

The State of Children in Suffolk 2022

Population and Families



Population and Families

Key points

1. In 2020, 761,246 people were estimated to be living in Suffolk. Of this total, 202,688 (26.6%) were children and young people aged 0-24 years of age, which is lower than the England average of 29.7%.
2. Over the past decade, the number of children and young people aged 0-24 in Suffolk has fallen by nearly 5,400, a fall of 2.6% compared with a 3% increase nationally. A similar fall is projected to happen over the next 20 years within Suffolk, compared with a slight increase of 0.1% nationally.
3. Just under 20% of local primary school pupils were from a minority ethnic group, compared with around 16% of secondary school pupils. These proportions have increased over the past five years.
4. There were 6,811 live births in Suffolk in 2020, a fall of 5.9% from 2019. The number of live births to local mothers aged under 25 years continues to fall, and has fallen from nearly 1,700 in 2015 to around 1,250 in 2020.
5. Nearly 26,000 children and young people in Suffolk live in areas classified as being among the 20% most deprived in England, which is 12.7% of the population of 0-24 year olds.
6. The proportion of children aged under 16 living in poverty has increased in Suffolk from 13% in 2014/15 to 16.5% in 2019/20. This means that approximately 22,750 local children under 16 are living in poverty.
7. There were around 18,500 lone parent households with dependent children in Suffolk in 2020, which is approximately 7.5% of all local households.

Why is population important in Suffolk?

Understanding how many children and young people live in Suffolk is vital when it comes to planning and providing services such as care for newborn babies, nursery places, education, apprenticeships, housing and transport. Similarly, the health and wellbeing needs of local children and young people cannot be fully met or measured without first knowing how many there are, where they live, how many may need extra support, and how many there may be in the coming years.

Information about the population of children and young people in Suffolk should be used to help improve access to services, as well as helping reduce differences in health outcomes between those who have the best and poorest health.¹⁻²

Impact of COVID-19 on data

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK have been felt and experienced by young and old alike, and will affect people's lives both in the short, medium and long term. One of the many consequences of the pandemic has been its impact on data collection. Across many areas, such as the economy, education, health and wellbeing, the pandemic has affected what data has been collected and what has been published. Even when published, not all data has been comparable with pre-COVID-19 data.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the population estimates used in this report, especially the migration data which was used to look at the numbers of people who moved in and

out of Suffolk. The 2020 data include a mix of data from pre-COVID-19 times (up to March 2020) and from during the pandemic (April to December 2020). The restrictions in place during the 2020 lockdown in the UK had direct impacts on population change at both national and local levels. Global restrictions also impacted the volume of international migration to and from the UK. The pandemic disrupted the collection and processing of demographic data from surveys, registration and administrative sources, for example, the international passenger survey (the main source of data on migration flows) was suspended in March 2020. As a consequence, some of the internal and international migration data presented in this report may not be as reliable as in previous years.

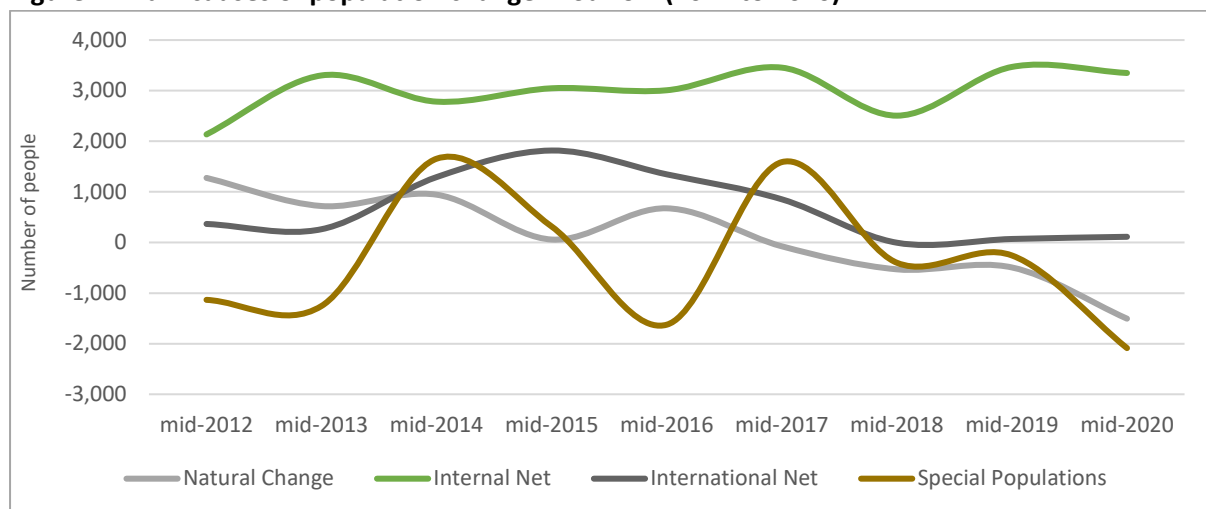
What is the local picture?

How many people live in Suffolk?

There were a total of 761,246 people estimated to be living in Suffolk in 2020.³ Whilst the numbers of people living locally increased between 2011 and 2019, last year the population of Suffolk fell by 104.⁴ Some of the main causes which impacted on the numbers of people living in Suffolk in 2020 included (figure 1):

- more people died than were born (8,652 deaths versus 7,146 births) – the COVID-19 pandemic would have had an impact on the numbers of deaths locally
- more people moved into Suffolk from elsewhere in the UK than moved out (an extra 3,349)
- more people born outside the UK moved into Suffolk than moved out (an extra 112)
- there were nearly 2,100 fewer home and foreign armed forces, and people in prison (although the reasons behind this fall are unclear)

Figure 1 Main causes of population change in Suffolk (2012 to 2020)



Source: Office for National Statistics. Analysis of population estimates tool for UK⁴

Natural Change = births versus deaths

Internal Net = people from other UK countries moving into and out of Suffolk

International Net = people born outside the UK moving into and out of Suffolk

Special Populations = home armed forces, foreign armed forces and the prison population

How many children and young people live in Suffolk?

There were around 203,000 children and young people aged 0-24 living in Suffolk in 2020, 26.6% of the total population of the county, which is lower than the England average of 29.7% (table 1). Compared with the Suffolk average of 26.6%, Ipswich (30.3%) and West Suffolk (28%) had higher proportions of children and young people living in their areas, whilst Babergh (25.1%), East Suffolk (25%) and Mid Suffolk (24.9%) had lower proportions.

