SWANSEA: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Introduction

Situated in the middle of the South Wales coast, Swansea is the second largest city in Wales and the regional centre of South West Wales. Swansea’s two neighbouring local authorities are Carmarthenshire to the west and Neath Port Talbot to the east.

The City and County, which has a land area of around 380 square kilometres, can be broadly divided into four geographic areas: the open moorlands of the Lliw Uplands in the north; the rural Gower Peninsula in the west, containing the UK’s first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; the suburban area stretching from the edge of Swansea towards settlements in the west and around the M4 corridor; and the coastal strip around Swansea Bay, which includes the city centre and adjacent district centres such as Uplands, Sketty and Mumbles.

Swansea’s population

The latest official estimate of the City and County of Swansea’s population (as at June 2018) is 246,500. Swansea has the second largest local authority population in Wales and accounts for almost 8% of its total population (3,138,600).

The average population density of the county is 649 people per sq. km (2018 estimate), the fifth highest of the 22 local authorities in Wales (average: 151 people per sq. km). The population is not evenly distributed within Swansea, with most people living within the urban area and the surrounding settlements to the north, including Morriston, Clydach, Gorseinon and Pontarddulais.

Ward level estimates of population density (2017) reveal high concentrations of population in and immediately around the city centre (Castle Ward), the adjacent wards of Cwmbwrla and Uplands (7,100 people per sq. km, the highest population density in the county), and also in Townhill and Penderry.

Figure 1: Population density by Ward

These are in contrast to the sparsely populated rural areas of the Gower and northern Lliw area; both Mawr and Gower Wards have a population density (2017) of 32 people per sq. km, the lowest in the county.

The adjacent map (figure 1) illustrates the estimated population density of each Electoral Division or Ward in Swansea as at 2011.

Source: Population Estimates, Office for National Statistics (ONS), and land area (sq. km).
**Population structure**

The latest ONS summary estimates of Swansea’s population (as at June 2018) by sex and age are set out in Table 1 below, along with the equivalent percentage figures for Wales and the UK.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Swansea</th>
<th>Wales</th>
<th>UK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>6,100</td>
<td>12,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15</td>
<td>15,300</td>
<td>14,100</td>
<td>29,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-24</td>
<td>19,000</td>
<td>15,600</td>
<td>34,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44</td>
<td>31,500</td>
<td>29,700</td>
<td>61,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>29,400</td>
<td>31,200</td>
<td>60,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>12,100</td>
<td>13,600</td>
<td>25,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75+ years</td>
<td>9,200</td>
<td>13,100</td>
<td>22,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>123,100</td>
<td>123,400</td>
<td>246,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Mid-Year Population Estimates 2018, ONS.

The proportion of Swansea’s population of working age (i.e. all aged 16-64), at 63.5%, is higher than Wales (60.6%) and the UK (62.0%). However, Swansea has a lower proportion of children (aged 0-15), at 17.0%, than both Wales (17.9%) and the UK (19.0%).

The population pyramid opposite illustrates the latest estimates for Swansea by age and gender.

**Figure 2: Swansea's population, mid-2018**

The pyramid shows a large ‘spike’ in the 19-22 age groups, largely reflecting the presence of student residents at the local universities. Swansea’s population for ages 22 to 29 then declines each year, before returning to a generally more stable pattern through the rest of the working age years. In 2017-18, there were approximately 17,800 full-time Higher Education students at Swansea University and over 3,200 at the Swansea campus of University of Wales Trinity St. David; with a further 4,400 full-time students in Further Education at Gower College Swansea.

**Population change**

The long-term published mid-year population estimates (ONS) suggest that Swansea’s population has steadily grown between 2001 and 2018, reversing the recorded trend of the 1990s. Between 2008 and 2018, the average rate of population growth in Swansea was approximately +1,200 people (+0.5%) per year. The overall long-term trend in Swansea’s population estimates since 1991 is shown in Figure 3, and includes both the latest official estimates and those reported prior to the release of the 2011 Census results.
Published estimates of the key components of population change – namely births, deaths and migration – suggest that the main driver of population growth in Swansea over the period 2001-2018 has been migration. In the ten years from 2001, average annual net inflow from all migration was around 1,500. In the six subsequent years (2011-17) this figure averaged 1,100; although increases have been higher in the last three years (most notably in 2015-16, at +2,200). In some years (i.e. 2002-05 and 2009-10), the majority of this growth has come from internal (within UK) migration; but in the last eight years it has been via international migration. In terms of natural change, the recorded number of births and deaths in Swansea has remained relatively constant overall since 2001. From 2005, the number of births exceeded deaths and positively contributed to population growth, most significantly in the years 2007-08 and 2010-12. However, in the last four years deaths have exceeded births; marginally initially but by between 200 and 300 in 2016-17 and 2017-18.

