

## Comparison of births and mid-year estimates of children under one year of age

### Key points

- The note outlines work done to compare births and children under 1 following an observation of 'losses' of births.
- This note, along with the background data, has been sent to ONS, Population Estimates Unit, for comment.

In November 2003 the London Borough of Newham contacted ONS Population Estimates Unit to alert the Unit to a potential anomaly in the sequential comparisons of births in the year to mid-year and the mid-year estimate of under-1s. In Newham it appeared that the 'loss' of births had been exaggerated in the 2001 estimates, but that the 2002 estimates had returned more-or-less to values expected from the years up to 2000. Newham was not completely satisfied with the technical response from PEU and asked the GLA Demography Team to make additional investigations. This note, together with the accompanying spreadsheets and charts, shows comparisons of the mid-year to mid-year births with the number of children under one from the current set of mid-year estimates based upon the 2001 Census.

GLA calculated ratios of under ones to the births in the previous 12 months, one year olds to the births of 1-2 years earlier and so on, for all London boroughs.

The ratios of under-1s to births for the period 1991 to 2002 for all boroughs were plotted and it is noticeable that in most boroughs there is a real discontinuity for the 2001 comparison. In a few boroughs this is due to a higher MYE than births, but in about half the boroughs it is due to lower mid-year estimates than the births would suggest.

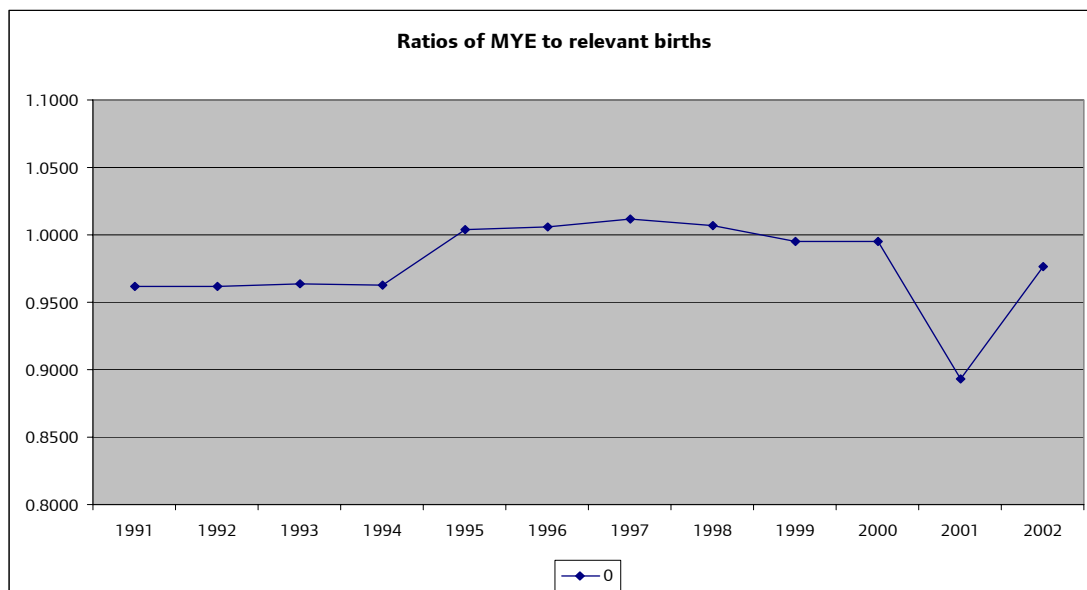
In some boroughs 'blips' occur in other years and in others there is no real pattern or no apparent anomaly. The accompanying chart for Redbridge clearly shows the problem experienced in most boroughs: an unexpectedly low ratio in 2001 followed by a return to previous values in 2002.

Ratios relevant to higher ages have not been plotted, but in many boroughs it is clear that the numbers of young children in the 2001 mid-year estimates may be too low.

This situation is a problem for Boroughs in planning their Education Services. The ONS mid-year estimates are a key source of anticipating the numbers of 4-year old reception places. 0-year olds in mid-2001 become 4-year olds in mid 2005 and many boroughs would expect from the MYE data to anticipate a falling intake in Autumn 2004 through to Spring 2005, only to be followed by a significant rise in 2005-06.

It is known that the 2001, 2002 and earlier estimates, will be revised and published in September and October 2004. This note has been sent to ONS in the hope that it may assist in some fine-tuning of the age structure of young children in a number of London boroughs.

**Chart: Ratio of estimate of population aged 0 to births in previous year: LB Redbridge: 1991-2002**



**Comments or further information:**

If you have comments or would like further information, please contact Georgia Hay (020 7983 4347) or John Hollis (020 7983 4604) in the GLA's Data Management and Analysis Group.  
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