

The Merton Population

Population Size and Growth

Introduction

Merton is far from homogenous and there has been a long-standing difference in health and wellbeing between people living in East and West Merton. Merton is made up of 20 wards and data analysis on inequalities has been used to compare 10 wards which make up East Merton and the other 10 that make up West Merton (Figure 1). On 5th May 2022, there was a change to the ward boundaries and data is currently limited on the new ward boundaries. The map below represents the new ward boundaries which make up East and West Merton.

This sub chapter includes information on the new ward boundaries which were released on 5th May 2022, unlike the rest of the Merton Story 2022 report and includes data that is currently available which are: ward population, age and gender. Future editions of the Merton Story will explore data such as ethnicity and religion and any other data as it becomes available for the new ward boundaries.

The East West Merton Population

Figure 1: Merton Map of new ward boundaries and east/west as of 5th May 2022, Merton Housing Led projections¹.

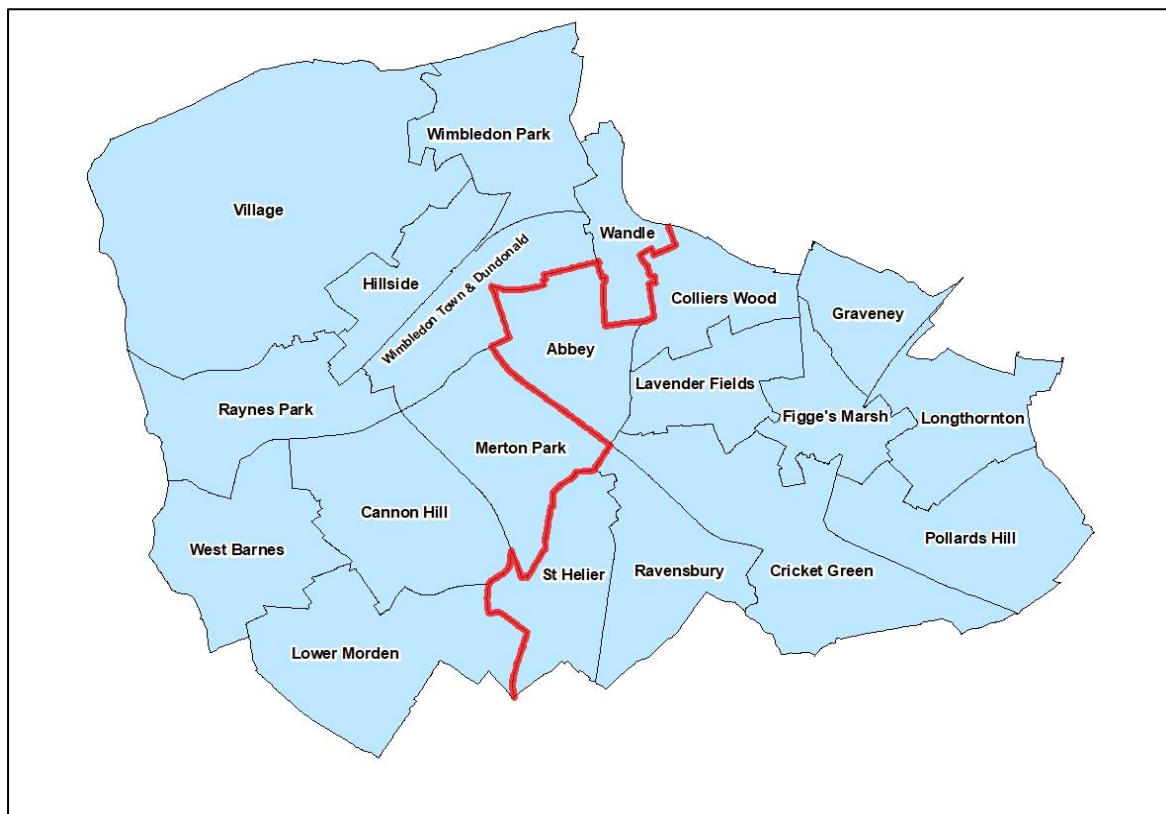


Table 1 below shows the current population by ward, East, West and Merton overall including the population projections by 2035 (numbers and proportions).

Table 1: Count and proportion (%) of the Merton population by wards in 2022 and 2035 (based on new ward boundaries as of 5th May 2022), Merton Housing Led projections¹.

Area	Year 2022		Year 2035	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Merton	205,820	-	214,999	-
East Merton	106,130	51.6%	112,135	52.2%
West Merton	99,690	48.4%	102,864	47.8%
Ward				
Abbey	10,398	5.1%	12,560	5.8%
Cannon Hill	9,534	4.6%	9,777	4.5%
Colliers Wood	10,757	5.2%	11,180	5.2%
Cricket Green	11,543	5.6%	12,800	6.0%
Figge's Marsh	10,476	5.1%	11,538	5.4%
Graveney	11,302	5.5%	11,279	5.2%
Hillside	8,612	4.2%	8,666	4.0%
Lavender Fields	11,050	5.4%	11,183	5.2%
Longthornton	10,632	5.2%	10,208	4.7%
Lower Morden	10,647	5.2%	10,904	5.1%
Merton Park	8,239	4.0%	10,378	4.8%
Pollards Hill	10,772	5.2%	10,347	4.8%
Ravensbury	8,722	4.2%	8,921	4.1%
Raynes Park	11,928	5.8%	11,873	5.5%
St Helier	10,476	5.1%	12,119	5.6%
Village	11,457	5.6%	11,272	5.2%
Wandle	6,222	3.0%	6,963	3.2%
West Barnes	9,832	4.8%	9,725	4.5%
Wimbledon Park	10,343	5.0%	10,383	4.8%
Wimbledon Town & Dundonald	12,876	6.3%	12,923	6.0%

In 2022 Merton has a resident population of 205,820 according to the housing led projections. The 2021 Census data released at the end of June 2022 shows Merton has a resident population of 215,200² (which is the actual number as opposed to a projection from previous years' data) and according to NHS Digital Merton has a GP registered population of 232,368 people as of 1st October 2022³.

