overall were West Midlands Urban Area, Greater Manchester Urban Area, Tyneside and Liverpool Urban Area. Tyneside was the only one of these where the proportion of the population aged 0 to 15 years was lower than that of the UK.

Greater London Urban Area and West Yorkshire Urban Area had relatively low proportions of pensionable-age population. These areas had a dependency ratio below that of the UK, while the proportion of the population aged 0 to 15 years was higher.

A common characteristic of the largest urban areas is a relatively large proportion of the population aged 16 to 24, but there is a large variation between urban areas. All of the ten most populous urban areas contained a higher proportion of 16 to 24-year-olds than the UK as a whole. This age group accounted for 12.0 per cent of the total population of the ten most populous urban areas combined and 11.0 per cent of the

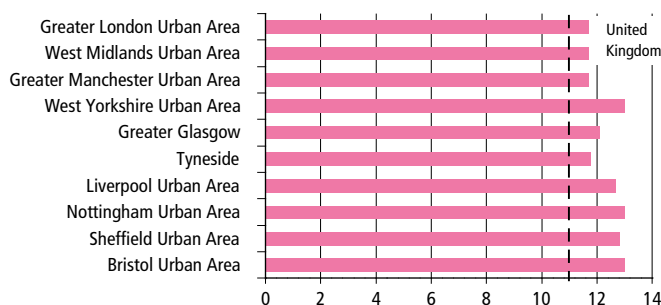
Figure 3.10
Dependency ratio, 2001



Source: 2001 Census – Office for National Statistics, General Register Office for Scotland and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

UK population. Figure 3.11 portrays the proportion of each urban area's population that was aged 16 to 24. This population group includes university-age people and represents a significant portion of the current and future workforce. The lowest proportion was in Greater Manchester Urban Area – 11.7 per cent of the population. The highest proportion was in Nottingham Urban Area – 13.2 per cent.

Figure 3.11
Percentage of the population aged 16 to 24, 2001



Source: 2001 Census – Office for National Statistics, General Register Office for Scotland and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

Sex

According to the 2001 Census, females made up 51.4 per cent of the United Kingdom population. There are more females than males in each of the ten most populous urban areas, shown in Table 3.12.

The population of Nottingham Urban Area was 50.8 per cent female; the lowest proportion of the ten most populous urban areas and lower than the United Kingdom as a whole. The populations of Bristol Urban Area and Sheffield Urban Area also had a smaller proportion of females than that of the United Kingdom, 51.1 per cent and 51.2 per cent respectively. Greater Glasgow included the largest proportion of females with 52.7 per cent. The second highest proportion of females could be found in Liverpool Urban Area, 52.3 per cent. Greater London Urban Area was home to the fifth highest proportion of females at 51.6 per cent of total population.

Migration

A fundamental characteristic of an area is the extent to which it experiences population movement. Analysis of migration to, from or within each of the top ten urban areas during the year before the census reveals that the populations of the ten most populous urban areas are heterogeneous, both when

Table 3.12
Proportion of the population by sex, 2001

	Male		Female	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
1 Greater London Urban Area	4,007,297	48.4	4,270,954	51.6
2 West Midlands Urban Area	1,109,397	48.6	1,174,696	51.4
3 Greater Manchester Urban Area	1,088,658	48.6	1,151,572	51.4
4 West Yorkshire Urban Area	724,818	48.3	774,647	51.7
5 Greater Glasgow	552,037	47.3	616,233	52.7
6 Tyneside	425,119	48.3	454,877	51.7
7 Liverpool Urban Area	389,119	47.7	427,097	52.3
8 Nottingham Urban Area	327,851	49.2	338,507	50.8
9 Sheffield Urban Area	312,619	48.8	328,101	51.2
10 Bristol Urban Area	269,689	48.9	281,377	51.1
United Kingdom	28,579,869	48.6	30,209,325	51.4

Source: 2001 Census – Office for National Statistics, General Register Office for Scotland and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

considering the scale and type of migration. The census definition, from which the data are obtained, of a migrant is: someone now resident in an area who either moved into or within the area during the year before the census or, had no usual address the year before the census.

