

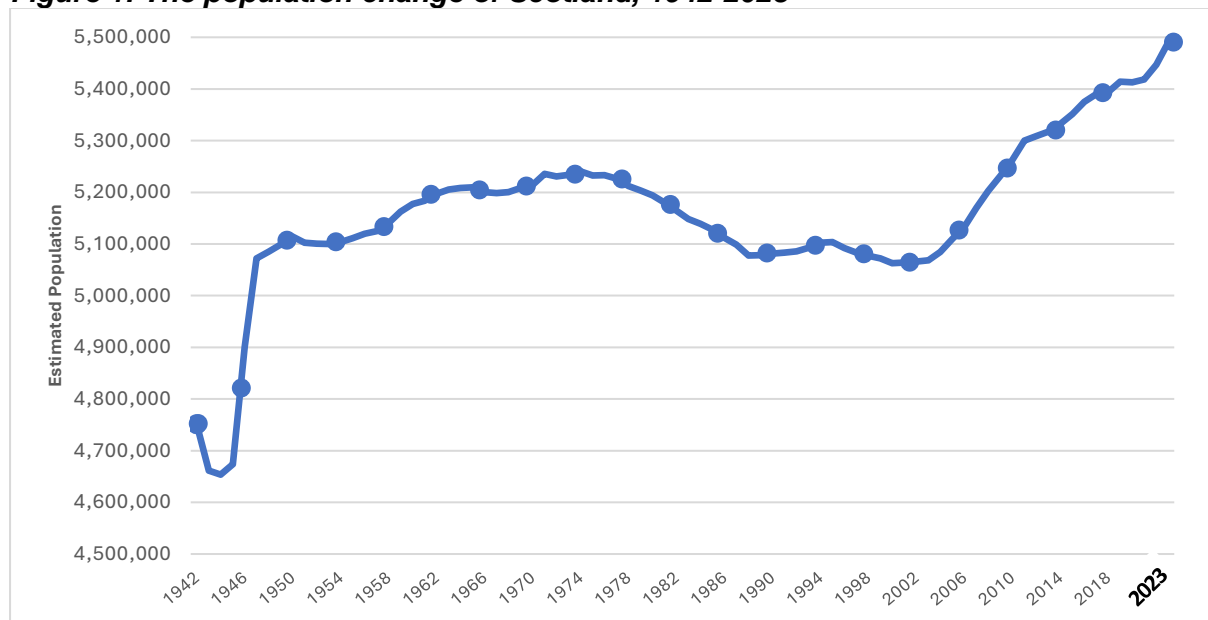
Briefing Note
Mid 2023 Population Estimates, Scotland

[National Records of Scotland](#) (NRS) published the [Mid 2023 Population Estimates](#) for Scotland and its administrative areas on 8 October 2024.

Scotland

As of June 2023, Scotland’s population was estimated at 5,490,100, marking an increase of 43,100 people (0.79%) since June 2022. As shown in Figure 1, this growth rate is the highest recorded since 1946 to 1947.

Figure 1: The population change of Scotland, 1942-2023



Scotland’s population growth is primarily fuelled by migration, with more people moving to Scotland than leaving. This trend has been consistent for the past two decades. The net increase in international immigrants was 47,700, while the net increase of people moving from other parts of the UK was 13,900.