Table 1 also shows East Merton currently has a larger population compared to West Merton by around 6,000 people. The number of people is estimated to increase by an additional 6,000 people in East Merton and an additional 3,000 people in West Merton by 2035. Abbey in East Merton and Merton Park in West Merton are estimated to have the largest increase in population and Pollards Hill and Longthornton in East Merton are estimated to have the largest decrease in population by 2035¹.

Characteristics

Figure 2 shows the 2021 Census data for Merton by age group. Population numbers are similar between the 2021 Census compared to the Merton housing led projections data in figure 3. According to the 2021 Census Merton has a higher number of young working age population (73,500) compared to the housing led projection (64,958)⁴.

Figure 2: The number of usual residents in the Merton population by age groups. Source: Office for National Statistics, Census Data 2021⁴.

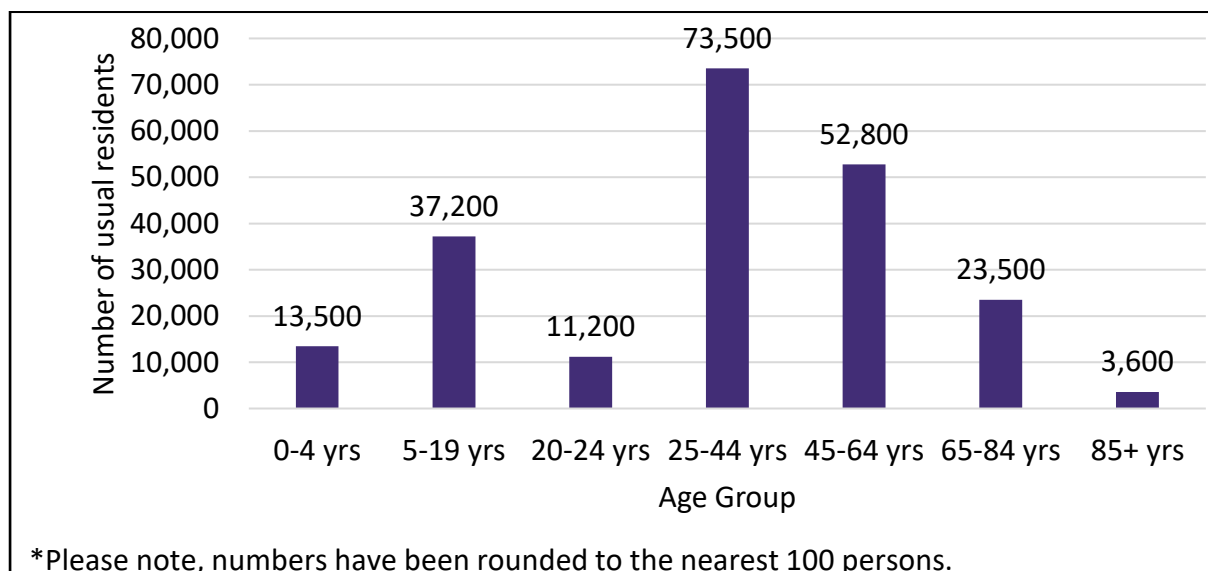
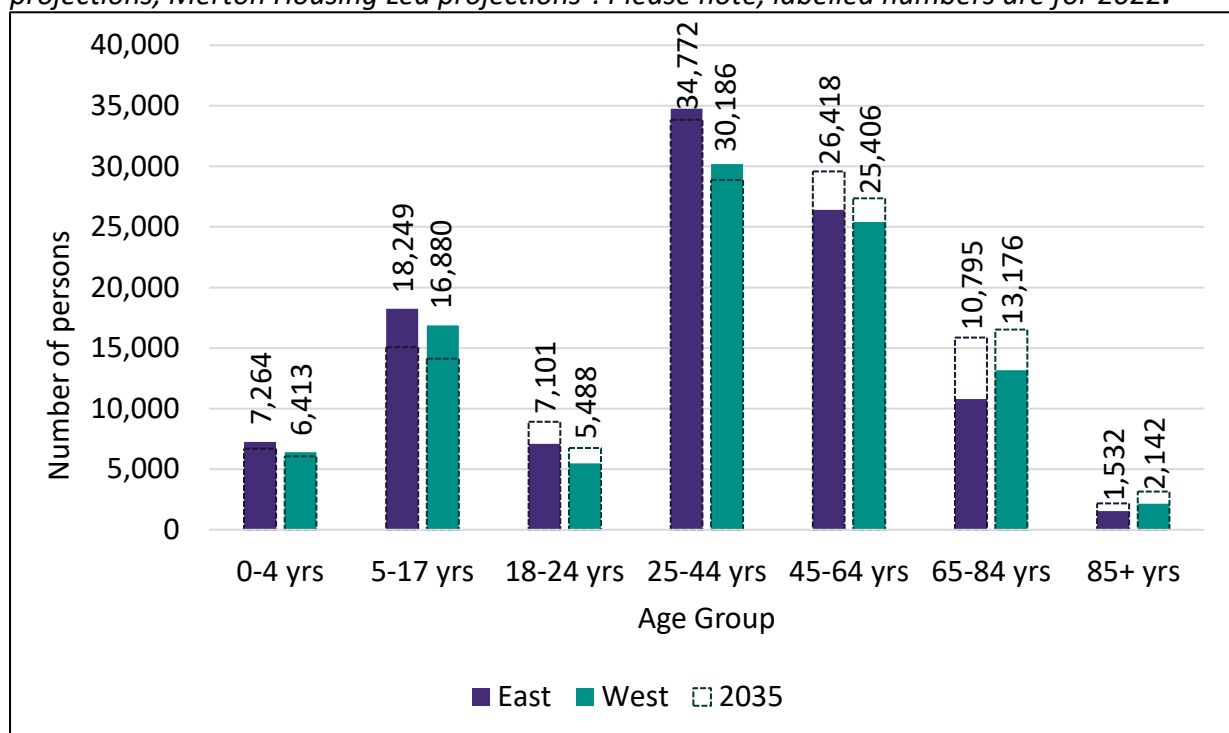


