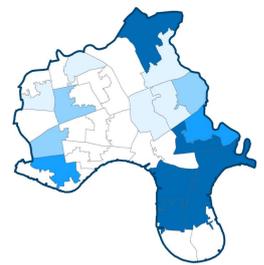


Population Projections for Tower Hamlets



The borough's population is projected to increase from 317,200 in 2018 to 370,700 in 2028. This is equivalent to **15 additional residents every day for the next ten years.**

Population growth is expected to be concentrated in the east of the borough, where there is large scale housing development. Areas in the Isle of Dogs are expected to see their populations **nearly double** in the next decade.



Our population is projected to age slightly over the next decade. The number of residents aged 65+ is projected to grow by **39%**, compared with a **17%** increase in working age residents and a **7%** increase in school age children.

The number of households in the borough is projected to increase from **132,100 in 2018 to 160,100 in 2028.** Households with multiple children and no adults (for example, flatshares and adult children living at home) are projected to see the biggest increase.



Projections should be treated with caution, as it is a particularly uncertain time. Brexit will likely have an impact on the economy and migration patterns, which will in turn impact population growth in Tower Hamlets.

Introduction

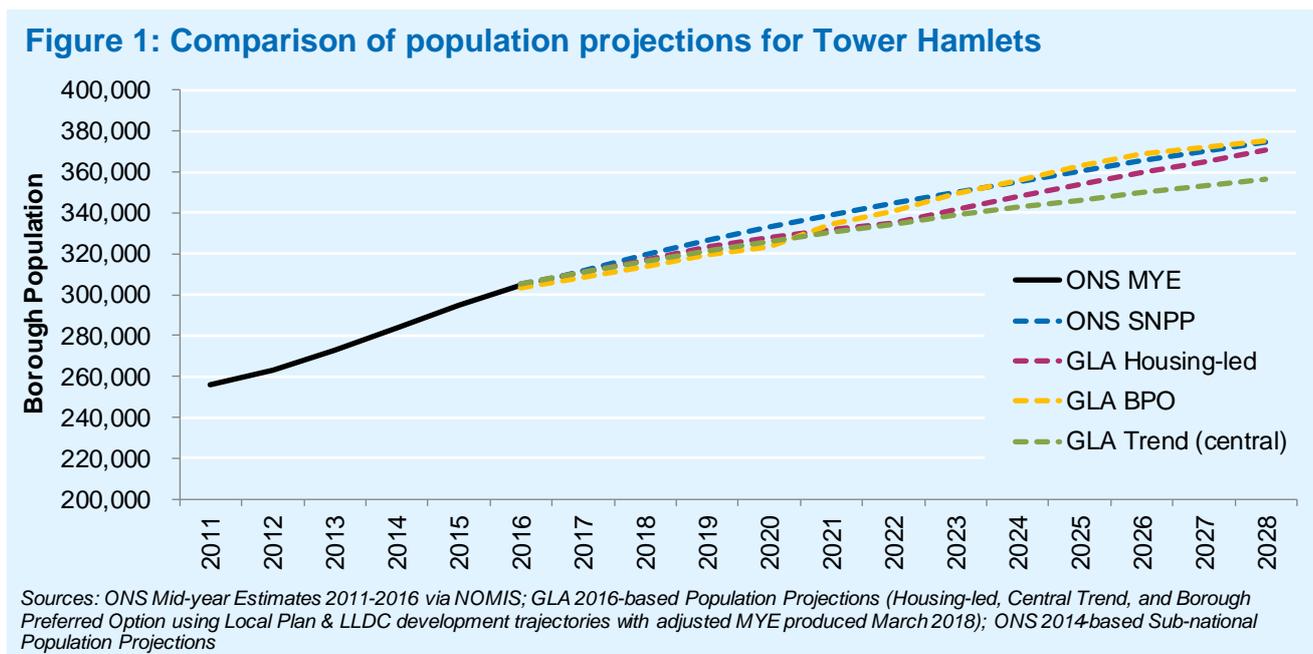
Tower Hamlets has seen drastic population change in recent decades, growing faster than any other local authority in the country. Over the last 30 years, the borough population more than doubled, rising from 150,200 in 1986 to 304,900 in 2016.¹ This briefing will examine how the population is expected to change over the next ten years using population projections, primarily those produced by the Greater London Authority (GLA).