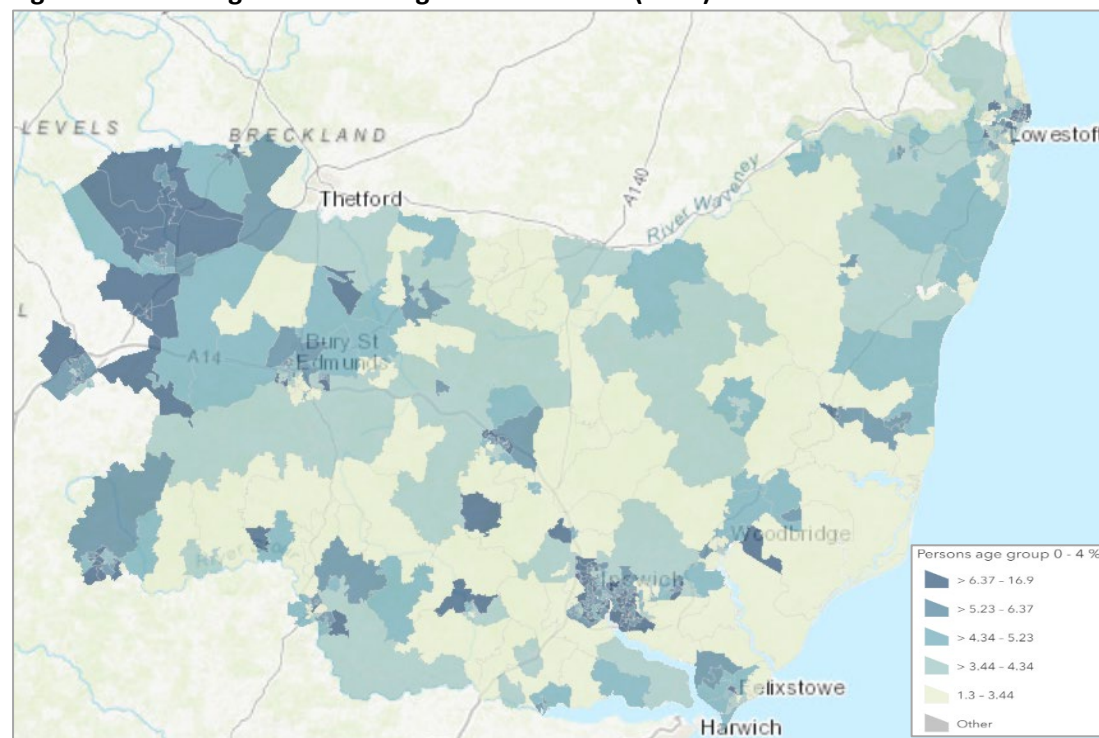
Table 1 Number of children and young people aged 0-24 in Suffolk (2020)

Age	Number	% of total population	
		Suffolk	England
0 to 4	39,083	5.1	5.7
5 to 9	43,985	5.8	6.3
10 to 14	44,787	5.9	6.1
15 to 19	38,733	5.1	5.5
20 to 24	36,100	4.7	6.1
Total	202,688	26.6	29.7

Source: Office for National Statistics. Analysis of population estimates tool for UK⁴

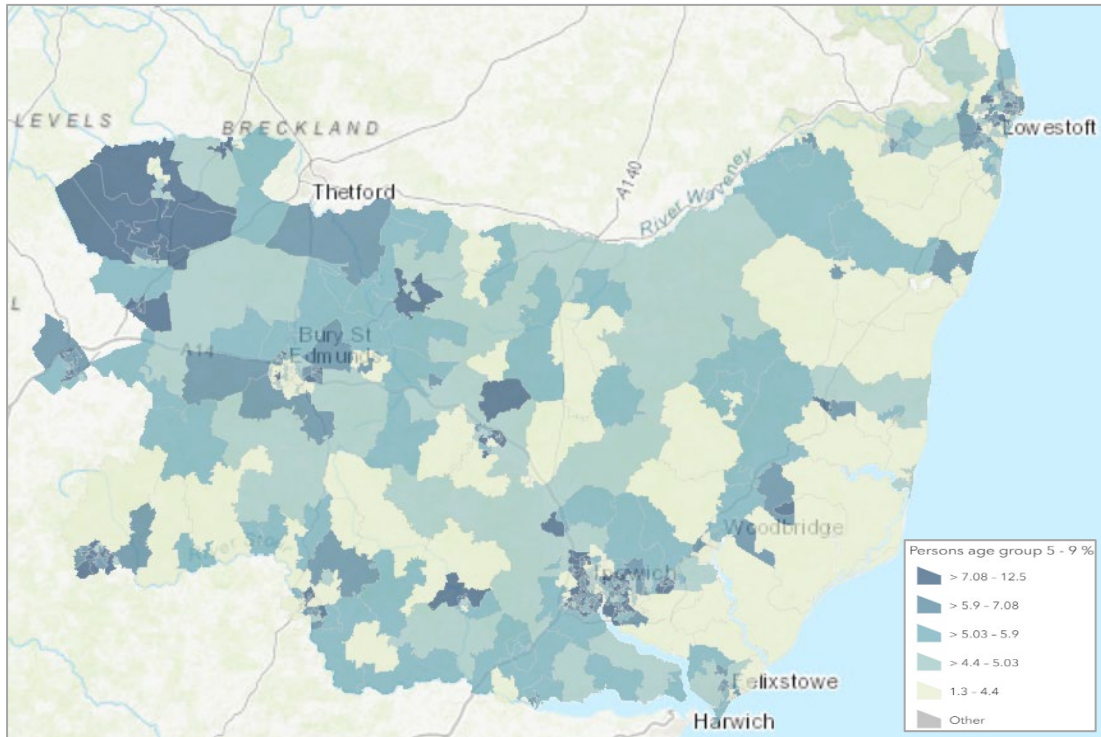
In Suffolk, areas around Mildenhall, Newmarket, Haverhill, Hadleigh, Ipswich, Felixstowe, and Lowestoft had the highest proportions of young children aged 0-4 (figure 2). For children aged 5-9, areas of Suffolk with the highest proportions were located around Mildenhall, Haverhill, Bury St Edmunds, Hadleigh, Ipswich, and Lowestoft (figure 3). Among children aged 10-14 years of age, areas around Mildenhall, Haverhill, Bury St Edmunds, Sudbury, Hadleigh, Ipswich, Woodbridge, and Lowestoft had the highest proportions (figure 4). For children and young people aged 15-19, areas of Suffolk with the highest proportions were located around Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Sudbury, Hadleigh, Ipswich, Framlingham, Halesworth, and Lowestoft (figure 5). Among young adults aged 20-24 in Suffolk, areas around Mildenhall, Haverhill, Sudbury, Ipswich, and Lowestoft had the highest proportions (figure 6).