Figure 3 represents the numbers of people by age group and East/West Merton as well as the projected numbers by 2035. Currently, East Merton has a younger population and a higher number of residents in the 25-44 year old working age population compared to West Merton with an older population and higher numbers of residents in the 65 year and over population. By 2035 projections indicate that East Merton will continue to have higher

numbers in the younger working age population compared to West Merton, but numbers will be balanced in the older age group population between East and West Merton¹.

Figure 3 shows that the population of younger age groups (0-17 year olds) is projected to decrease from 48,806 in 2022 to 41,950 by 2035, which is a decrease of 3,753 0-17 year olds in East Merton and a decrease of 3,103 0-17 year olds in West Merton by 2035. The population of working age groups (25-64 years) is projected to increase from 116,782 in 2022 to 119,655 by 2035 which is an increase of 2,242 25-64 year olds in East Merton and an increase of 631 25-64 year olds in West Merton by 2035. The population of older age (65 years and over) is projected to increase from 27,645 in 2022 to 37,713 by 2035 which is an increase of 5,698 people 65 years and over in East Merton and an increase of 4,370 people 65 years and over in West Merton by 2035¹.

Figure 3: Numbers of residents in East and West Merton by age group in 2022 including 2035 projections, Merton Housing Led projections¹. Please note, labelled numbers are for 2022.



By 2035, the largest increases in the numbers of residents can be seen generally in the older age groups, whereas children and young people aged 5-17 years will decrease by over 3,000 in East Merton and by over 2,500 in West Merton¹.

In Merton 2020 the general fertility rate was 63.6 per 1,000 births and has shown a year-on-year decline from 73.2 per 1,000 births in 2015⁵. There is evidence from 24 European countries, including the UK, that in 2021 a further drop of 14.1% was observed compared to the average number of live births in January 2018 and 2019⁶.

Figure 4: Proportion (%) of East and West Merton population by gender, 2022, Merton Housing Led projections¹.