Bristol Urban Area included the highest proportion of migrants with 14.6 per cent of the resident population on Census day 2001, 80,264 people, having changed address during the previous year. Over six out of ten of these migrants moved within Bristol Urban Area during the year before the census, and over a quarter moved into the area from within the UK. The second largest proportion of migrants was in Nottingham Urban Area with 13.9 per cent of the population. Nottingham Urban Area, home to a smaller population than Liverpool Urban Area, included 3,555 more migrants. Table 3.13 shows the types of migrants as a proportion of the population of each urban area.

West Midlands Urban Area recorded the smallest proportion of migrants with 10.2 per cent of the resident population having changed address during the previous year. More than seven out of every ten migrants in this area moved within the area during the year before the census. A fairly low 1.6 per cent of West Midlands Urban Area residents moved from inside the

United Kingdom, the next smallest proportion was in Greater London Urban Area with 2.0 per cent of residents.

The highest proportion of the resident population with no usual address one year before the census was 1.6 per cent, in Greater London Urban Area. The second highest proportion was in Bristol Urban Area at 0.94 per cent. The lowest proportion was Tyneside with 0.74 per cent.

Greater London Urban Area included the highest proportion of people who moved within the area, 8.9 per cent. Bristol Urban Area and West Yorkshire Urban Area included 8.8 per cent. The lowest proportion was in Greater Glasgow with 6.6 per cent.

Of the migrants in Greater London Urban Area, 11.5 per cent moved into the area from outside the UK, representing 1.6 per cent of the total population. This proportion is nearly double that of the next urban area – 5.9 per cent of migrants living in Bristol Urban Area moved into the area from outside the UK during the year before the census. The smallest proportion of migrants who moved into the area from outside the United Kingdom was Liverpool Urban Area with 0.37 per cent of the total population or 3.4 per cent of migrants. Nearly three in ten migrants in Greater Glasgow lived in a different UK area during the year before the census.

Table 3.13
Migrants as a percentage of all people in each urban area, 2001

	Migrants (number)	Percentage ¹ of all people				
		Migrants	Moved within area	No usual address one year ago	Moved into the area from within the UK	Moved into the area from outside UK
1 Greater London Urban Area	1,140,662	13.8	8.9	1.60	2.0	1.60
2 West Midlands Urban Area	233,108	10.2	7.4	0.81	1.6	0.47
3 Greater Manchester Urban Area ²	266,571	11.9	8.4	0.89	2.1	0.52
4 West Yorkshire Urban Area	196,959	13.1	8.8	0.92	2.8	0.58
5 Greater Glasgow	130,066	11.1	6.6	0.88	3.1	0.54
6 Tyneside	104,942	11.9	8.1	0.74	2.5	0.55
7 Liverpool Urban Area	89,061	10.9	7.6	0.82	2.1	0.37
8 Nottingham Urban Area	92,616	13.9	8.6	0.87	3.7	0.71
9 Sheffield Urban Area	84,040	13.1	8.5	0.80	3.2	0.63
10 Bristol Urban Area	80,264	14.6	8.8	0.94	4.0	0.86

¹ Percentages may not add exactly to totals due to rounding.

² Migration data for the separate urban area of Helsby is included for the Greater Manchester Urban Area. These data were included in previously published material in error.

Source: 2001 Census – Office for National Statistics, General Register Office for Scotland

Identity

A fundamental feature of a person's identity is their ethnicity. Bulmer (1996) was cited in the ONS publication *Ethnic Group Statistics* (2003)⁸ as describing an ethnic group as a:

'...collectivity within a larger population having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared past, and a cultural focus upon one or more symbolic elements which define the group's identity, such as kinship, religion, language, shared territory, nationality or physical appearance.'

It is important to note that an individual can have many layers of identity and hence ethnic groups. For example, an individual may identify strongly with the area of York in Yorkshire on the lowest layer, Yorkshire as a whole on the next, as a Northerner on the next and as a White Briton on the next. The census

results provide us with information on this highest layer of identity.