Figure 2 Percentage of children aged 0-4 in Suffolk (2020)



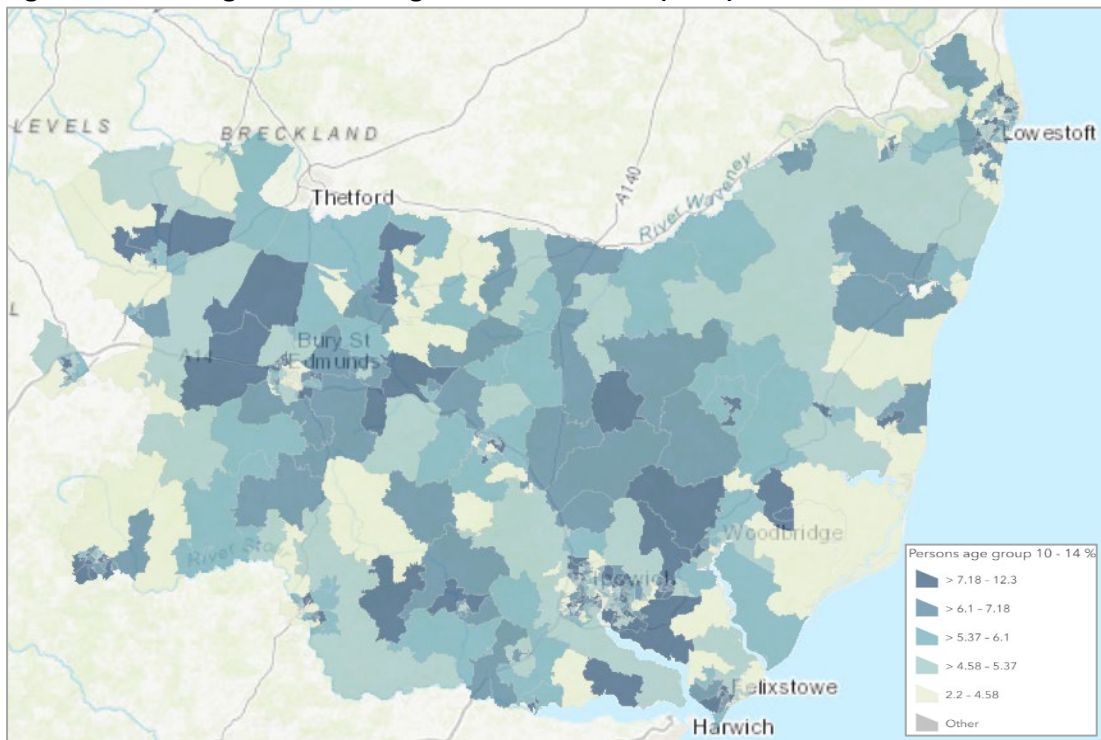
Source: Suffolk Observatory⁵

Figure 3 Percentage of children aged 5-9 in Suffolk (2020)



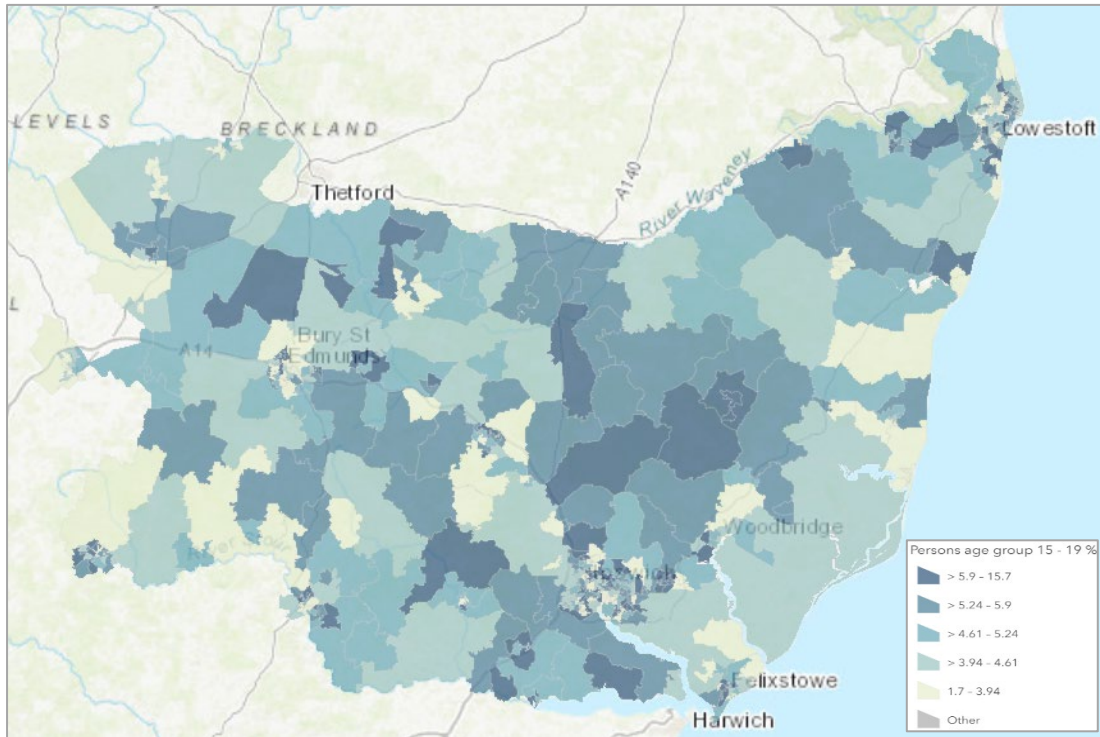
Source: Suffolk Observatory⁵

Figure 4 Percentage of children aged 10-14 in Suffolk (2020)



