

Key messages

The Merton population

Headline

Overall Merton's population is aging with falling births and increasing older age groups, and is becoming more diverse. Population growth is slow but churn is high. Merton has significant persistent social and health inequalities between the East and West of the borough. The gap in life expectancy between the 10% most deprived and the 10% least deprived in Merton is 7.7 years for males and 5 years for females.

Key statistics

Population size and growth

- Merton has a resident population of 215,200 according to the 2021 Census and a registered population of 232,368 people as of 1st October 2022.
- By 2035, Merton's population will grow by over 9,000 people with an increase of over 16,000 people aged 18 years and over and a decline by almost 7,000 people under 18 years.
- Births have been declining in Merton since 2015, but 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 2019.
- East Merton has a larger population than West Merton and will gain 6,000 people compared to only 3,000 people in West Merton by 2035.
- More than half of Merton's population is of working age and is projected to increase by almost 3,000 people by 2035.
- Merton's population is growing older and by 2035 it is estimated to increase by over 10,000 people aged 65 years and over with more than half residing in East Merton.
- Overall 37% are from an ethnic minority group, increasing by 10,000 by 2035 and higher in East Merton (61.9%), and in young people in Merton (19.3%).
- For the year 2022, population turnover encompassing occurrences of births, deaths, and migration in Merton is high at 219 per 1,000 population.

Inequalities

- Deprivation in Merton is illustrated by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) pattern, of an East/West divide. These social inequalities are mirrored by inequalities in life expectancy, mortality and morbidity for main diseases.
- Overall life expectancy is 78.6 years in males and 83.5 years in females, and healthy life expectancy is 66.6 years in males and 67.1 years in females. The gap in life expectancy between the 10% most deprived and the 10% least deprived in Merton, is 7.7 years for males and 5 years for females and similar to London and lower than England for males and females. Since 2010-12 there is no clear trend in the gap between the 10% most and 10% least deprived communities in Merton for both males and females.
- Of the 340,000 Core20 population in South West London, 29,000 are located in East Merton with characteristics of ethnic diversity, significant school aged population, older working age population (44-64 years) and deprivation in housing.

Conclusions to inform priorities

- **Our people are our biggest asset.**
- **Using common projections for joint planning.**
- **Embedding health inequality reduction in all we do: health in all policies (HIAP) approach, considering equity alongside health and sustainability.**
- **Exploring further use of core20 approach with health partners to monitor inequalities, where core20 represents the most deprived 20% of the national population as identified by the national Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).**