**Change by age**

An overview of recent trends can be provided via analysis of the main changes in the age structure of Swansea’s population over the ten-year period 2008-2018.

In terms of the key ‘life stage’ groups, the broad trends are as follows:

- **All people**: an increase of 12,300 (+5.3%), from 234,100 (in 2008) to 246,500.
- **Children** (aged 0-15): a small net change (+800 / 1.9%) to 42,000 (in 2018).
- **Working age** (16-64): an increase of 5,100 (+3.3%) to 156,400, below the equivalent overall rate of population increase in Swansea.
- **Older people** (aged 65 and over): an increase of 6,500 (+15.5%) to 48,000; indicative of an ageing population, in line with wider trends.

For specific smaller cohorts, the trends for Swansea over this ten-year period are:

- Aged 0-4: a small overall decline of 200 (-1.4%).
- 5-14: a net increase of 1,000 (+3.4%).
- 15-24: a significant growth of 2,800 (+14.0%), partly linked to levels of student immigration from elsewhere in the UK and overseas.
- 25-29: an even more significant increase in this cohort by 2,700 (+17.9%), due to both in-migration and population growth in the previous generation (aged 50-54).
- 35-44: an overall loss of 3,300 (-10.6%) in this ten-year cohort.
- 50-54: increase of 1,500 (+10.4%), in part due to the 1960s baby-boom.
- 65-74: increase of 4,300 (+20.3%), reflecting the post-war baby-boom.
- Aged 85+: a significant percentage growth, increasing by 16.2% (+900) over the ten years to 2018, to around 6,500 people.

Projected population change

The Welsh Government’s latest trend-based population projections suggest that Swansea’s population will grow by 9.0% (21,600 people) between 2014 and 2039. In these projections, Swansea has the third highest projected growth rate (%) of the 22 Welsh local authorities, behind only Cardiff and Wrexham. In comparison, the projections suggest a population increase of 5.4% across Wales over the period.

In reality these projections can only provide an indication of future population should recent demographic trends continue, and only provide one scenario based on a particular set of assumptions. The 2014-based projections are based on past trends, essentially using five years of fertility, mortality and migration data (to mid-2014).

The projections suggest that the number of people of pension age (65 and over) will increase by 18,400 (+39.8%) to 64,700 over the 2014-2039 period – an average annual increase of 740 (+1.6%). The main reason for this is long-term improvements in mortality rates (reflected in people living longer) and the ageing on of some population cohorts. However, the projections suggest smaller rates of growth in the working age (16-64) population over the 25-year period, by 3,400 (+2.2%) overall, an average of 140 people or 0.1% per year. Projected change in the 0-15 age group, suggests a very small decrease of 100 (0.3%) over the full 25 years. Figure 4 shows the broad future trend in Swansea’s population indicated by these projections.

Household composition

The total number of households (with residents) in Swansea in mid-2017 is estimated at 108,200 (rounded), an increase of approximately 700 (or 0.7%) on the 2016 figure. Since 2007, the number of households in Swansea has increased by 8,500 (+8.5%), with average household size falling from 2.29 people (2007) to 2.23 people (2017).

In 2017, single-adult households (37,500 / 34.7% of the total) and 2-person 0-children households (31,800 / 29.4%) were the most common household types in Swansea. Between 2007 and 2017, the number of single-person households increased by around 5,400 (+16.8%), with other significant change occurring in 2-adult 0-child households (an increase of 2,100 or 7.2%) and 4-adult 0-children households (an increase of 700 or 18.6%); partly reflecting an increase in student households. By contrast, the number of 2-adult, 1 (or more) child households in Swansea has fallen by 400 (-1.8%) over the ten-year period.