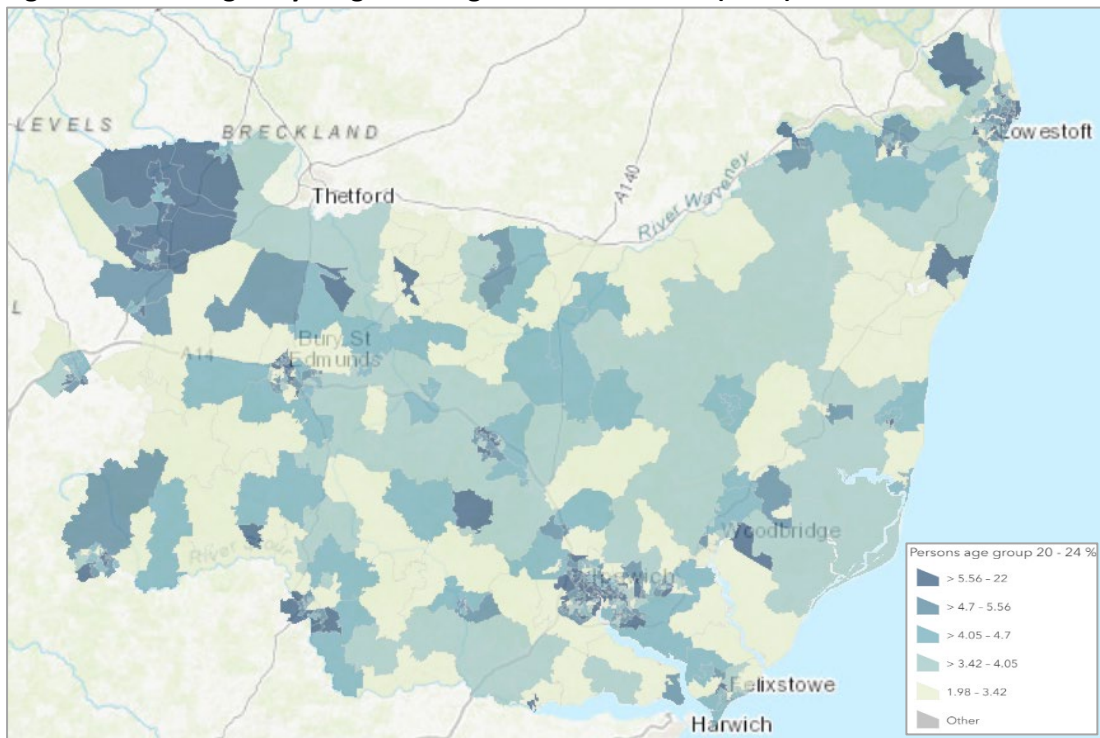
Source: Suffolk Observatory⁵

Figure 5 Percentage of children and young people aged 15-19 in Suffolk (2020)



Source: Suffolk Observatory⁵

Figure 6 Percentage of young adults aged 20-24 in Suffolk (2020)



Source: Suffolk Observatory⁵

Changes to the population

Over the past decade, the number of children and young people aged 0-24 in Suffolk fell by nearly 5,400, a fall of 2.6% (table 2). The largest fall locally was seen among children and young people aged 15-19 and young adults aged 20-24, where the proportions fell in both age groups by 10.8%. In Suffolk, the reductions in the proportions of 0-4 year olds, 15-19 and 20-24 year olds were greater than England.

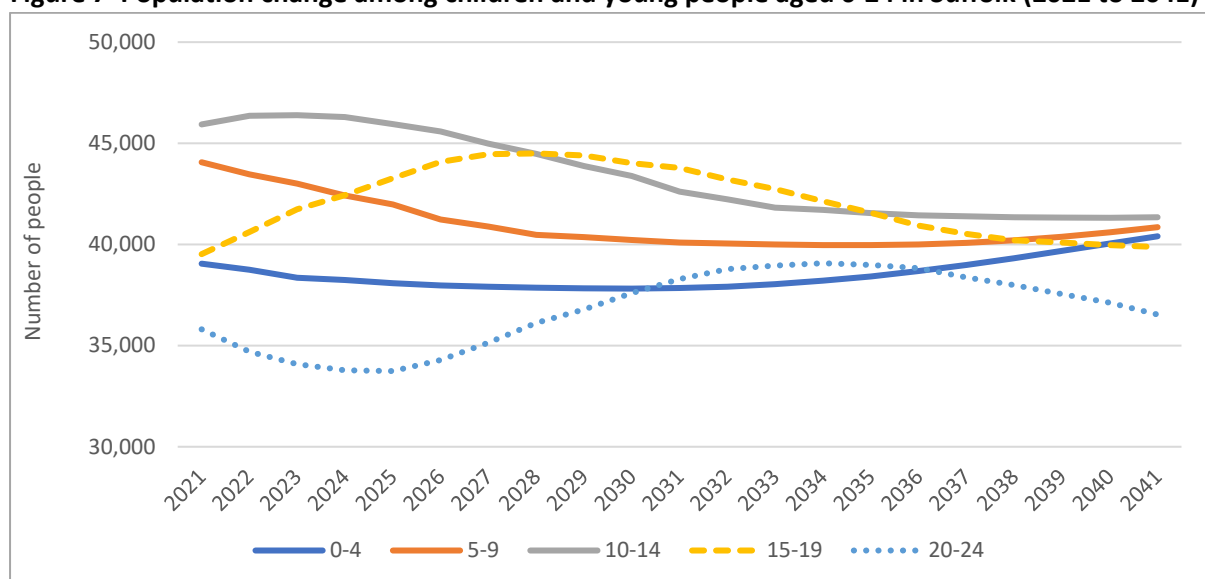
Table 2 Number of children and young people aged 0-24 in Suffolk (2011 to 2020)

Age	Number		Change	% change	
	2011	2020		Suffolk	England
0 to 4	42,365	39,083	-3,282	-7.7	-2.7
5 to 9	39,695	43,985	4,290	10.8	18.4
10 to 14	42,117	44,787	2,670	6.3	12.0
15 to 19	43,405	38,733	-4,672	-10.8	-6.3
20 to 24	40,474	36,100	-4,374	-10.8	-3.4
Total	208,056	202,688	-5,368	-2.6	3.0

Source: Office for National Statistics. Analysis of population estimates tool for UK⁴

Population projections for Suffolk over the next 20 years indicate that the numbers of children and young people aged 0-24 will fall by around 5,400 (figure 7). This is similar to the fall seen between 2011 and 2020. The largest falls are likely to occur among children aged 10-14 and among 5-9 year olds.

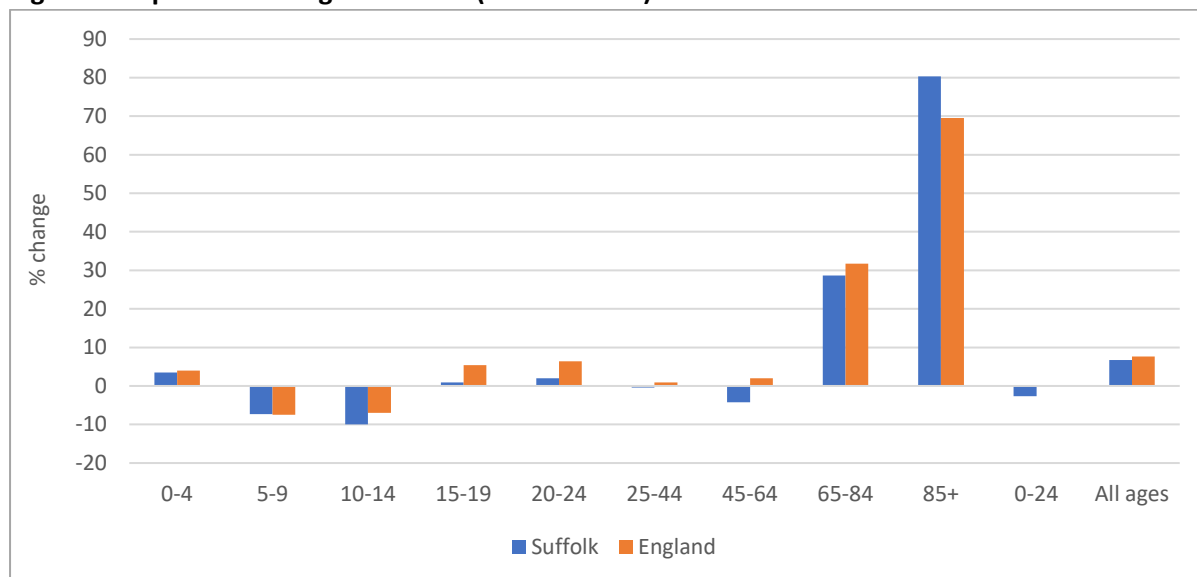
Figure 7 Population change among children and young people aged 0-24 in Suffolk (2021 to 2041)