Table 3.14 shows the percentage of population in each urban area by ethnic group. Greater London Urban Area included the lowest proportion of people identifying as White British and the highest proportions for all thirteen ethnic groups except for White British, Indian and Pakistani. The highest proportion of people identifying as Indian resided in West Midlands Urban Area, 5.8 per cent, compared to 5.6 per cent of the Greater London Urban Area population – the second largest proportion, and 0.3 per cent of Liverpool Urban Area, the smallest proportion. While the highest proportion of Indians can be found resident in West Midlands Urban Area there were 327,703 more people identifying as Indian in Greater London Urban Area.

Table 3.14
Percentage of population by ethnic group, 2001

	Percentage of population	Percentage of population													
		White			Mixed	Asian or Asian British				Black or Black British			Chinese or Other ethnic group		
		All people	British	Irish	Other White	Any Mixed Groups	Indian	Paki-stani	Bangla-deshi	Other Asian	Caribbean	African	Other Black	Chinese	Other
1 Greater London Urban Area	8,278,251	63.5	2.9	7.7	2.9	5.6	1.9	1.9	1.7	4.2	4.6	0.7	1.0	1.4	
2 West Midlands Urban Area	2,284,093	76.6	1.9	1.2	2.2	5.8	5.8	1.2	0.7	3.2	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	
3 Greater Manchester Urban Area	2,240,226	86.9	1.8	1.5	1.4	1.6	3.3	0.9	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.3	
4 West Yorkshire Urban Area	1,499,465	83.1	1.0	1.4	1.5	2.7	7.5	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.3	
5 Greater Glasgow	1,168,270	93.4	1.6	1.3	0.3	0.6	1.7	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.2	
6 Tyneside	879,996	95.2	0.4	1.1	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.3	
7 Liverpool Urban Area	816,216	94.4	1.0	0.9	1.2	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.8	0.2	
8 Nottingham Urban Area	666,358	89.0	1.0	1.8	1.8	1.5	1.7	0.1	0.2	1.7	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.3	
9 Sheffield Urban Area	640,720	90.1	0.6	1.2	1.4	0.5	3.2	0.3	0.4	0.8	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.4	
10 Bristol Urban Area	551,066	90.4	1.0	2.2	1.7	1.0	0.8	0.2	0.2	1.1	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.3	

Note: Results from the 2001 Census in England and Wales are reported using 16 ethnic groups, Scotland census data are reported using 14 groups. The differing groupings have been harmonised into 13 ethnic groups. The Scotland groupings of White Scottish and Other White British have been merged with White British, Other South Asian with Other Asian, Other Black with Black Scottish and Other Black, and African with Black African. The England and Wales mixed ethnic categories have been combined into one group.

Source: 2001 Census – Office for National Statistics, General Register Office for Scotland

The largest proportion of people identifying as Pakistani existed in West Yorkshire Urban Area with 7.5 per cent; the smallest proportion was in Liverpool Urban Area, 0.2 per cent. Both Greater London Urban Area (153,479 people) and West Midlands Urban Area (131,844) included a higher number of people identifying as Pakistani than West Yorkshire Urban Area (111,949).

Of the ten urban areas, Greater Glasgow had the smallest proportion of people identifying as Bangladeshi, African, Mixed and Other ethnic groups. Tyneside had the smallest proportion of people identifying as White Irish, Other Asian, Caribbean and Other Black. Liverpool Urban Area had the smallest proportion of Other White, Indian and Pakistani.

Throughout this report, the term 'ethnic minority' refers to those people who identify with an ethnic group other than White. The differences between the proportions of residents in ethnic minority populations among the urban areas are noteworthy. The identity of the population of these urban areas is heterogeneous, ranging from 25.9 per cent of the Greater London Urban Area population identifying as part of the ethnic minority and 20.4 per cent of West Midlands Urban Area to 3.4 per cent of the Tyneside population. The range across the ten urban areas is shown in [Figure 3.15](#).

Census data provide clues as to whether people of similar or differing identities/ethnic groups choose to live together in households. Most UK-household members are of the same ethnic group or identity. There are large differences between urban areas in the proportion of households that include people of differing ethnic groups.