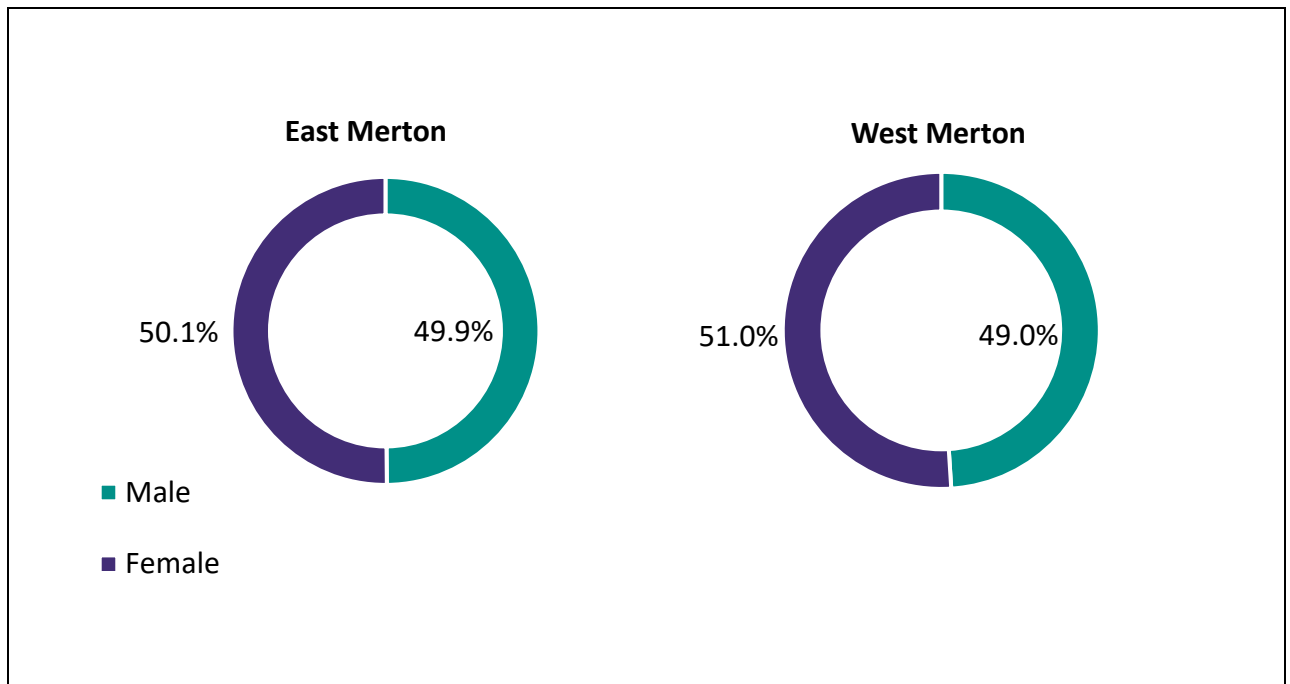


Figure 4 represents the proportion of Merton residents by gender, East and West based on the housing led projections. There are almost equal proportions of males and females in both East and West Merton¹ for 2022 based on the housing led projections. The Census 2021 data released shows 110,500 were female (51.3%) and 104,700 were males (48.7%) in Merton these proportions were similar to both London and England. We are unable to compare gender differences by East and West Merton as the data is not yet available from the 2021 Census⁴.

Population Demographics

To understand the Merton population variation in the characteristics and needs of the ethnic groups is important. This helps in our decision making and strategic planning for service provision and community needs, especially in the health sector in identifying investment priorities and targeting community health programmes⁷.

For information around socioeconomic status and ethnicity please see the index of multiple deprivation (IMD) 2019 which is described in the Merton Story 2021 (see recommendations section below). More information around socioeconomic status and ethnicity at ward level will be available once 2021 Census data is released and will be included in the Merton Story 2023.

Ethnicity

Table 2 looks at the numbers and proportions of broad category ethnic groups as well as the overall Ethnic Minority groups for 2022 and 2035 projections in Merton. In 2022, 37.3% of the Merton population are from an Ethnic Minority group which is lower than London (44.5%) and by 2035, is projected to increase by 1% in Merton, or 10,000 people, and increase by over 2% in London. According to the 2011 Census, people from an ethnic minority group are higher in East Merton (61.9%)⁸ and in young people (19.3%)⁷. The overall White population in Merton is currently 62.7% which is higher than London (55.5%) and by 2035, is projected to decrease by 1% in Merton and decrease by almost 2% in London⁷.

In 2022, 40.6% of the Merton population are White British which is higher than London (37.4%) and by 2035, is projected to decrease to 37.4% in Merton. The White Other population is currently 22.1% of the population which is higher than London (18.1%) and by 2035, is projected to increase to 24.3% in Merton. The Asian population is currently 20.8% which is slightly lower than London (21%) and by 2035, is projected to increase to 22.1% in Merton. The Black population is currently 9.1% which is lower than London (13.5%) and by 2035 is projected to decrease to 8.6% in Merton and the Mixed population is currently 5.4% which is lower than London (5.9%) and by 2035, is projected to increase to 5.6% in Merton⁷.

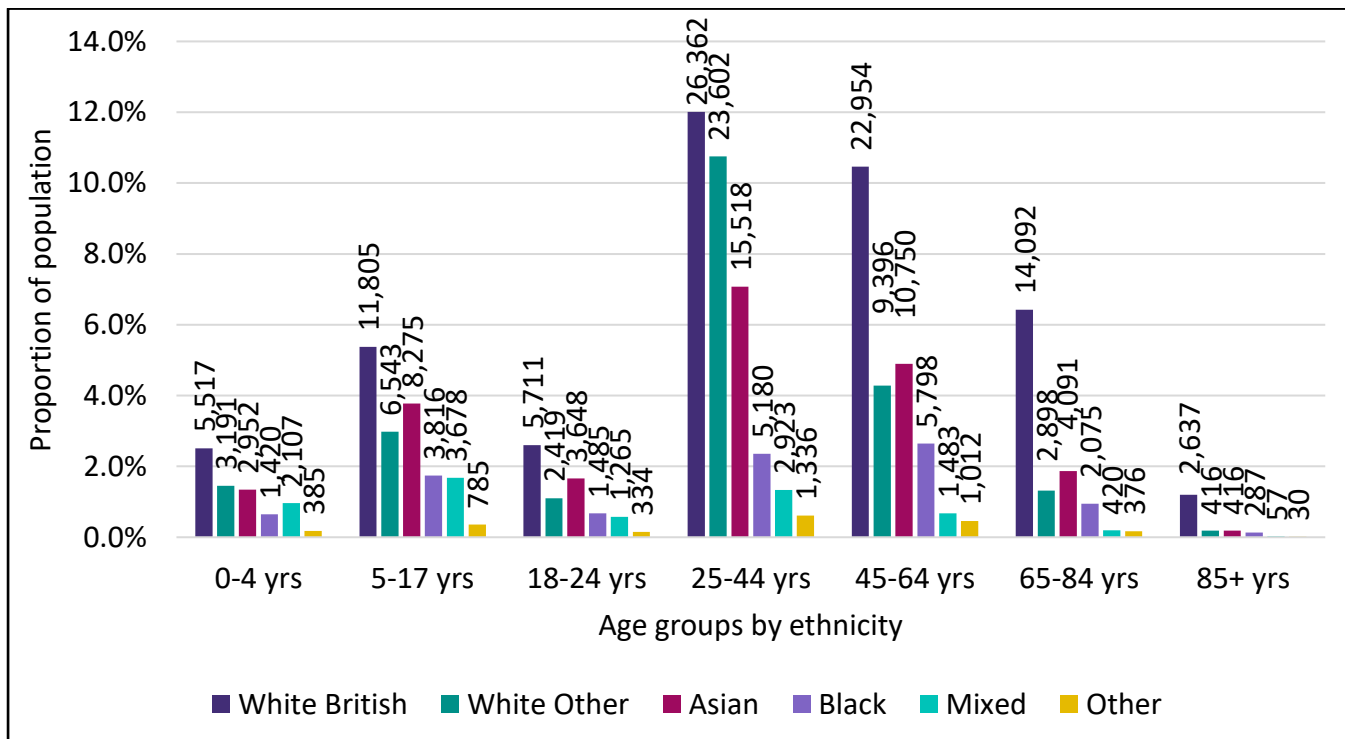
Table 2: Count & percentage of the Merton & London population by ethnic groups including 2035 projections, 2022, 2016 GLA Housing based projections⁷.