Population projections attempt to understand the changing nature of the population by analysing historical trends and making assumptions about what will happen in the future. However, many social and economic factors influence population change, so it is important to keep in mind the imprecise nature of population projections when interpreting this briefing.

Most notably, these projections do not attempt to take into account the impact of the UK leaving the European Union (known as 'Brexit'), which will likely affect the economy and migration patterns, and consequently the population of Tower Hamlets.

Different population projections

There are a variety of population projections available for Tower Hamlets, each with a slightly different methodology which has its own strengths and weaknesses. [Figure 1](#) compares the four main population projections for the borough. It shows that all four sets of projections expect the borough's strong population growth to continue over the next decade, and that the projections are very similar up until around 2020 when they begin to diverge. By 2028, the difference between the highest and lowest projection is around 20,000 residents.

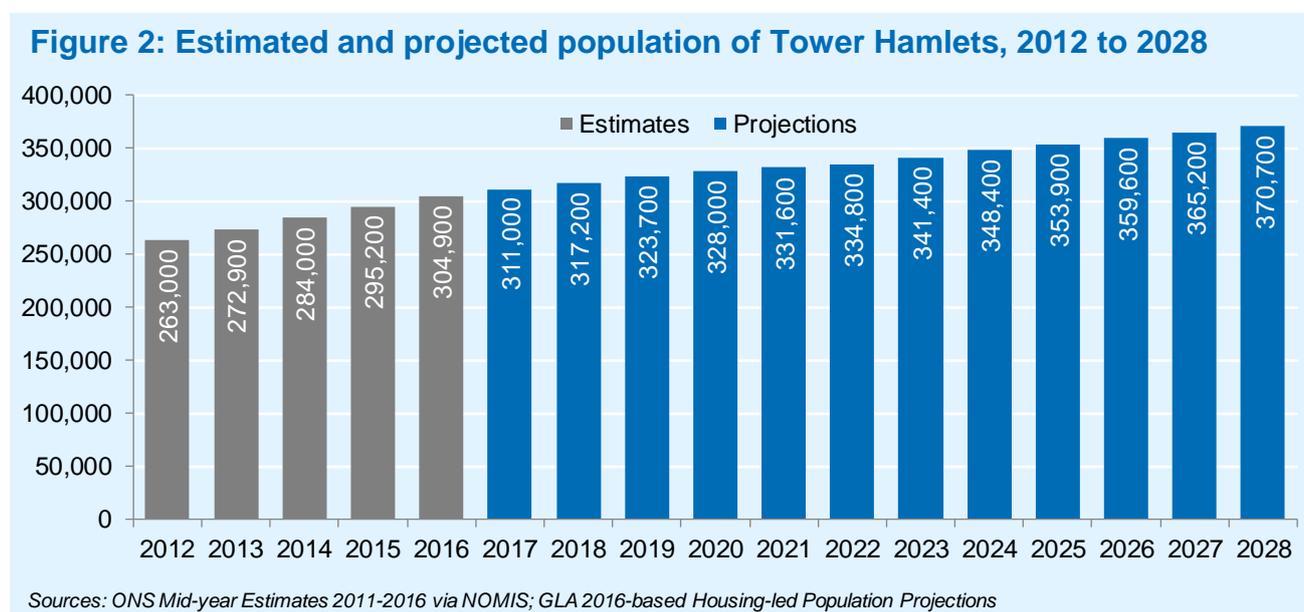


¹ ONS, *Mid-year population estimates 1986-2016*, accessed via [NOMIS](#).

While it is important to understand that there are different sources of projections, this briefing will use the GLA housing-led projections as its primary data source. This is because the GLA housing-led projections take into account the borough’s capacity to accommodate future growth, provide the greatest variety of outputs, and allow us to benchmark Tower Hamlets against other London boroughs. For more information about the other sources of population projections, see [Appendix 1](#).

Projected population growth in Tower Hamlets

Over the next ten years, the population of Tower Hamlets is projected to increase from about 317,200 residents in 2018 to 370,700 in 2028 (see [Figure 2](#)). This would be an increase of 53,200 additional residents – equivalent to around 15 additional residents per day for the next ten years. It would be a 17 per cent increase in the population compared with 10 per cent in London as a whole, making Tower Hamlets one of the fastest growing boroughs in the capital.