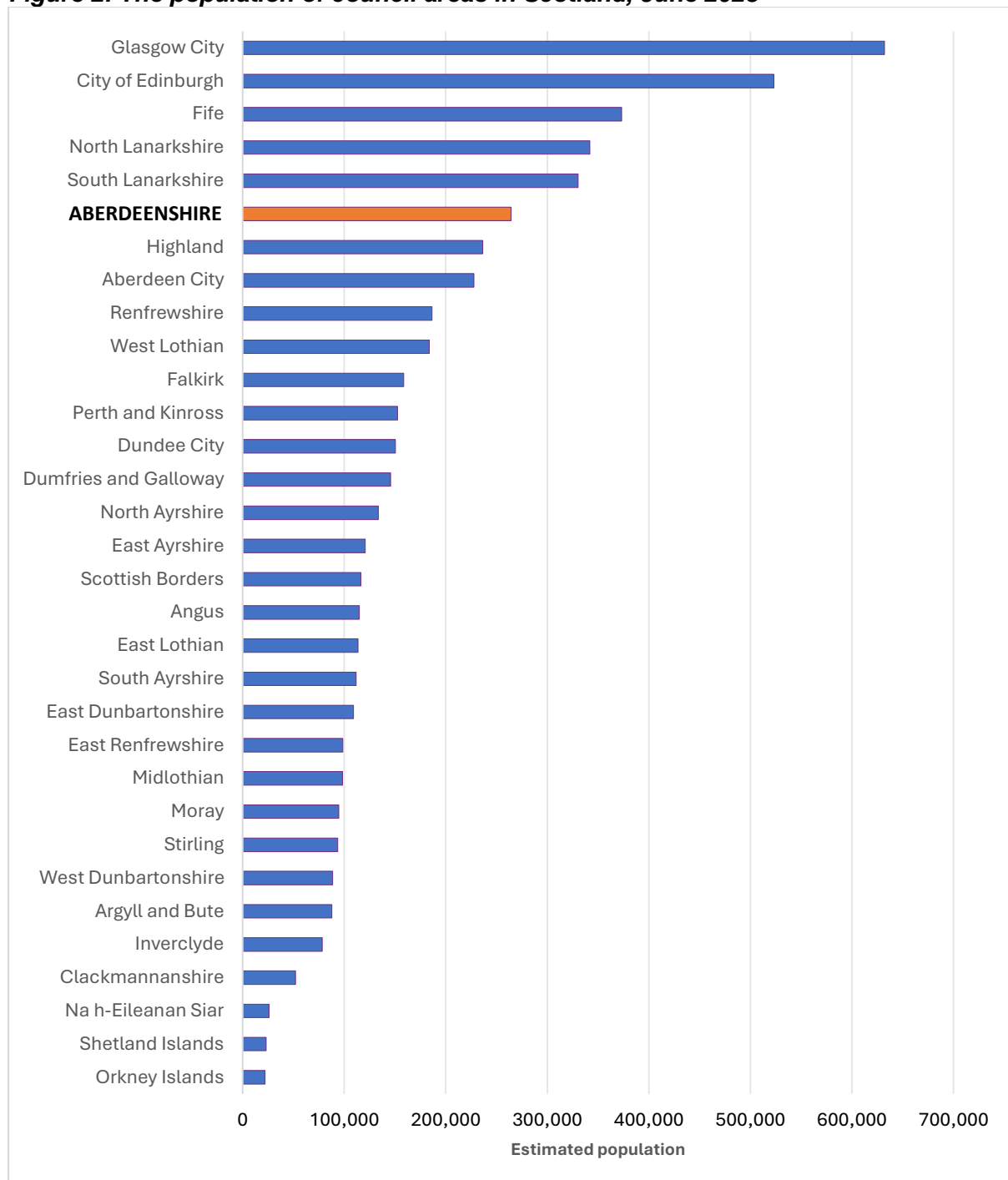
During this period, there were 19,100 more deaths than births, continuing the recent trend of deaths outnumbering births. This represents the largest natural decrease in Scotland’s population since 1960. Without positive net migration, Scotland’s population would be in decline.

Scotland’s population also continues to age, with 20.3% of the population aged 65 and over, an increase from 16.1% in 2003. The number of people aged 65+ surpasses those aged 0 to 15, who make up only 16.3% of the population, a decrease from 18.7% in 2003.

