

Comparison of Births and ONS Mid-year Estimates of Children Under One Year of Age in London Boroughs

Key points

- The note outlines work done to compare births and children under-1 following the observation of an inconsistent pattern of 'losses' of births.
- This is a revised version of *Demography Update 2004/02*, using the revised mid-year estimates for 1992 to 2002 and the new estimates for 2003.
- The previous version of this note, along with the background data, was sent to ONS, Population Estimates Unit. ONS Comments are included.

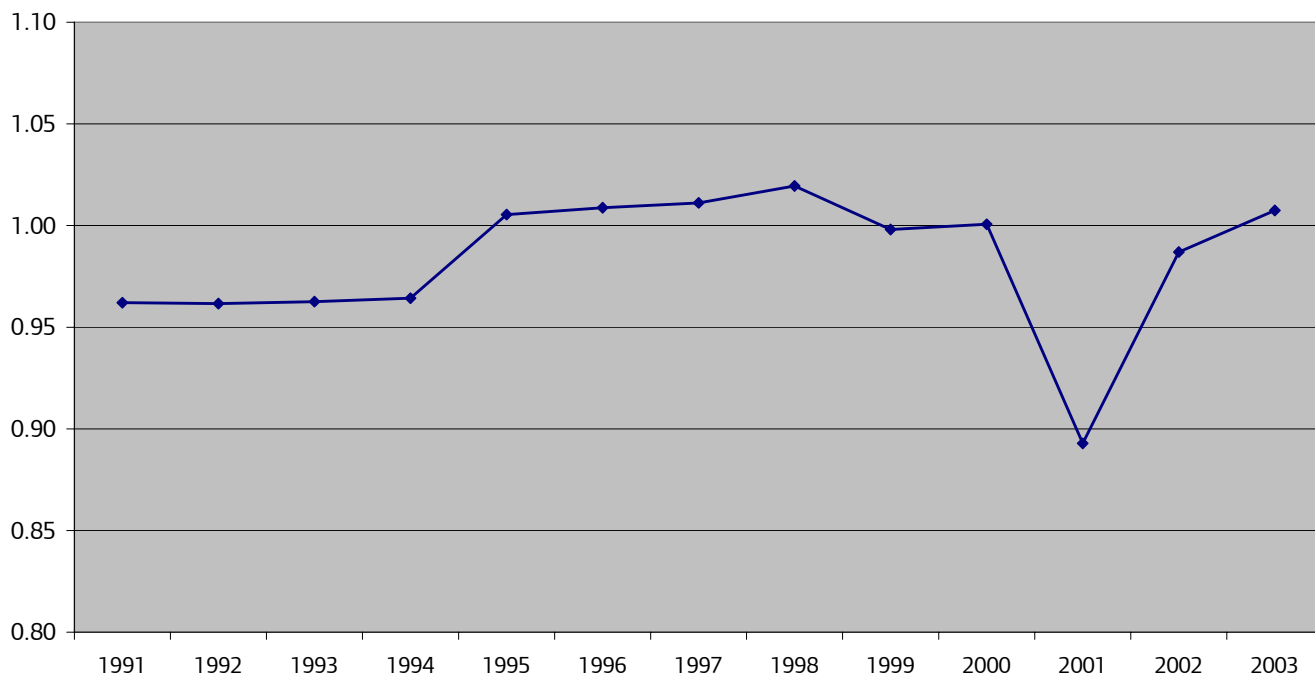
In November 2003 the London Borough of Newham contacted ONS Population Estimates Unit to alert the Unit to a potential anomaly in the sequential comparisons of births in the year to mid-year and the mid-year estimate of under-1s. In Newham it appeared that the 'loss' of births had been exaggerated in the 2001 estimates, but that the 2002 estimates had returned more-or-less to values expected from the years up to 2000. Following ONS' technical response Newham asked the GLA Demography Team to make additional investigations. This note, together with the accompanying charts, shows comparisons of the mid-year to mid-year births with the number of children under-1 from the current set of mid-year estimates based upon the 2001 Census. This note is an update of the original note produced in July 2004. The data used to produce the charts now includes an additional year of births (2002-03) and revisions to 1992 to 2002 mid-year estimates as well as the new 2003 estimates. The incorporation of the revised estimates has made little difference to the overall picture.

GLA calculated ratios of under-1s to the births in the previous 12 months for all London boroughs. The ratios for the period 1991 to 2003 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 and 2003. 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.

ONS consider that this problem is related to births to non-UK resident mothers and ONS plan to investigate this in the coming months. A further possibility is the mis-allocation of the migration of infants between local authorities within former health authority areas. The NHSCR provides estimates of internal migration of under-1s between former health authorities but the patient register migration methodology does not pick up moves of under-1s. Moves of 1-year olds between local authorities are used as a surrogate. The 2001 estimates are based upon the Census and therefore do not depend upon migration estimation methodology.

Chart: Ratio of estimate of population aged 0 to births in previous year: LB Redbridge: 1991-2003



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) of the GLA Data Management and Analysis Group.
georgia.hay@london.gov.uk, john.hollis@london.gov.uk