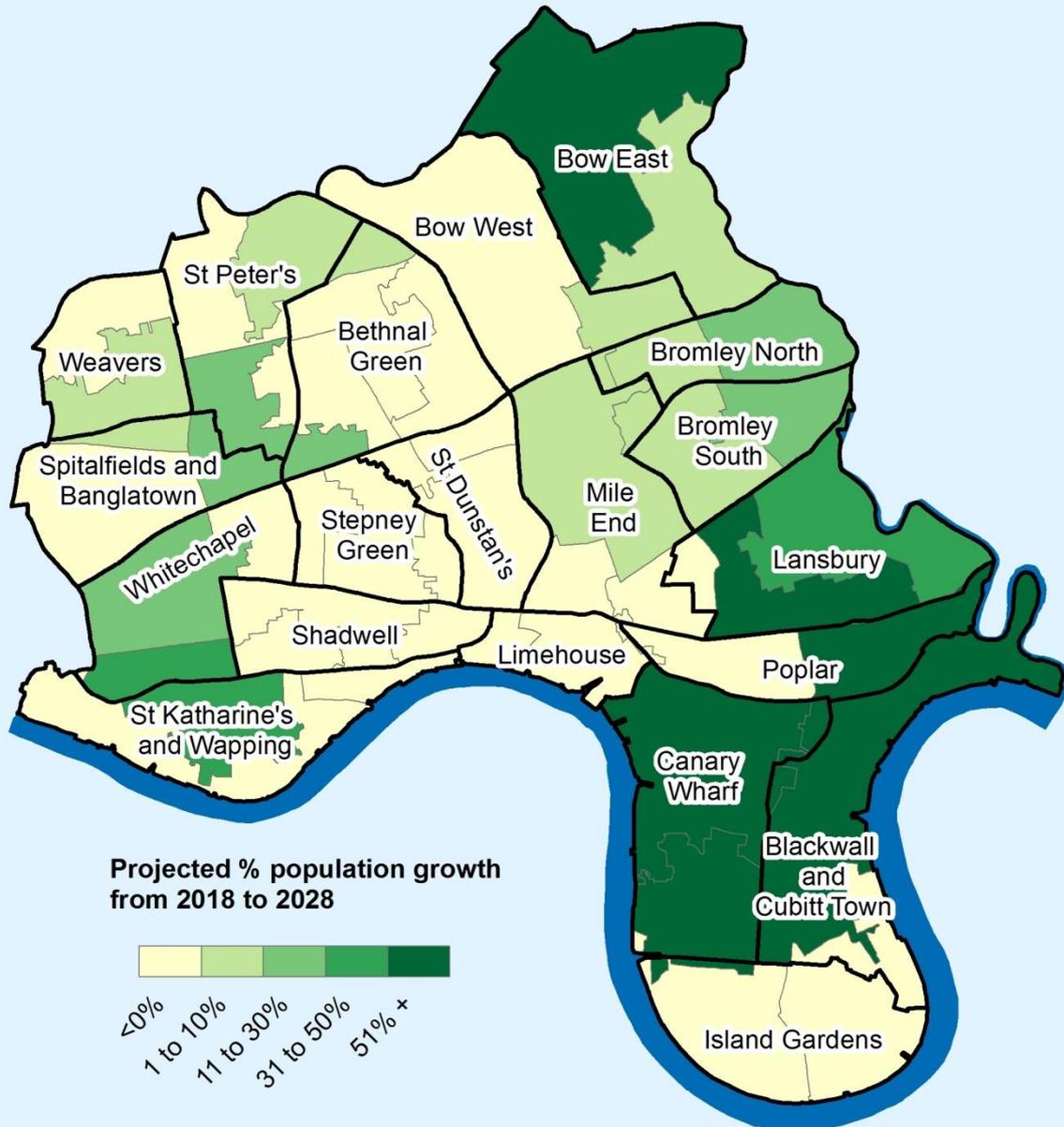


However, population growth is expected to vary greatly within the borough. [Figure 3](#) shows the projected percentage increase in the population by Middle Super Output Area (MSOA). It shows that a large number of areas, particularly in the centre of the borough, are expected to see their population slightly fall (less than 0 per cent growth). This is because there is little housing development planned in these areas, while at the same time the average household size of the existing population is expected to fall as the population ages. An area in Shadwell is projected to see the biggest decrease, with its population expected to fall by 9 per cent over the next ten years.