Population Characteristics:

- by Ethnic Group

The 2011 Census reports that 14,326 people in Swansea were from a non-white ethnic group, 6.0% of the total population; higher than the equivalent figure for Wales (4.4%) and the third highest percentage of the 22 local authorities in Wales, although lower than the equivalent UK figure (12.9%).

20,368 (8.5%) of Swansea’s population were non-’White British’ in 2011 (i.e. also including other white ethnic groups); above the Wales average (6.8%) and again third highest of the Welsh local authority areas, but below the UK.
Over the period 2001 to 2011, the proportion of people in Swansea from a non-White ethnic group increased from around 2% of the population to 6%, an increase of 9,500 (+198%). The number of non-‘White British’ people increased by 10,800 (+113%). These are above equivalent increases for Wales (+118% and +78% respectively).

2011 Census data suggests that the largest non-white ethnic groups in Swansea are:
- Chinese – 2,052 people (0.9% of Swansea’s population)
- Bangladeshi – 1,944 (0.8%)
- Other Asian – 1,739 (0.7%)
- Black African – 1,707 (0.7%)
- Arab – 1,694 (0.7%).

Amongst the non-white ethnic groups, the largest estimated increases in population between 2001 and 2011 were in the Black African (+1,500 approx.), Bangladeshi and Indian groups (both +900). The ‘Other-White’ population increased by 1,400, partly reflecting economic in-migration from Eastern European countries since 2003.

Amongst children, Census estimates of the numbers aged 5-15 from non-white ethnic groups show an increase from around 1,000 in 2001 to 4,500 in 2011. More recently, Annual Schools Census data reports that the proportion of the school population who are not ‘White-British’ increased from 9.9% in 2011 to 14.6% in 2017.

More recent research estimates from ONS suggest that in 2016 around 19,000 people in Swansea (8% of the total population) were from a non-white ethnic group; with 26,000 (11%) of Swansea’s population non-‘White British’.

Ward level breakdowns of Swansea’s population by ethnic group are also available from the 2011 Census. The largest ethnic minority populations were recorded in the urban wards of Uplands (2,091), Castle (3,202) and Sketty (1,323). In proportionate terms, Castle and Uplands wards both have ethnic minority populations of above 10%.

- by Religion

The 2011 Census is also the main national source of statistics on religion. Christianity remains the predominant religion in Swansea (55%); although 34% held no religious beliefs and 7% did not answer (the Census question on religious affiliation is voluntary). Of the groups listed, 5,415 people (2%) stated their religion as Muslim, making this the largest religion in Swansea after Christianity.

Census data on the distribution of non-Christian religion by Ward again sees the greatest numbers in Castle (2,049), Uplands (1,208) and Sketty (886). As a percentage, the wards of Castle (13%), Uplands and Landore (both 8%) have the highest rates of population with a non-Christian religion.

- Welsh language

The proportion of people aged 3 and over able to speak Welsh in Swansea decreased from 13.4% (28,938) in 2001 to 11.4% in 2011 (26,332 people); a fall of around 2,600 Welsh speakers (-9.0%) despite an overall increase in the population.

However, changes between Censuses in the Welsh language skills of the population vary by age. In Swansea, the proportion of children aged 3-4 who can speak Welsh increased from 10.5% in 2001 to 14.6% in 2011, with a slight increase also in the 5-15 age group, rising from 25.2% in 2001 to 26.0% in 2011.

Within Swansea (2011), Mawr ward has the highest percentage of its population (aged 3+) able to speak read and write Welsh, at 29.3% (35.8% in 2001), with the Townhill ward having
the lowest (3.7%). Llansamlet had the highest number of residents who could speak read and write Welsh (1,367). In 2011, Mawr also had the lowest percentage of residents with no skills in Welsh (47.9%) while Townhill had the highest (89.5%).

- **Economic activity**

Recent data on the structure of Swansea’s workforce suggests that economic activity and employment rates in Swansea are currently below both the Wales and UK average rates. However, the large number of students resident in Swansea has some effect on these figures.