Greater London Urban Area differs to the other nine urban areas. Of households consisting of more than one person, 21.9 per cent in Greater London Urban Area were made up of

people not of the same ethnic group. The smallest proportion was 4.1 per cent in Tyneside.

Conclusion

The urban areas that are home to nearly a third of the UK population have been found to consist of heterogeneous populations. Comparisons of age, sex, migration and identity using 2001 Census data have borne this out. The population of one of the ten most populous urban areas would not be interchangeable with the population of another.

The populations of the ten major urban areas in the United Kingdom exhibit a diverse range of characteristics. Population change between 1991 and 2001 ranged from an increase of 8.6 per cent in Nottingham Urban Area to a decrease of 2.6 per cent in Greater Glasgow. There were 672 dependents per 1,000 people of working age in West Midlands Urban Area compared to 542 in Greater London Urban Area. The Bristol Urban Area population included 14.6 per cent migrants compared to 10.2 per cent in West Midlands Urban Area. Tyneside had the highest proportion identifying as White British, 95.2 per cent, compared to 76.6 per cent in West Midlands Urban Area and 63.5 per cent in Greater London Urban Area.

The population of Greater London Urban Area was found to exhibit an extreme set of characteristics across a number of variables compared to the other urban areas. The population included the largest proportion identifying as other than White British, the lowest dependency ratio, the lowest proportion of pensionable age, and the lowest proportion of households where all members share the same ethnic identity.

Boundaries of urban land are not static. Nottingham Urban Area expanded between 1991 and 2001 to include Ilkeston. Bristol Urban Area increased through the inclusion of a predominantly industrial area in Easton-in-Gordano and the previously separate residential area of Almondsbury. Greater Manchester Urban Area no longer included the urban areas of Mossley and Buckton Vale in 2001 compared to 1991, while Bolton almost doubled in area without a commensurate increase in population.

Figure 3.15
Ethnic minority population, as a percentage of all people in each urban area, 2001



Source 2001 Census – Office for National Statistics, General Register Office for Scotland

Notes and references

1. Census data reported here are derived or reported from data included in publications released by the UK's statistical offices: General Register Office for Scotland, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and Office for National Statistics.
2. The adjustments made to the mid-year population estimates were a result of the Local Authority Population Studies and were made following an extensive review of census results and processes. This showed that, for a small number of authorities, there was evidence which provided a basis for making a better estimate of the population. More information can be accessed here: www.statistics.gov.uk/about/Methodology_by_theme/LAStudies.asp
3. Countryside agency *et al.* (2004) *Rural and Urban Area Classification 2004*, An Introductory Guide. www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/downloads/Rural_Urban_Introductory_Guidev2.pdf
4. General Register Office for Scotland (2004) *Scottish Executive Rural Urban Classification 2003–2004*. www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/rural/seurc-00.asp
5. Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (2005) *Report of the Inter-Departmental Urban-Rural Definition Group, Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements*, February 2005. www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/financeandpersonnel/DMB/urban_rural.html
6. The urban area of Belfast and connected settlements used in this report includes the connected areas of: Belfast Urban Area, Castlereagh Urban Area, Greenisland Urban Area, Holywood Urban Area, Lisburn Urban Area, Newtownabbey Urban Area and Milltown (Lisburn LGD). The nearby non-connected settlements of Bangor, Carrickfergus, Carryduff, Crawfordsburn, Groomsport, Helen's Bay, and Seahill, which are used by NISRA in the definition of Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area, have been excluded from the definition of the urban area of Belfast and connected settlements for this report.
7. Griffiths C (2001) Demographic Backgrounds, 2, 6–9, in Griffiths C (ed.) and Fitzpatrick J (ed.) *Geographic Variation in Health*. London: The Stationery Office; www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_health/DS16/DS16_cap02.pdf
8. Office for National Statistics (2003) *Ethnic Group Statistics, A guide for collection and classification of ethnicity data*. www.statistics.gov.uk/about/ethnic_group_statistics/downloads/ethnic_group_statistics.pdf