On the other hand, some areas in the borough are expected to see dramatic increases. Two areas in the Isle of Dogs (in Canary Wharf and Blackwall & Cubitt Town wards) are expected to see their populations nearly double over the next decade (+90 per cent). Population growth in these and other areas of the borough is driven primarily by large scale housing development.

A more comprehensive table of projections by MSOA can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

Figure 3: Projected percentage increase in population by MSOA, 2018 to 2028



Source: GLA 2016-based housing-led population projections by MSOA via London Datastore.
 © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey, London Borough of Tower Hamlets 100019288.

Population projections by age

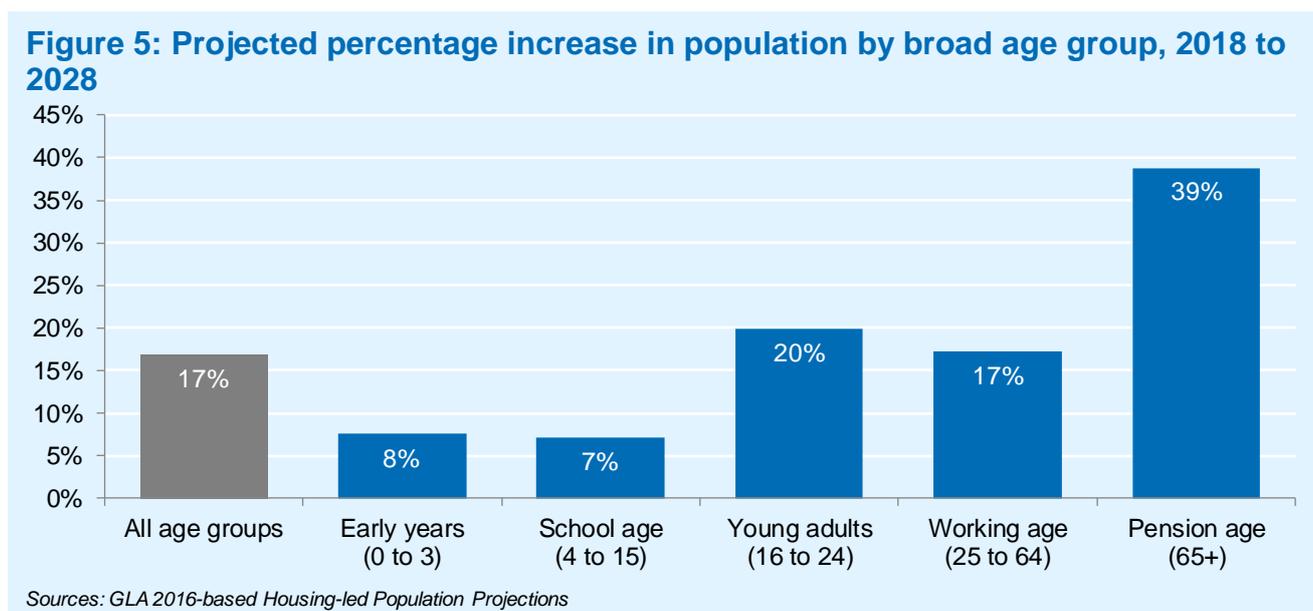
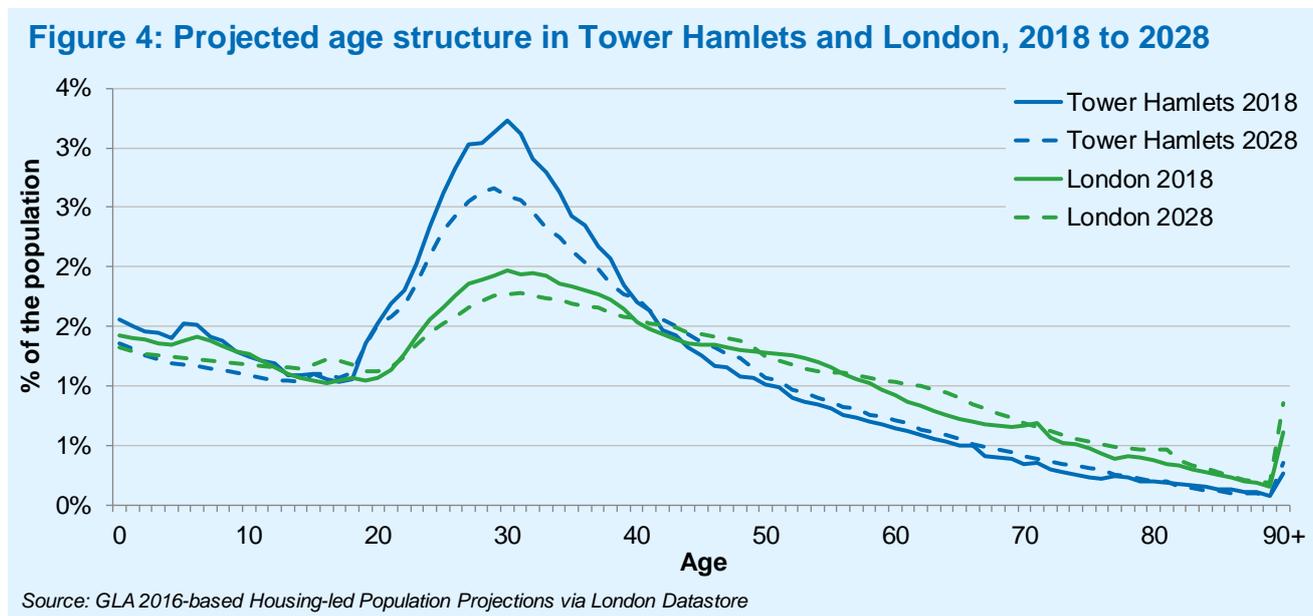
Tower Hamlets has a relatively young population compared with the rest of the country. Our median age in 2016 was 30.6 years which was the 4th youngest median age out of all local authorities in the UK.² Nearly half of the borough's population (47 per cent) is aged between 20 and 39 which is the highest proportion in the UK, and well above the London average (34 per cent).