Local Authority Areas

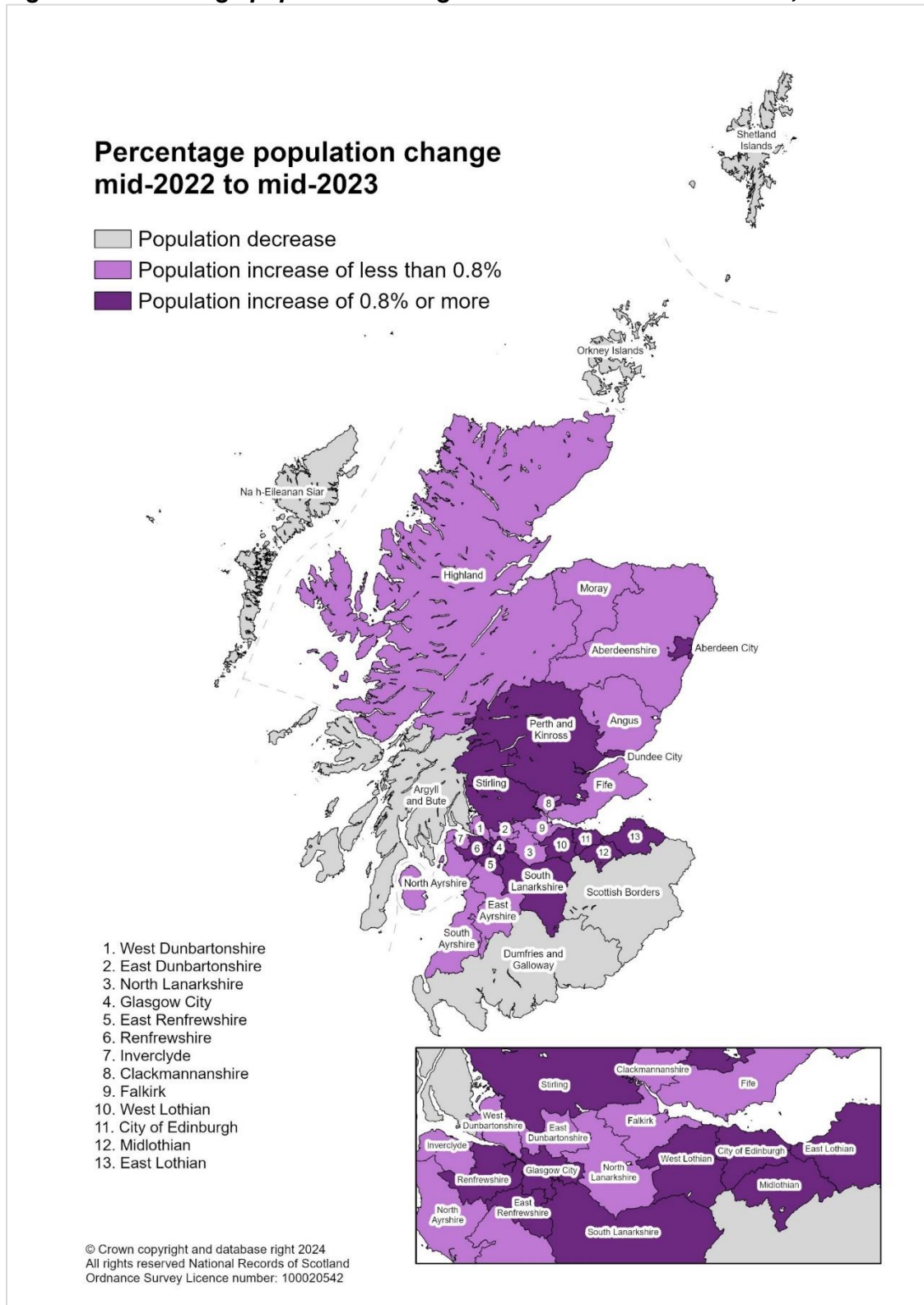
Figure 2 shows the population for all council areas in Scotland. Out of 32 local authority areas, Glasgow City had the largest population at 631,970 (up by 9,920 since June 2022), while Orkney Islands had the smallest at 22,000 (down by 30). Aberdeenshire ranked sixth with 264,320 (up by 570), and Aberdeen City was eighth with 227,750 (up by 3,500). In terms of ranking there was no change between 2022 and 2023.