	Merton		London	
	2022	2035	2022	2035
White	137,552 (62.7%)	148,466 (61.7%)	5,211,379 (55.5%)	5,541,842 (53.3%)
Ethnic Minority Groups	81,895 (37.3%)	92,165 (38.3%)	4,178,689 (44.5%)	4,855,118 (46.7%)
<i>Further breakdown by ethnic group</i>				
White British	89,079 (40.6%)	89,913 (37.4%)	3,509,206 (37.4%)	3,566,701 (34.3%)
White Other	48,473 (22.1%)	58,553 (24.3%)	1,702,173 (18.1%)	1,975,141 (19.0%)
Asian	45,645 (20.8%)	53,223 (22.1%)	1,970,413 (21.0%)	2,318,469 (22.3%)
Black	20,062 (9.1%)	20,695 (8.6%)	1,266,696 (13.5%)	1,422,775 (13.7%)
Mixed	11,928 (5.4%)	13,446 (5.6%)	550,887 (5.9%)	639,525 (6.2%)
Other	4,261 (1.9%)	4,800 (2.0%)	390,691 (4.2%)	474,349 (4.6%)

Ethnicity by Age

Figure 5 of ethnicity by age shows Merton currently has a higher proportion of working age populations, particularly in those 25-64 years. The younger and older working age populations (25-64 years) in total have higher White British (22.5%), White Other (15%) followed by Asian (12%) ethnic groups⁷.

Figure 5: Proportion of the Merton population by ethnicity and age for 2022⁷.



Ethnicity by Gender

The White British population in Merton has equal proportions of males (49.8%) and females (50.2%). However, ethnic groups such as White Other (males: 47.4% & females: 52.6%), Black (males: 47.2% & females: 52.8%) and Other (males: 46% & females: 54%) currently have higher proportions of females compared to males. Asian (males: 51% & females: 49%) and Mixed (males: 52.3% & females: 47.7%) ethnic groups have higher proportions of males compared to females. By 2035, these patterns for all ethnic groups are predicted to stay the same⁷.

Nationality & Place of Birth

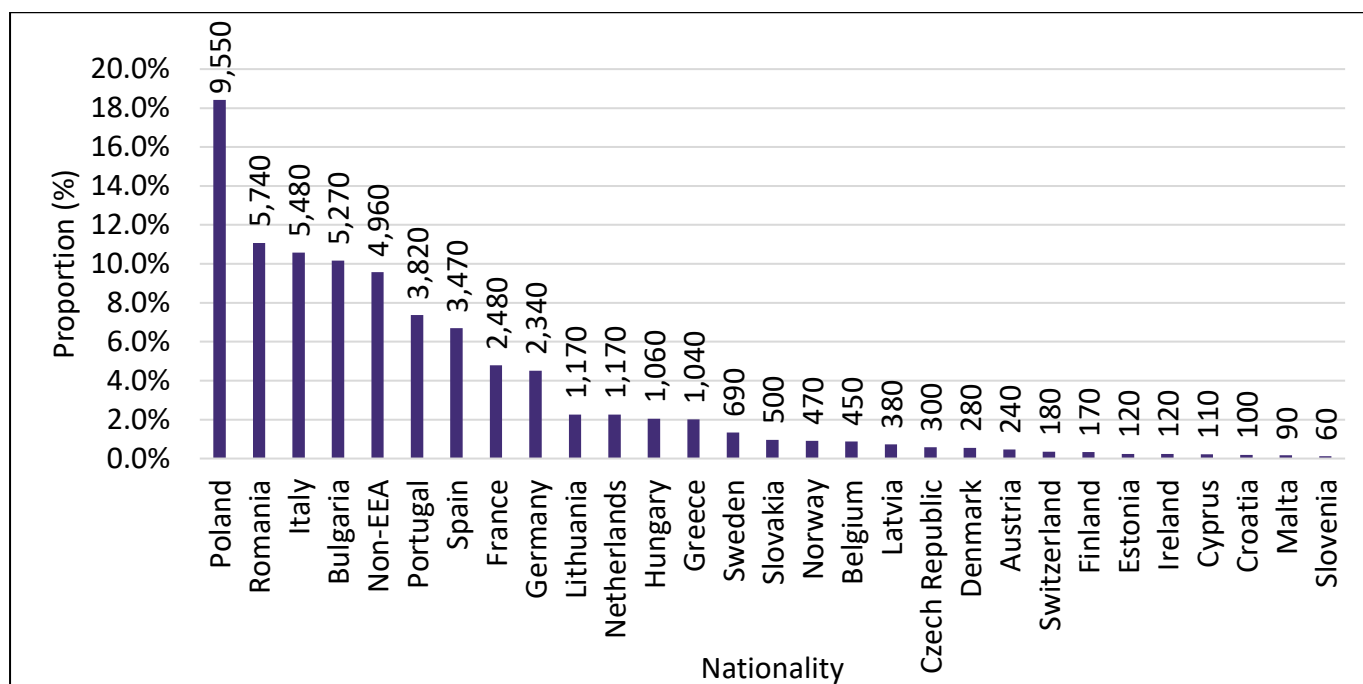
Merton has a lower proportion of UK/British nationals (73.3%) compared to London (78.5%) and a higher proportion of European (14.3%), Asian (5.2%) and American nationals

compared to London (Table 3. A lower proportion of people in Merton are born in the UK (59.5%) compared to London (63.1%)⁹.