² ONS, [Mid-2016 population estimate](#)

Over the next decade, the borough population is expected to age slightly, though Tower Hamlets will remain a relatively young borough. Figure 4 shows that the proportion of children and young adults in their twenties and thirties is projected to fall while the proportion of older adults is projected to increase. Figure 4 also shows that London is projected to see a similar trend over the next decade.

Figure 5 also illustrates that the borough’s pension age population (aged 65 and over) is expected to grow faster than any other age group, increasing by 39 per cent by 2028 which is more than double the growth rate for all ages (17 per cent). On the other hand, the number of children in the borough is expected to grow at a much slower rate.

A more comprehensive table of population projections by five and ten year age bands can be found in Appendix 3.



Household projections

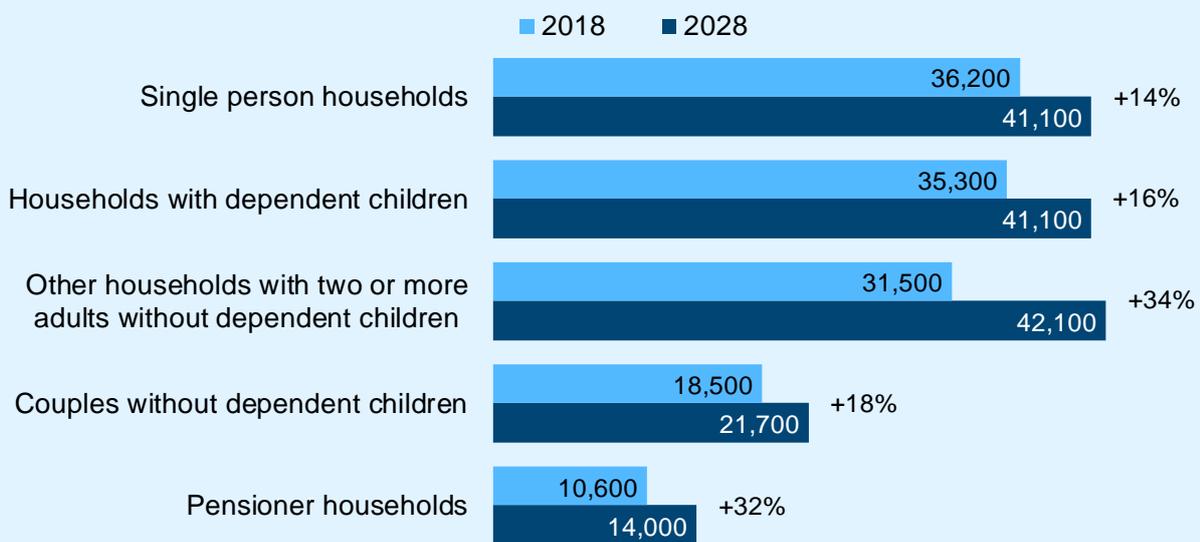
Based on past trends³, the number of households living in Tower Hamlets is projected to increase from 132,100 in 2018 to 160,100 in 2028 – an increase of 28,000 households over the next ten years. This is a 21 per cent increase which is the highest growth out of all London boroughs.