Source: Office for National Statistics. Subnational population projections for England: 2018-based⁶

Over the next 20 years, the overall population of Suffolk is projected to increase by 6.8%, which is similar to the England average of 7.7% (figure 8). However, the 0-24 year old population locally is projected to fall over the coming years by 2.6%, compared with a slight increase nationally of 0.1%. When the different age groups under 24 in Suffolk are compared with England, projections over the next 20 years are broadly similar for children up to the age of 14, but increases are lower locally among 15-19 year olds and 20-24 year olds.

Figure 8 Population change in Suffolk (2021 to 2041)



Source: Office for National Statistics. Subnational population projections for England: 2018-based⁶

Ethnicity – school pupils

The 2011 Census contains data on ethnicity about children and young people in Suffolk. This information, however, is now a decade old. Each year, schools in Suffolk (and throughout the country) carry out a School Census which collects information about a range of topics, including ethnicity. This information can be used to give an indication on the numbers of local children from different ethnic groups.

The School Census of January 2021 found that 18.2% of pupils who attended state-funded primary schools in Suffolk were from a minority ethnic group, compared with 15.3% of state-funded secondary school pupils (table 3). The largest minority ethnic groups within Suffolk schools were children from White non-British backgrounds, followed by those from Mixed/multiple ethnic groups.

Table 3 Number of school pupils by ethnicity in Suffolk (January 2021)

Ethnicity	State-funded primary school		State-funded secondary school	
	Pupils	%	Pupils	%
White British	45,511	80.0	36,470	81.2
All Other White	4,505	7.9	2,814	6.3
Asian	1,162	2.0	847	1.9
Black	569	1.0	450	1.0
Mixed/multiple	3,488	6.1	2,369	5.3
Other	641	1.1	385	0.9
Not recorded	1,040	1.8	1,553	3.5
Total	56,916	100	44,888	100

Source: Department for Education. Schools, pupils and their characteristics⁷

Over the past five years, the percentage of pupils attending school from minority ethnic groups has increased in Suffolk – from 16% to 18.2% in state-funded primary schools, and from 11.8% to 15.3% in state-funded secondary schools.

The School Census also provides information about the proportion of pupils in Suffolk schools who have a first language other than English. In January 2021, 10.2% of state-funded primary school

pupils in Suffolk did not have English as a first language – nearly 6,000 pupils (table 4). This compares with 7.5% of state-funded secondary school pupils.

Table 4 Number of school pupils whose first language is not English in Suffolk (January 2021)

First language	State-funded primary school		State-funded secondary school	
	Pupils	%	Pupils	%
English	50,962	89.5	41,366	92.2
Not English	5,813	10.2	3,350	7.5
Not recorded	141	0.2	172	0.4
Total	56,916	100	44,888	100

Source: Department for Education. Schools, pupils and their characteristics⁷

The proportions of pupils who did not have English as a first language has increased in Suffolk over the past five years – from 8.9% to 10.2% in state-funded primary schools, and from 6.3% to 7.5% of pupils in state-funded secondary schools.

Groups who may need extra support

Refugees and asylum seekers

At the end of 2019, nearly 80 million people worldwide had been forcibly displaced from their homes as a result of conflicts, persecution, and human rights abuses. Of these, 26 million were refugees.⁸ Among those displaced, an estimated 40% were children below the age of 18, many of whom would have been living in poor conditions, lost family members, and traumatised by their experiences.

Refugees and asylum seekers have distinct needs and require appropriate services, and whilst many are likely to arrive in Suffolk in good health, this is not the case for everyone. There are estimated to be around 2,500 refugees in Suffolk, the majority of whom are living in Ipswich.⁹ During 2020, the Suffolk Refugee Support charity worked with 227 children in the county aged 0-18 (this number refers only to those children ‘worked with’). There are also currently 80-90 asylum seekers, many of them families, housed in Ipswich under the government’s ‘dispersal’ system.

In addition, Suffolk has hosted an increasing number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) in recent years. As of October 2021, there were 88 UASC hosted across the county compared with 66 children hosted in April 2018.¹⁰ Of those most recently hosted, 19 (21.6%) were aged 15 and under, 33 (37.5%) were aged 16 whilst 36 were aged 17 (42%). The majority of hosted children were male (84 out of 88). Nearly half of the hosted children were from Afghanistan (42 – 47.7%), but included children from a range of countries such as Iran, Iraq, Syria, Kuwait. The majority of UASC children hosted in Suffolk in October 2021 were located in Ipswich (60 – 68.2%).

Gypsy, Roma and Travellers

The umbrella term Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) describes a diverse minority group who come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. GRT are known to experience poorer health and educational outcomes, to face racial discrimination and to be victims of hate crime.¹¹

Information about GRT in Suffolk, especially children and young people, is limited. Data from January 2020 shows there were 370 Traveller caravans in Suffolk.¹² Just over one third of these (126 caravans) were based in Mid Suffolk. Whilst some of these 370 caravans will be occupied by families with children, we don’t know how many children there are. There were also 20 caravans belonging to Travelling Showpeople, 17 of which were in Mid Suffolk. The largest site was West Meadows in Ipswich.

Sexual identity

The Government's 2018 LGBT Action Plan highlighted how your sexual orientation or gender identity could have a significant impact on your physical, mental and sexual health and wellbeing.¹³ Evidence also shows that health outcomes are generally worse for LGBT people than the rest of the population, and that many LGBT people feel their specific needs are not considered in their care.¹⁴

Latest estimates suggest that between 19,300 and 23,200 people aged 16 and over in Suffolk are likely to identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or other (table 5).¹⁵ Among 16-24 year olds in Suffolk, there are an estimated 4,200 to 6,000 people who are likely to identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or other (table 6).