Table 3: Nationality and place of birth of Merton residents by continent, 2020-21⁹.

Merton	Area	UK/British	Europe	Asia	Africa	Americas	Oceania
Nationality	Merton	154,000 (73.3%)	30,000 (14.3%)	11,000 (5.2%)	4,000 (1.9%)	11,000 (5.2%)	N/A (<1%)
	London	7,128,000 (78.5%)	1,131,000 (12.5%)	407,000 (4.5%)	159,000 (1.8%)	199,000 (2.2%)	48,000 (0.5%)
Place of birth	Merton	125,000 (59.5%)	31,000 (14.8%)	24,000 (11.4%)	11,000 (5.2%)	16,000 (7.6%)	3,000 (1.4%)
	London	5,724,000 (63.1%)	1,150,000 (12.7%)	1,103,000 (12.2%)	604,000 (6.7%)	400,000 (4.4%)	90,000 (1.0%)

Figure 6: Proportion and numbers of EU settlement scheme applications by nationality in Merton, 28th August 2018 to 31st March 2022¹⁰.



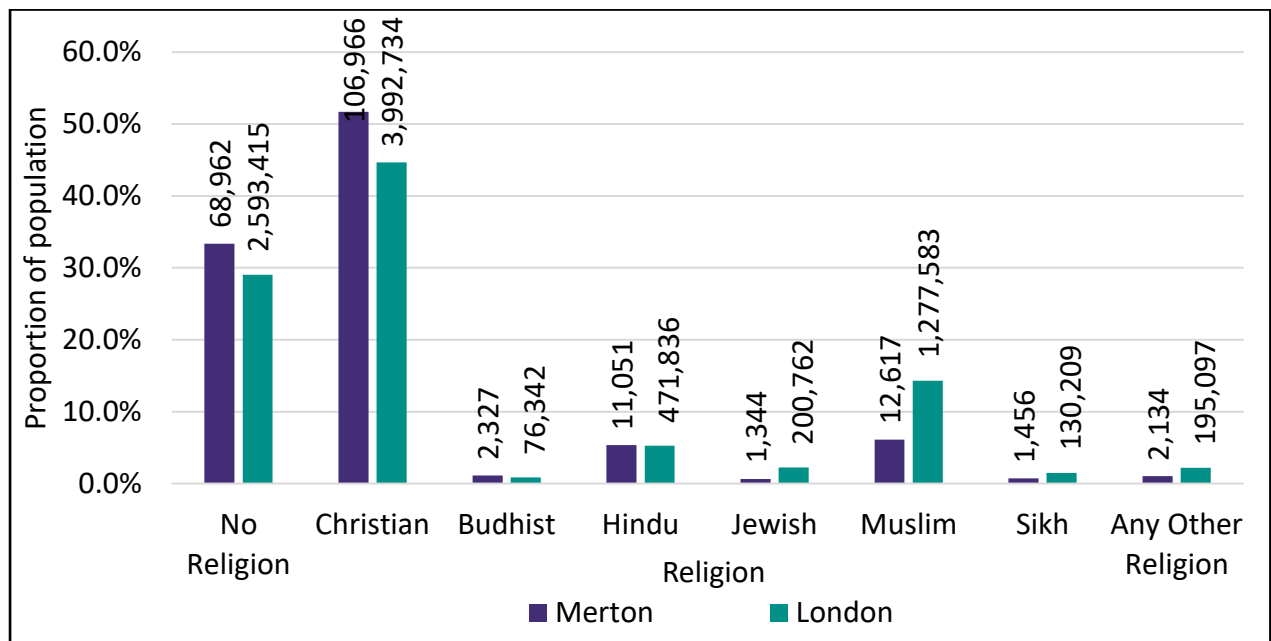
The numbers and proportions of EU settlement scheme applications to Merton by nationality approximately over the last three and a half years can be seen in figure 6 with over 9,500 (18.4%) applications made by Polish nationals, followed by over 5,000 each from

Romanian, Italian and Bulgarian nationals. People described as non-EEA nationals are defined as those outside the European Union and the European economic area¹⁰.

Religions in Merton

Over half of Merton’s population is Christian (51.7%) which is higher than London (44.7%) and a third of the population in Merton have no religion (see Figure 7)¹¹.