This growth rate is also higher than the projected growth in the number of *residents* (17 per cent). This means that the average household size in the borough is expected to fall from 2.37 in 2018 to 2.20 in 2028.

Figure 6 provides a breakdown of these projections by household type. All household types are expected to see a substantial increase over the next decade, but the biggest increase in both absolute and relative terms is expected to be in households with two or more adults without dependent children (for example, a flat share or an adult child living with their parents). The number of these households is expected to increase by around 10,600, or 34 per cent. By 2028, multi-adult households without children are projected to become the most common household type in the borough.

On the other hand, single person households are projected to see the slowest proportion growth (+14 per cent) and couples without children are expected to see the smallest absolute growth (+3,300 households).

Figure 6: Household projections for Tower Hamlets by household type, 2018-28



Source: GLA 2016-based Central Trend Household Projections via London Datastore

Note: Population counts have been rounded to the nearest 100 as per GLA convention, so the sum of all household types may not sum to the total borough population. Calculations have been done on unrounded figures.

³ For methodological reasons, housing-led projections (used in the rest of this briefing) are not available for households, so GLA 2016-based central trend-based projections have been used here.

Uncertainty about the future

All projections are subject to some level of uncertainty, but projections are at their weakest in times of great demographic change because they rely heavily on information about historical trends. In the past, national population projections did not foresee the baby boom or the increase in migration in the 1990s.⁴

Brexit makes this a particularly uncertain time for population projections in Tower Hamlets, and indeed the rest of London and the UK. It will undoubtedly impact the economy and migration patterns, and consequently the borough population. However, no source of population projections has yet attempted to take into account the impact of Brexit because it is unclear what assumptions should be made about the future until policies are finalised and new trends begin to emerge. There will likely be impacts that we do not anticipate, but we already know that there is uncertainty about:

- *International migration:* People born in the EU (excluding the UK) have accounted for seven in ten economic migrants who came to Tower Hamlets over the past five years.⁵ However, the number of economic migrants from the EU has fallen slightly in the past two financial years and it will fall further once the UK officially leaves the EU. It is unclear whether this will lead to an overall reduction of international migration into the borough, or if migration from other regions and countries will increase to offset this reduction.
- *Existing EU residents:* At the time of the last Census in 2011, there were over 25,000 borough residents who were born in the EU (excluding UK), making up one in ten of our residents.⁶ While the government has reached an agreement with the European Union that EU citizens who arrive before the UK leaves the EU will have the right to remain in the country⁷, it is unclear whether and to what extent EU residents might make a personal decision to leave the UK.
- *The future of the finance sector in Canary Wharf:* Brexit may impact the role of London as a financial services hub for Europe which would affect jobs in Canary Wharf. Some large financial institutions based in Canary Wharf (such as Credit Suisse⁸ and HSBC⁹) have indicated that they may move jobs out of Tower Hamlets, but this decision will largely depend on the outcome of Brexit negotiations.
- *The pace of housing development:* Housing development is one of the most important factors in the population projections, but if house prices fell or there was a downturn in the economy, property developers could slow down the building of new homes in the borough or struggle to sell them to potential residents. This would result in slower population growth.