Table 5 Estimates of sexual identity in Suffolk, 16 years and over (2020)

Sexual identity	England %	Suffolk	
		Low estimate	High estimate
Heterosexual or straight	93.3	581,878	584,378
Gay or lesbian	1.6	9,375	10,625
Bisexual	1.1	6,250	7,500
Other	0.7	3,750	5,000
Don't know or refuse	3.3	19,375	21,875

Source: Office for National Statistics. Sexual orientation¹⁵

Table 6 Estimates of sexual identity in Suffolk, 16-24 year olds (2020)

Sexual identity	UK* %	Suffolk	
		Low estimate	High estimate
Heterosexual or straight	88.5	58,073	59,535
Gay or lesbian	2.6	1,395	2,060
Bisexual	4.1	2,326	3,123
Other	1.0	465	864
Don't know or refuse	3.8	2,060	2,990

Source: Office for National Statistics. Sexual orientation¹⁵

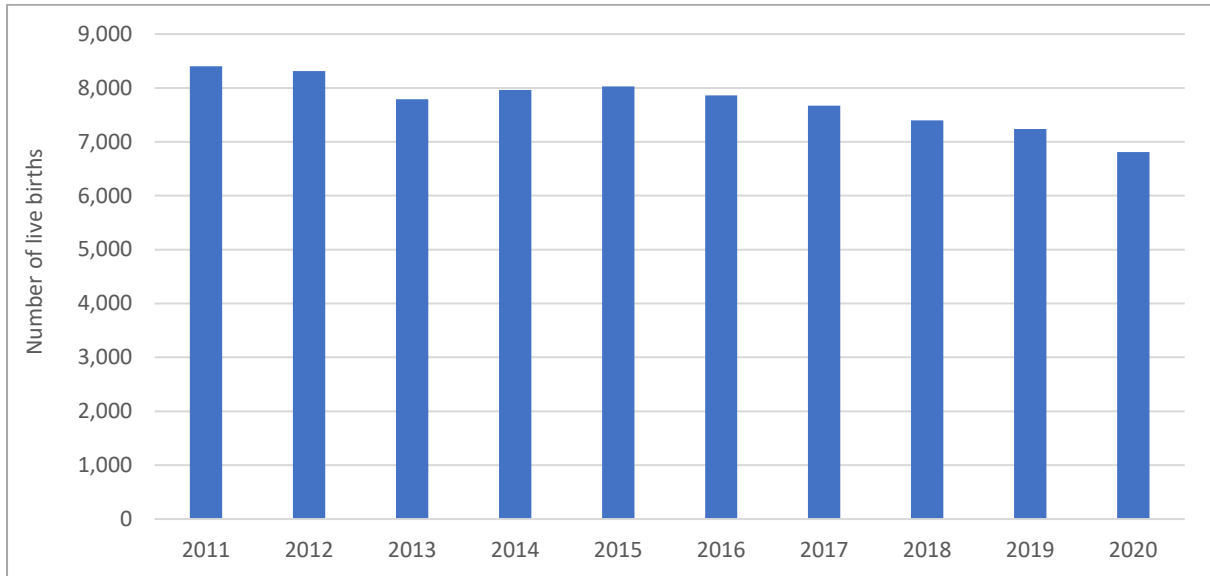
* 16-24 year old estimates are not available for England

Number of babies born

There were 6,811 live births in Suffolk in 2020, a fall of 5.9% from 2019 (compared with a 4.1% fall nationally). Locally, the number of live births is the lowest it has been over the past decade (figure 9).¹⁶ The number of live births to mothers aged under 25 years in Suffolk also continues to fall, and fell from nearly 1,700 in 2015 to around 1,250 in 2020.¹⁷

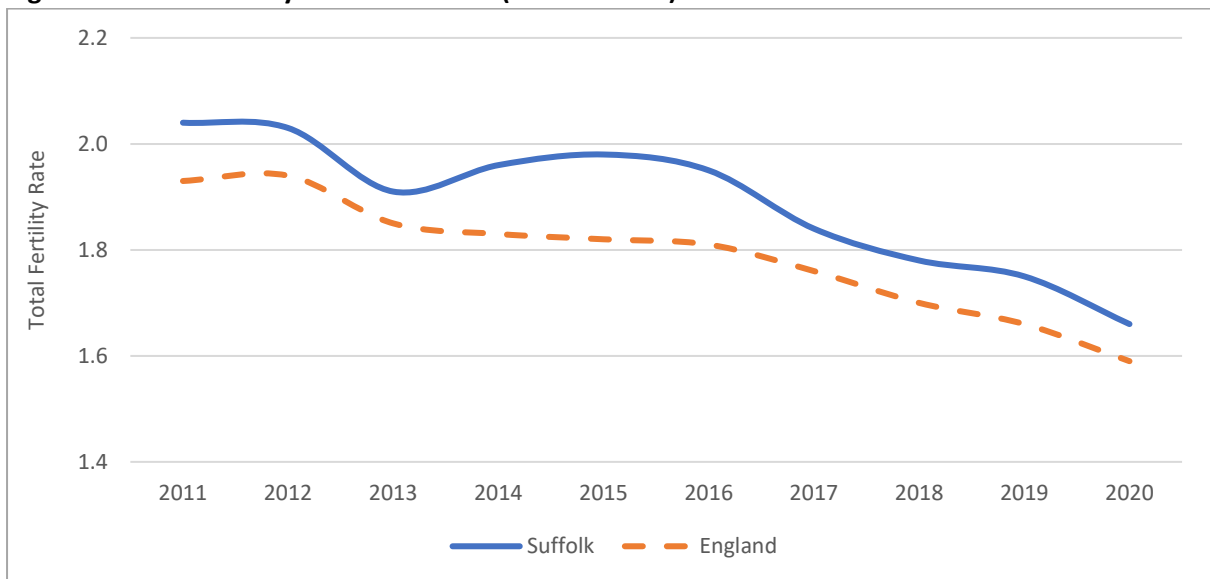
The total fertility rate in Suffolk continues to be higher than the England average, though rates for both Suffolk and England are falling (figure 10).

Figure 9 Number of live births in Suffolk (2011 to 2020)



Source: Office for National Statistics. Births in England and Wales: summary tables¹⁶

Figure 10 Total Fertility Rate* in Suffolk (2011 to 2020)



Source: Office for National Statistics. Births in England and Wales: summary tables¹⁶