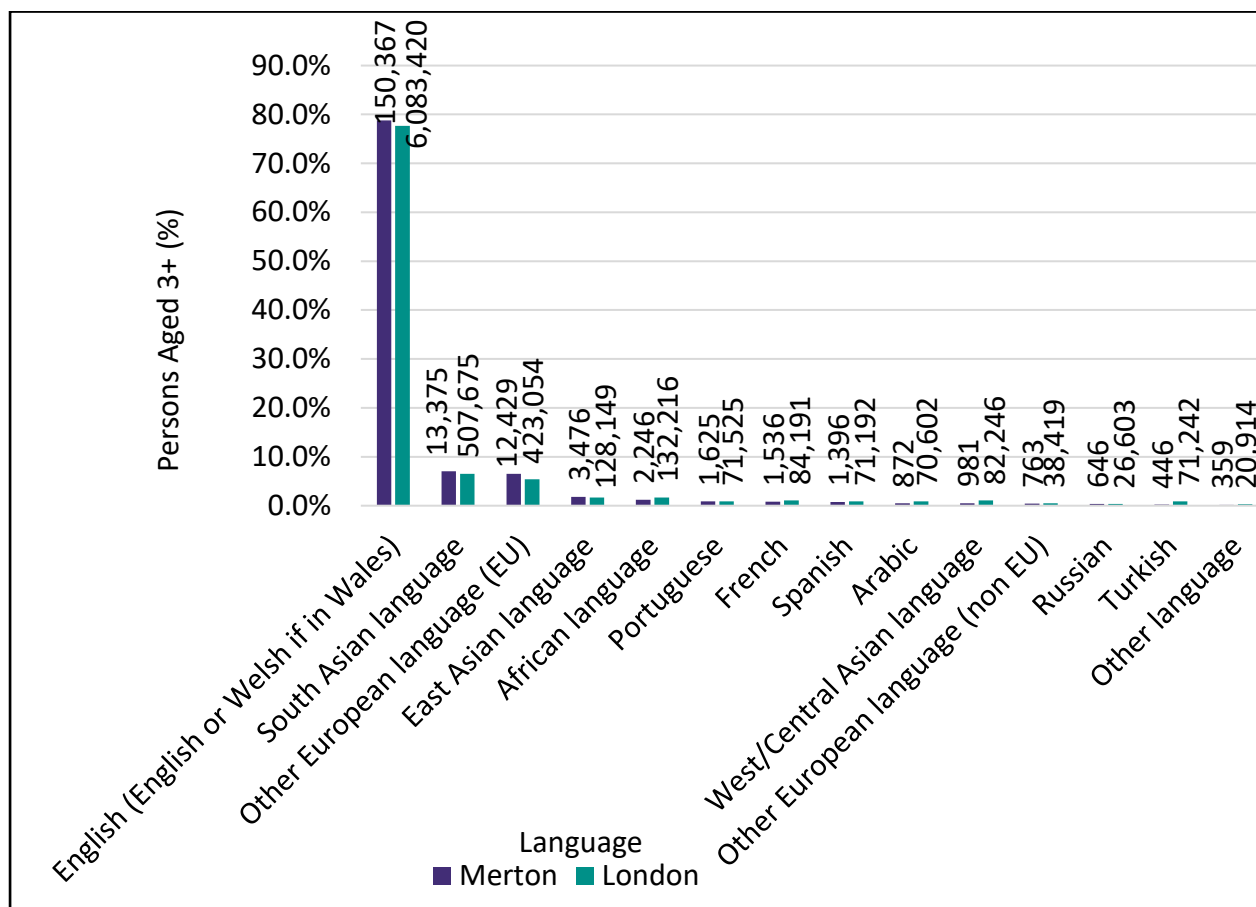
Figure 7: Proportion & numbers of Merton’s population by religion including London, ONS, 2018¹¹.



Languages Spoken in Merton

According to the 2011 Census almost 80% of people in Merton speak English which is similar to London (see Figure 8)¹².

Figure 8: Common languages spoken among Merton residents, including London, 2011¹².



LGBTQ+ Population

In 2013-15, 92.0% (150,000) of people in Merton identified themselves as heterosexual or straight which is similar to London (90.2%) and England (93.6%) and approximately 3,000 (1.8%) individuals in Merton identified as gay or lesbian, 1,000 identified as bisexual (0.6%), 1,000 (0.6%) identified as 'other', and 8,000 (4.9%) as 'don't know or refuse'. Therefore, from known sexual identities in Merton (2013 – 2015), 3.1% of the Merton population identify themselves as LGBTQ+¹³.

Population Changes in Merton

Population change is driven by births, deaths and migration that occur in an area. Migration is the movement of people from one permanent area of residence to another area, about immigration (moving into a new place) and emigration (leaving one place to move into another). Types of migration are internal, international, and cross border migration. Information around migration has a wide range of uses by central government, local government and the health sector for planning, resource allocation and managing the economy¹⁴.

Predicted population growth is not the same in all age groups as mentioned in the Merton Story 2021. The proportion of older people is projected to increase as Merton’s population is ageing while the proportion of younger people is projected to fall. In 2021 the population growth rate was estimated to be more than 2% per year in the 65+ group and less than 1% in the 0–4 age group (see predicted population changes section in Merton Story 2021)¹⁵.

The GLA projections for London in 2021 show a decrease in the population and then a year-on-year increase but at a smaller rate than the original predictions forecasted¹⁶. Therefore, it is expected that the current Merton population projections may be a very slight over projection, however this does not change the fact that the Merton population is still increasing.

Migration & Population Growth

Table 4: Factors influencing population changes in Merton (including % proportion), ONS, 2022¹⁷.