⁴ ONS, 2016. [National population projections accuracy report](#).

⁵ DWP, *NINo Registrations to Adult Overseas Nationals Entering the UK* via [Stat-Xplore](#). Figures relate to financial years 2012/13 to 2016/17.

⁶ ONS, Census 2011, [Table QS203](#) via NOMIS.

⁷ [Gov.uk](#) as at 6 March 2018

⁸ The Times, 26 February 2018, [Credit Suisse and Standard Life Aberdeen jobs head to EU over Brexit fears](#)

⁹ Reuters, 16 June 2017, [HSBC sees fewer London jobs move on softer Brexit hopes](#)

Further information

This briefing was produced by the council's Corporate Research Unit. Our research briefings provide timely and in-depth analysis about Tower Hamlets and can be found on the [Borough Statistics pages](#) of the council's website.

The data used in this briefing were sourced from:

- ONS's 2014-based sub-national population projections, available on [Gov.UK](#)
- ONS's mid-year estimates, available on [NOMIS](#)
- GLA's 2016-based projections, available on [London Datastore](#)
- GLA's bespoke Borough Preferred Option projections (not publicly available)

For more information about this report or population projections in Tower Hamlets, please contact the [Corporate Research Unit](#).

Appendix 1: Comparison of population projections

Projection	Description	Frequency	Bench- marking	Considers housing development?	Lowest geography available	Available outputs	Most recent projection
ONS Sub-national population projections (SNPP)	Assumes past trends in births, deaths and migration will continue in the future. They are the 'official' projections which are used for central government funding to local authorities.	Every two years	✓ England	✗	Borough	Five year age groups, gender	2014-based, published May 2016
GLA Trend: short-term	Assumes past trends in births, deaths and migration will continue in the future. Trends are based on the previous 5 years.	Annual	✓ England	✗	Borough	Single year of age, gender, households	2016-based, published July 2017
GLA Trend: central	Assumes past trends in births, deaths and migration will continue in the future. Trends are based on the previous 10 years.	Annual	✓ England	✗	Borough	Single year of age, gender, ethnic group, households	2016-based, published July 2017
GLA Trend: long-term	Assumes past trends in births, deaths and migration will continue in the future. Trends are based on the previous 15 years.	Annual	✓ England	✗	Borough	Single year of age, gender, households	2016-based, published July 2017
GLA Housing-led	Takes housing development into account alongside past trends. GLA recommends that London boroughs use these projections for most uses.	Annual	✓ London	✓ SHLAA data	2011 Wards and MSOA	Single year of age, gender, ethnic group	2016-based, published December 2017
GLA Borough Preferred Option (BPO)	Similar to the housing-led variant, but based on development data held by the council.	Ad hoc	✗	✓ Council planning data	2011 Wards and MSOA	Single year of age, gender	2016-based, produced March 2018 (not publicly available)

Appendix 2: Population projections by Middle Super Output Area (MSOA)