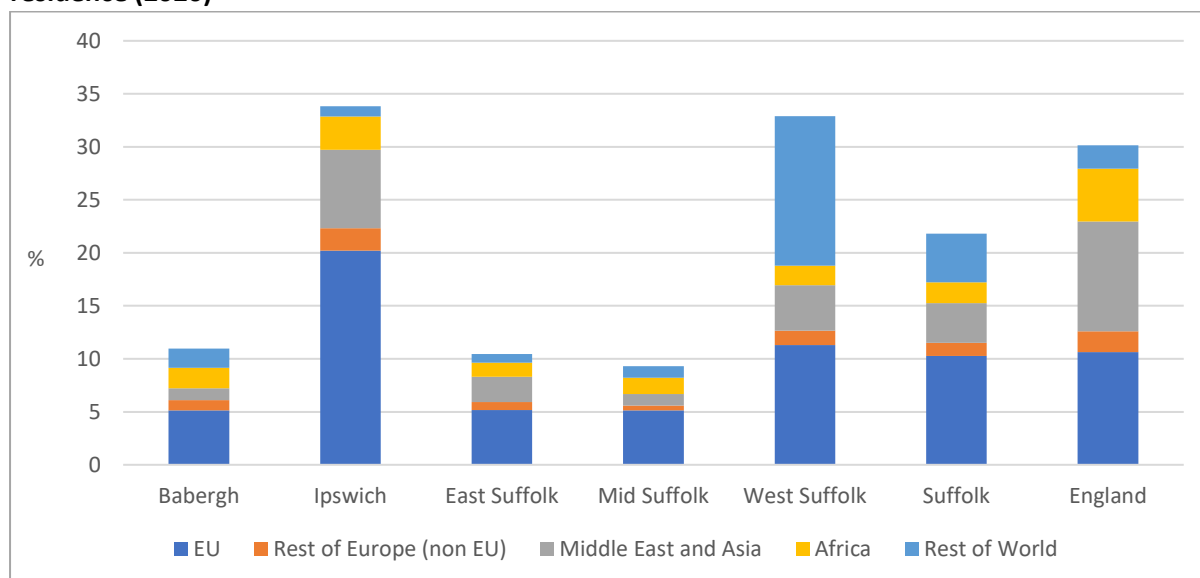
* The Total Fertility Rate is the average number of live children that a group of women would bear if they experienced the age-specific fertility rates of the calendar year throughout their childbearing lifespan.

Births to non-UK born mothers

Just over 1 in 5 live births (21.8%) in Suffolk in 2020 were to mothers born outside the UK (1,486 out of 6,811; figure 11).¹⁸ This is below the England average of 30.2%. Within Suffolk, the highest proportions of births to mothers born outside the UK were in Ipswich (33.8%) and West Suffolk (32.9%).

These higher proportions of births in Ipswich are likely to reflect the increased ethnic diversity within the borough, whilst in West Suffolk, the presence of the United States military bases at RAF Lakenheath and RAF Mildenhall will be driving these higher proportions, particularly live births to non-UK mothers from the 'rest of world'.

Figure 11 Percentage of babies born to mothers who were born outside the UK by usual area of residence (2020)



Source: Office for National Statistics. Parents' country of birth¹⁸

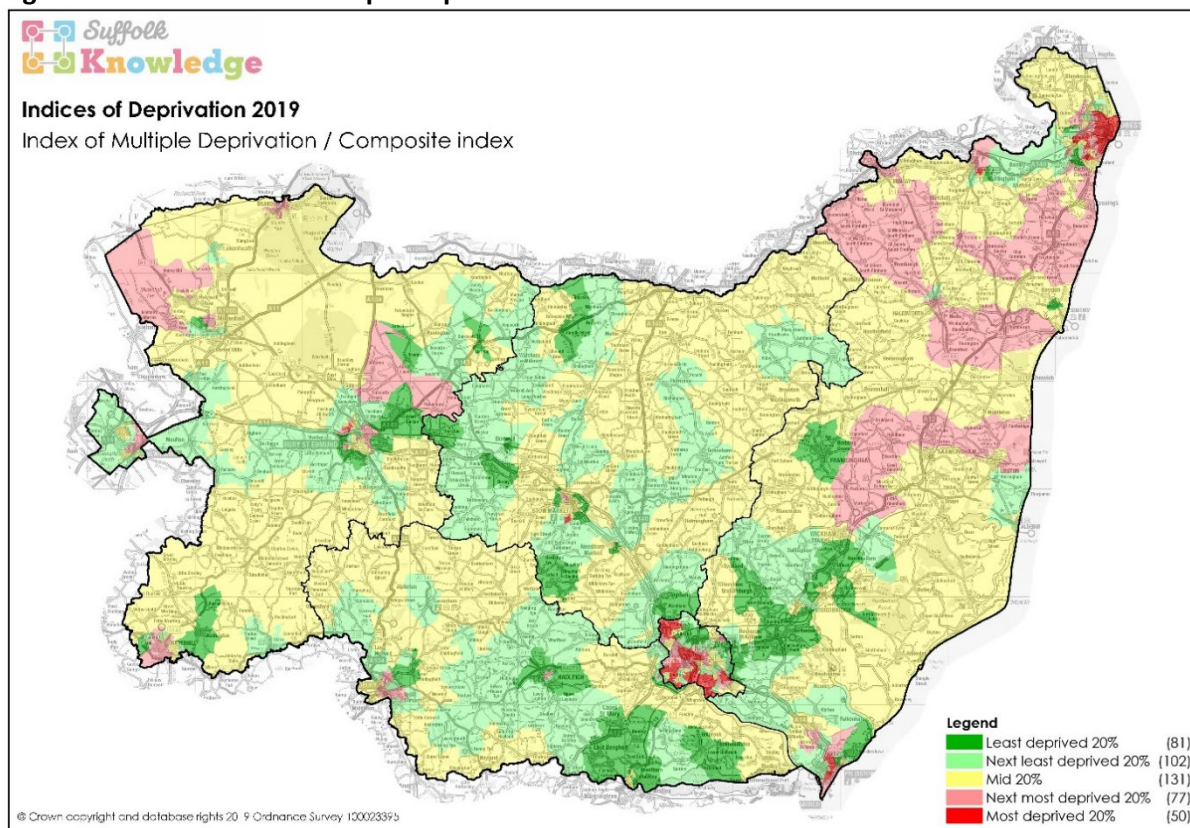
Deprivation in Suffolk

The 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation is the official measure of relative deprivation in England and provides a way of comparing deprivation using seven domains: income, employment, health and disability, education, crime, barriers to housing and services, and the living environment.¹⁹ Relative deprivation does not tell us how many people are affected by deprivation, but it shows how deprived an area is relative to other areas. This can be used and is helpful in identifying the most deprived areas within England.

Across Suffolk, the greatest levels of deprivation are found in the more built up areas of the county such as Beccles, Bury St Edmunds, Felixstowe, Ipswich, Lowestoft, and Stowmarket (figure 12). Although the most deprived areas in Suffolk are concentrated in towns and other urban areas, pockets of rural deprivation, often masked by areas of relative affluence, are likely to exist. As these areas are difficult to identify, it may mean some people do not receive the same levels of services and interventions that larger and more noticeable areas would.

Based on the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation, nearly 26,000 children and young people aged 0-24 in Suffolk live in areas classified as being among the 20% most deprived in England. This is 12.7% of the population of 0-24 year olds (table 7). Across the whole of the county, 10.5% of all people live in the 20% most deprived areas of England.