Population Growth (% proportion contribution to growth)		Population Decline (% proportion contribution to decline)	
Births	2,791 (12.3%)	Deaths	1,287 (5.7%)
Internal Migration In	16,435 (72.3%)	Internal Migration Out	18,612 (82.5%)
International Migration In	3,177 (14.0%)	International Migration Out	2,302 (10.2%)
Cross-border In	335 (1.5%)	Cross-border Out	366 (1.6%)
Total Growth	22,738	Total Decline	22,567
Population Change Estimate: 171 persons increase			

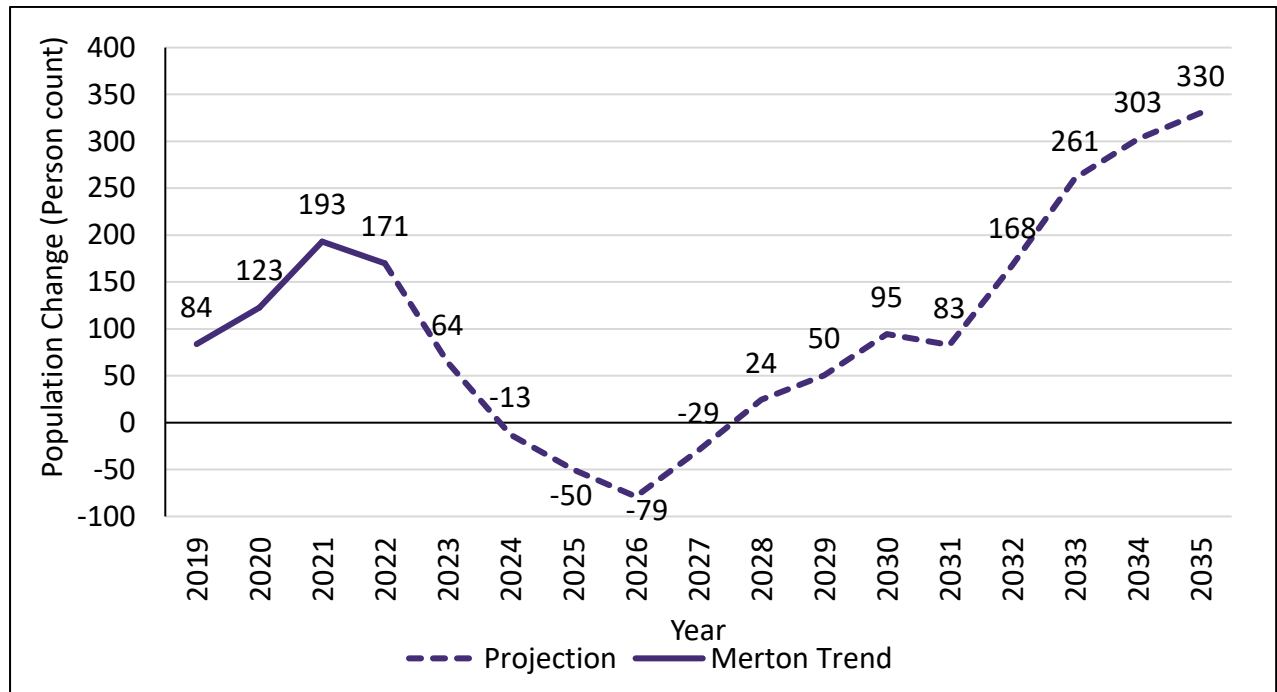
Definitions on population growth mentioned in Table 4 are:

- Internal migration: This is the movement of people within England.
- Cross border migration: This is the movement of people between England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
- International migration: This is the movement of people between England and countries outside of the UK (This includes migrants, visitors, and asylum seekers)¹⁴.

In 2022 Merton is estimated to have had a population increase of 171 people (Table 4 and Figure 9) and is predicted to have a smaller increase estimated of 64 people in 2023

followed by a slight decrease in population growth for 2024-2027. In 2035 the yearly predicted increase is an estimated 330 people (Figure 9) and the cumulative increase (from 2022) in the population by 2035 will be 1,378 additional people in Merton¹⁷.

Figure 9: Population change in Merton between 2019-2022, including projections to 2035, ONS¹⁷.



Population Turnover

Population turnover measures all demographic changes, by adding up 'gains' (births and immigration) and 'losses' (deaths and emigration) in a population and is different from the 'net population change', which means the simple difference between population sizes at two different points in time. Population turnover measures add value as population counts may appear relatively stable, yet its composition may change, and it captures the demographic dynamics to help us understand what is changing within a population's structure even though the total number of people remains roughly the same¹⁸.

In 2022, the Merton population turnover is high at 219 per 1,000 population and in comparison, to other SW London boroughs is lower than Wandsworth (270 per 1,000) but higher than Kingston (198 per 1,000), Richmond (184 per 1,000), Croydon (163 per 1,000), and Sutton (146 per 1,000)¹⁹.

Population Density

Population density is the number of people resident per square kilometre²⁰. According to the GLA housing led population projections Merton's population density is 57.6 per hectare which is lower compared to London (59.7 per hectare) with projections estimating this will increase to 62.9 per hectare but will still be lower than London (66.1 per hectare) by 2035²¹. The 2021 Census data shows the population density of Merton to be 57.2 usual residents per hectare which is higher than London (56.0 per hectare) but similar to the GLA housing led projection²².

Census 2021 socioeconomic status data will be included in the next Merton Story 2023-24. Information on ethnicity at ward level from the Census 2021 data will also be included, and information on languages spoken.

Further Information

- Please refer to the Inequalities Chapter.
- For more information on East/West population differences based on the old ward boundaries please refer to Merton Story 2021 and Merton Story 2019 here: <https://www.merton.gov.uk/healthy-living/publichealth/jsna/the-merton-story>
- For more information around socio-economic status refer to the Merton Story 2021 here: https://www.merton.gov.uk/system/files/The%20Merton%20Story%202021_final_15th%20June_2022%20%281%29.pdf

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