	2018 Residents	2023 Residents	2028 Residents	Change 2018-2028 Residents	%
Borough population	317,200	341,400	370,700	53,500	17%
MSOA					
Tower Hamlets 001	10,300	13,100	15,900	5,600	55%
Tower Hamlets 002	8,200	8,400	8,400	200	3%
Tower Hamlets 003	10,900	10,400	10,200	-700	-7%
Tower Hamlets 004	11,700	12,100	12,400	700	6%
Tower Hamlets 005	7,300	6,900	7,000	-300	-5%
Tower Hamlets 006	6,200	5,900	5,800	-500	-7%
Tower Hamlets 007	7,100	6,800	6,600	-500	-7%
Tower Hamlets 008	11,000	12,000	13,900	3,000	27%
Tower Hamlets 009	9,500	9,200	10,300	800	9%
Tower Hamlets 010	9,500	8,900	8,700	-700	-8%
Tower Hamlets 011	7,700	7,600	7,600	-100	-1%
Tower Hamlets 012	14,400	14,500	14,600	200	1%
Tower Hamlets 013	7,700	7,600	8,900	1,200	15%
Tower Hamlets 014	13,300	13,400	13,800	500	4%
Tower Hamlets 015	12,100	11,500	11,300	-800	-7%
Tower Hamlets 016	8,300	7,900	7,700	-500	-6%
Tower Hamlets 017	6,400	6,100	6,000	-400	-7%
Tower Hamlets 018	10,100	10,200	13,500	3,300	33%
Tower Hamlets 019	11,200	11,000	11,100	-100	-1%
Tower Hamlets 020	9,300	13,100	14,700	5,400	58%
Tower Hamlets 021	13,000	15,200	16,700	3,700	28%
Tower Hamlets 022	7,300	6,900	6,600	-600	-9%
Tower Hamlets 023	8,700	8,400	8,300	-500	-5%
Tower Hamlets 024	11,100	10,700	11,000	-200	-1%
Tower Hamlets 025	9,100	8,800	8,700	-500	-5%
Tower Hamlets 026	9,200	10,800	12,300	3,100	34%
Tower Hamlets 027	6,300	6,000	5,900	-400	-6%
Tower Hamlets 028	21,200	31,900	40,400	19,200	90%
Tower Hamlets 030	8,200	8,100	7,900	-200	-3%
Tower Hamlets 031	11,400	11,200	11,300	-200	-2%
Tower Hamlets 032	9,700	12,400	15,000	5,300	55%
Tower Hamlets 033	9,600	14,500	18,300	8,600	90%

Source: GLA 2016-based Housing-led Population Projections by MSOA via London Datastore

Note: Population counts have been rounded to the nearest 100 as per GLA convention, so the sum of all MSOAs may not sum to the total borough population. The population and percentage increases have been calculated based on unrounded figures.

Appendix 3: Population projections by age; five and ten year age bands and client age groups

	2018 Residents	2023 Residents	2028 Residents	Change 2018 to 2028 Residents %	
Borough population	317,200	341,400	370,700	53,500	17%
Five year age bands					
0 to 4	22,000	22,600	23,500	1,600	7%
5 to 9	21,200	20,700	21,300	0	0%
10 to 14	17,400	20,100	19,600	2,200	13%
15 to 19	16,700	18,600	21,300	4,600	27%
20 to 24	27,900	28,500	32,300	4,400	16%
25 to 29	43,600	43,800	46,600	3,000	7%
30 to 34	43,700	43,100	45,200	1,500	3%
35 to 39	32,300	35,500	36,300	4,000	12%
40 to 44	22,500	26,700	29,100	6,700	30%
45 to 49	17,100	19,900	23,400	6,400	37%
50 to 54	13,800	15,900	18,200	4,500	33%
55 to 59	10,900	13,000	14,800	3,900	35%
60 to 64	8,700	10,200	12,000	3,200	37%
65 to 69	6,500	7,800	9,100	2,600	40%
70 to 74	4,500	5,700	6,800	2,300	52%
75 to 79	3,400	3,900	4,900	1,500	45%
80 to 84	2,600	2,600	3,100	400	17%
85 to 89	1,700	1,800	1,800	200	11%
90+	800	1,000	1,300	500	63%
Ten year age bands					
0 to 9	43,200	43,300	44,800	1,600	4%
10 to 19	34,100	38,700	40,900	6,800	20%
20 to 29	71,500	72,400	78,900	7,400	10%
30 to 39	76,000	78,600	81,500	5,500	7%
40 to 49	39,500	46,600	52,600	13,100	33%
50 to 59	24,700	28,900	33,000	8,300	34%
60 to 69	15,300	18,000	21,100	5,800	38%
70 to 79	7,900	9,600	11,700	3,800	49%
80+	5,100	5,400	6,200	1,100	22%
Client age groups					
Early years (0 to 3)	17,800	18,300	19,100	1,300	8%
School age (4 to 15)	46,000	48,600	49,400	3,300	7%
Young adults (16 to 24)	41,300	43,600	49,500	8,200	20%
Working age (25 to 64)	192,600	208,000	225,700	33,100	17%
Pension age (65+)	19,500	22,900	27,000	7,600	39%

Source: GLA 2016-based Housing-led Population Projections by MSOA via London Datastore

Note: Population counts have been rounded to the nearest 100 as per GLA convention, so the sum of all age bands may not sum to the total borough population. The population and percentage increases have been calculated based on unrounded figures.