Table 2: Swansea’s workforce structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Economically Active (aged 16 &amp; over)</th>
<th>Economic Activity Rate (working age)</th>
<th>Employment (aged 16 &amp; over)</th>
<th>Employment Rate (working age)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swansea: Total</td>
<td>114,100</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
<td>107,100</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>63,400</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
<td>59,100</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>50,700</td>
<td>65.1%</td>
<td>47,900</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>1,526,900</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
<td>1,458,600</td>
<td>73.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>33,562,100</td>
<td>78.3%</td>
<td>32,168,600</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS) estimates, period ending December 2018, ONS.

Swansea’s status as a major regional administrative, commercial and leisure centre in South West Wales is reflected in the higher proportions of employment in the service sectors, and corresponding lower rates of manufacturing employment.

Swansea has a slightly greater proportion of working age residents with higher level qualifications than Wales, with 58.5% of Swansea’s residents (aged 16-64) qualified to NVQ level 3 (2+ A-levels or equivalent) or level 4 (degree level), above the Wales figure (55.1%) with UK at 57.6%. However, 9.4% of Swansea’s working age population have no qualifications (Wales 8.6%; UK 8.0%) (Source: APS data 2018, ONS).

Labour market statistics also demonstrate Swansea’s position as a sub-regional hub with strong integration between Swansea and its two neighbouring authorities. The latest data on commuting patterns points to significant estimated daily inflows to Swansea of 32,600 (net inflow +12,800). The majority of in-commuters come from Neath Port Talbot (15,100) and Carmarthenshire (10,700) (Source: Welsh Government and APS data, 2018).

- **Health**

A number of 2011 Census indicators can provide a very broad assessment of the health of Swansea residents, with questions based on self-assessment. In 2011, 77.9% of Swansea residents assessed their general health as ‘good’ or ‘very good’, close to the Wales average (77.8%). However, 23.3% of Swansea residents had their day-to-day activities limited a lot or a little by a long-term health problem or disability, slightly higher than the Wales average (22.7%). The Census data also reveals considerable variations in this for wards within Swansea, ranging from 12.5% in Killay North to 28.9% in Bonymaen.

**Life expectancy**

Life expectancy in Swansea, as elsewhere in the UK, is increasing. The long-term general trend of an ageing population is confirmed by ONS figures on average life expectancy at birth (for 2015-17), which now stands at 77.3 years for males in Swansea (Wales 78.3) and 82.1 for females (Wales 82.2). Ten years previously, i.e. 2005-2007, life expectancy in Swansea was 76.3 years for males and 80.9 years for females. The latest figures (again
for 2015-17) for average healthy life expectancy in Swansea (the number of years lived in ‘good’ health) stand at 60.4 years for males and 63.1 years for females.

Deprivation

Statistical information on relative deprivation for local areas in Swansea is available from the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2014. The Index brings together data for the 1,909 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Wales on:

- Income
- Employment
- Health
- Education
- Housing
- Physical environment
- Access to services
- Community safety.

The WIMD data generates individual LSOA scores and rankings for each of these eight domains and an overall index of ‘multiple deprivation’. Levels of deprivation in Swansea are most significant in respect of the Income, Health and Education domains, with lower than average levels of deprivation in the Access to services, Housing and Physical environment domains.

Swansea has an above average share of its LSOAs (18 out of 148, or 12%) featuring in the most deprived 10 per cent in Wales. Eight of Wales’ 22 local authorities have a higher proportion of deprived LSOAs.

In terms of the overall index the most deprived LSOAs in Swansea (i.e. those featuring in the most deprived 10% in Wales) are found in the following wards:

- Penderry (5 of the 7 LSOAs in the ward - ‘Penderry 1’ is ranked 21 of 1909 in Wales)
- Townhill (5 of 6 LSOAs)
- Morriston (3 of 11 LSOAs)
- Castle (2 of 10 LSOAs)
- Mynyddbach (1 of 6 LSOAs - Clase area)
- St. Thomas (1 of 4 LSOAs - east of ward)
- Bonymaen (1 of 4 LSOAs - east of ward).

In contrast, 25 (17%) of Swansea’s LSOAs fall within the 10% least deprived.


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For further statistical information about Swansea, please visit our web pages:

www.swansea.gov.uk/statistics

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