Figure 12 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation in Suffolk



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. English Indices of Deprivation¹⁹

Table 7 Numbers of children and young people aged 0-24 in Suffolk living in the 20% most deprived areas of England (2020)

Population	Numbers by age group					0-24	All Ages
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24		
20% most deprived	5,349	5,619	5,322	4,711	4,735	25,736	80,068
Total population	39,083	43,985	44,787	38,733	36,100	202,688	761,246
% in top 20%	13.7	12.8	11.9	12.2	13.1	12.7	10.5

Sources: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. English Indices of Deprivation,¹⁹ and Office for National Statistics. Lower layer Super Output Area population estimates²⁰

Children in poverty

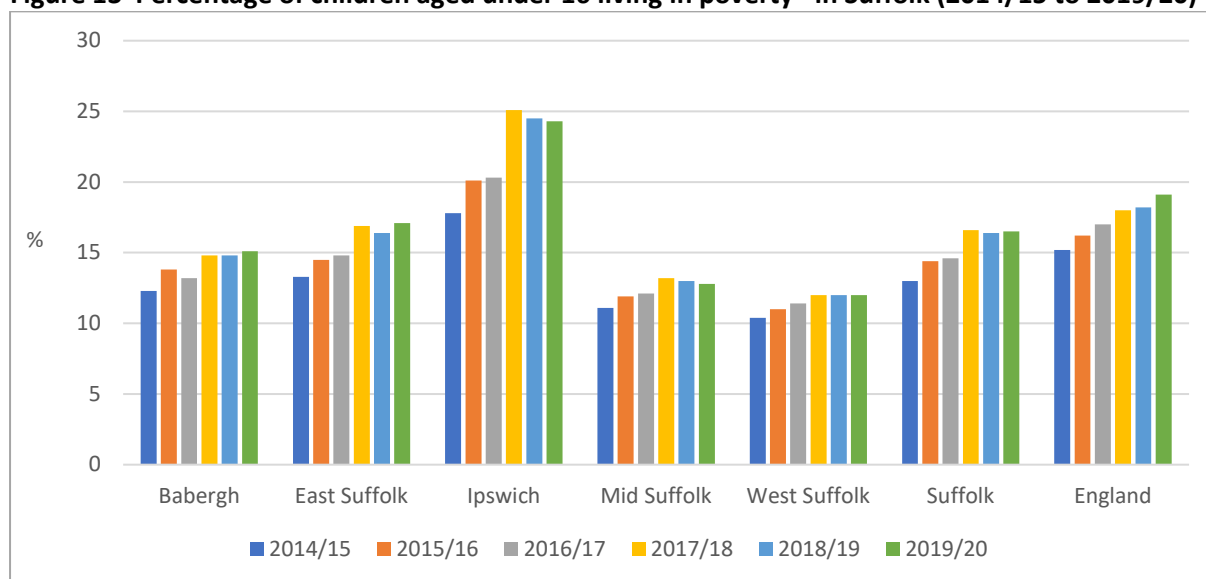
Poverty affects millions of people in the UK each year. Poverty often means not being able to heat your home, pay your rent, or buy the essentials for your children. It means waking up every day facing insecurity, uncertainty, impossible decisions about money, and often discrimination.²¹

Families with children face higher risks of poverty because of the extra costs of children and because of the effect on parents' working hours. Lone parents are more likely to experience poverty, and 47% of children in lone parent families are in poverty. Children living in poverty find themselves more susceptible to bullying, facing exclusion and having low aspirations, and poorer educational attainment.²¹ The Marmot Review identifies childhood poverty as an indicator of future premature mortality and poor health outcomes for adults.²

The proportion of children aged under 16 living in poverty has increased in Suffolk from 13% in 2014/15 to 16.5% in 2019/20 (figure 13). This means that approximately 22,750 children under 16 in

Suffolk are living in poverty. Nationally, the proportion increased from 15.2% to 19.1% during this time.

Figure 13 Percentage of children aged under 16 living in poverty* in Suffolk (2014/15 to 2019/20)



Source: Department for Work and Pensions. Children in low income families²²

* Relative low income (poverty) is defined as a family in low income Before Housing Costs (BHC) in the reference year. A family must have claimed Child Benefit and at least one other household benefit (Universal Credit, tax credits or Housing Benefit) at any point in the year to be classed as low income in these statistics.

Across Suffolk, the proportion of children under 16 living in poverty in 2019/20 ranged from 12% in West Suffolk to 24.3% in Ipswich. Between 2014/15 and 2019/20, the largest increase in childhood poverty was seen in Ipswich, where the proportion increased from 17.8% to 24.3%. This means that nearly 1 in 4 children under the age of 16 are living in poverty in the borough of Ipswich.²²

Data from End Child Poverty indicate that, after housing costs are taken care of, the numbers of children under 16 living in poverty in Suffolk could be even higher.²³

Families

Family life in the UK is continually changing. Around 1 in 4 children under 15 no longer lives with both biological parents, cohabitation is increasing, and children are now leaving their parental homes far later.²⁴ In 2020, there were 2.9 million lone parent families in the UK, which is 14.7% of all families.²⁵ Children of separated parents are at increased risk of:²⁶

- growing up in households with lower incomes and poorer housing
- experiencing behavioural problems
- performing less well in school and gaining fewer educational qualifications
- leaving school and home when young
- becoming sexually active, pregnant or a parent at an early age
- reporting more symptoms of depression
- reporting higher levels of smoking, drinking and drug use during adolescence and adulthood

There were around 18,500 lone parent households with dependent children in Suffolk in 2020, which is approximately 7.5% of all local households (table 8). In 2019, this proportion was 6.1%. There

were an estimated 22,500 children under the age of 16 living in lone parent households in Suffolk, which equates to just under 16% of all children aged under 16. In West Suffolk, this increased to nearly 1 in 4 children. The estimated number of dependent children (0-18 year olds) living in lone parent households in Suffolk was 29,200, which is 17.9% of all dependent children across the county. This proportion, once more, was highest in West Suffolk (26%).

Table 8 Number of lone parent households with dependent* children in Suffolk (2020)

Area	Households		Children under 16**		Children 0-18	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Babergh	2,000	6.5	2,500	16.4	2,900	15.8
East Suffolk	6,400	8.4	8,300	16.5	9,800	17.6
Ipswich	2,400	4.6	1,600	7.3	3,300	13.3
Mid Suffolk	2,100	6.8	1,600	8.1	2,900	12.0
West Suffolk	5,700	9.8	8,600	24.7	10,200	26.0
Suffolk	18,500	7.5	22,500	15.9	29,200	17.9

Source: Office for National Statistics. NOMIS – Annual Population Survey²⁷

* A household that contains at least one dependent child. A dependent child is one aged 16 years or under, or aged 16 to 18 years and in full-time education.

** These estimates are potentially unreliable due to small sample sizes.

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