Figure 2: The population of council areas in Scotland, June 2023



Population growth between 2022 and 2023 has been strongest in urban areas of Scotland, reversing trends resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Proportionally, the City of Edinburgh experienced the largest increase at 1.7% (+8,680 people), while Na h-Eileanan Siar had the greatest decrease at -0.3% (-90 people). Overall, seven areas saw slight population decreases, while the rest increased.

Figure 3: Percentage population change of council areas in Scotland, June 2023



Aberdeenshire

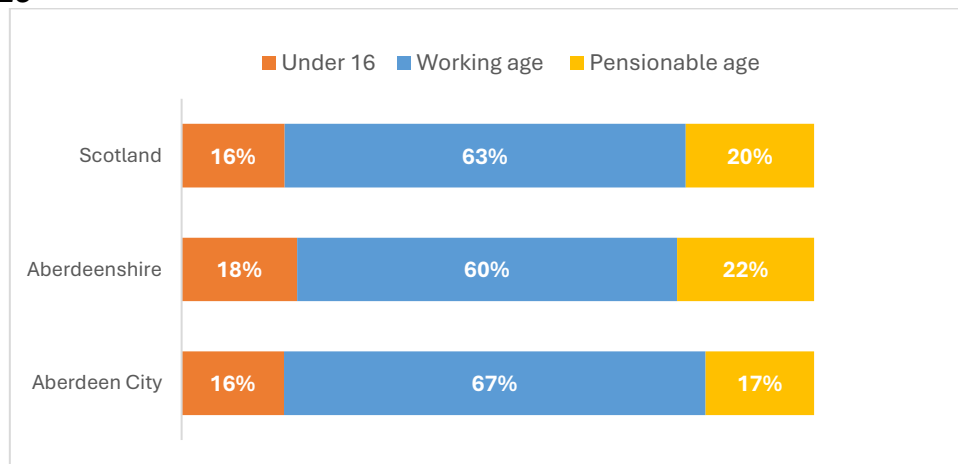
As of June 2023, Aberdeenshire's population was estimated at 264,320, a slight increase of 570 people (0.2%) from June 2022's estimate of 263,750, reversing the minor decline reported the previous year.

The increase in population was driven by migration. Aberdeenshire experienced positive net migration of +1,160 people. The largest proportion (470) of the increase was due to migration from elsewhere in the UK (excluding Scotland), continuing a trend from recent years. There were more deaths than births in Aberdeenshire, resulting in a natural decrease of -645 people for the year ending June 2023.

Aberdeenshire's population is ageing faster than Scotland's overall. In June 2023, 22% of Aberdeenshire's population was aged 65 and over, an increase of 2.3% from June 2022. For the decade between 2013 and 2023, Aberdeenshire saw a 28.6% increase in residents aged 65 and over, well above the national rate of 17.8%.

Between 2013 and 2023, Aberdeenshire's population aged 0-15 increased slightly by 0.8%, while the 16-64 age group decreased by 4.2%. Figure 4 shows, compared to Scotland and Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire has a higher proportion of children and older adults, and a smaller working-age population.

Figure 4: Age structure of Population in Scotland, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City, June 2023



Aberdeen City

In 2023, Aberdeen City's population is estimated to have been 227,750. This is an increase of 3,500 people or 1.6% on the 2022 figure of 224,250.

Aberdeen's population is 67% working age, 16% aged 0-15, and 17% aged 65+. This age distribution, with a higher proportion of working-age individuals and fewer older people, is typical of Scottish cities.

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