

Bolton in Brief

Our people

Bolton is home to 310,000 people, 24% are aged under 18 and 17% aged 65+. Bolton has a higher proportion of young people under 18 than England as a whole, and also slightly higher than Greater Manchester. Bolton has a lower proportion of people aged 65+ than England but slightly more than Greater Manchester (mid-2024 population estimates). By 2040, Bolton is expected to have around 317,000 residents (3.8% increase from 2025) – a lower increase than we see for England or GM as a whole (2022 based population projections).

Bolton is richly diverse: 69% of our population are from a White English, Welsh, Scottish or British background, while 31% identify with another group. 20% belong to Asian ethnic groups and 4% to Black ethnic groups. Our Asian population is higher than Greater Manchester and England as a whole, but our Black population is lower than both Greater Manchester and England, 97% of Bolton's population either speak English as their main language or are proficient in speaking English (census 2021).

Bolton experiences high levels of deprivation, being just outside the top 10% of most deprived local council areas in England; 46% of residents live in an area that is among the 20% most deprived nationally, while 16% live in an area that is among the 20% least deprived (Indices of Deprivation, 2025). In 2024, 38% of Bolton children (24,600 individuals) lived in relative low-income households – putting Bolton among the top 20 highest in the country (DWP 2024).

Our place

Bolton is located in the North West of England, and is one of the 10 Greater Manchester boroughs. Bolton borders the Greater Manchester boroughs of Bury, Salford, and Wigan; to the north it borders Lancashire (Chorley), and Blackburn with Darwen.

All of Bolton is classed as 'Urban: Nearer to a major town or city' (DEFRA 2025). 27% of the borough is developed land (highways and road transport 10%, residential 5%, industry and commerce 2%). Of the 73% of the borough that is classed as undeveloped land, 29% is in agricultural use, 18% forest, open land and water, and 15% residential gardens (Land use in England, 2022). The main built up areas, together with highest levels of deprivation, are around Bolton, the main town centre near the centre of the borough, and Farnworth towards the south (Indices of Deprivation, 2025). The west is less developed but has built up areas and also a degree of deprivation surrounding the district centres of Horwich and Westhoughton. Bolton has 3 grade 1 listed buildings and numerous other buildings, structures and places of historical importance (Historic England, 2025). Bolton has a number of Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSIs): the West Pennine Moors to the north of the borough, Red Moss (Horwich), Nob End and Ashclough (Little Lever) (DEFRA Magic Mapping). 33% of the borough's households live in terraced houses, and 13% in flats (Census 2021). 12% of Bolton households are in fuel poverty (DESNZ, 2023).

68% of Bolton adults age 16-64 are in employment, lower than the North West as a whole. Among those who are economically inactive, 29% are long term sick, 31% students, 10% retired, and 20% looking after home and family (NOMIS labour market profile, 12 months to Sept 2025). Pay for jobs in Bolton is on average lower than for England or the North West as a whole (median annual full-time gross salary: Bolton £30,455; England £37,647; NW £35,176) (ONS earnings and hours worked, 2024 revised edition).

Individual behaviour is crucially influenced by the social and physical environment in which they live. Bolton has 155.1 fast food outlets per 100,000 population, worse than England; 24% of Bolton adults meet the '5-a-day' fruit and vegetable consumption recommendations (worse than the England rate of 31%), 61% are physically active (worse than the England rate of 67%), and 71% are overweight or obese (worse than the England rate of 65%). 12% of Bolton adults smoke (similar to England) – down from 24% in 2011. 37% of year 6 students (age 10-11) are overweight or obese (similar to England) – this has improved since the peak in Covid years, but follows the England pattern of a long-term increase. 58% are physically active (better than the England rate of 48%). (OHID, Obesity, physical activity and nutrition profile; Public Health Outcomes Framework).

Bolton has a vibrant voluntary and community sector, with 26% of Bolton adults volunteering at least once a month (GM residents survey).

Our health and wellbeing

As with many local authorities in the north of England, the health of people in Bolton is generally worse over a range of measures than the average for England (OHID Local Authority Health Profiles).

Life expectancy is an important indicator of overall population health, and inequalities in health. Bolton's life expectancy at birth is significantly worse than England for both males and females, and has been so since 2001. At 76.9 years for males and 81.4 for females, life expectancy in Bolton is over 2 years less than seen at England (ONS Life expectancy for local areas 2022-24). Within Bolton, life expectancy varies by over 10 years between small areas (MSOA life expectancy 2019-23). Health inequalities are systematic, unfair and avoidable differences in health outcomes. They stem from the social, economic and environmental conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age (NICE). The main conditions contributing to the life expectancy gap by deprivation within Bolton are circulatory disease and respiratory disease for males, and respiratory disease and cancer for females (OHID Segment tool 2025). Bolton's under 75 mortality from all causes is worse than England, as is mortality from heart disease and stroke, chronic lower respiratory disease and lung cancer. The all age mortality rate for deaths involving diabetes and deaths involving hypertensive disease are both better than England as is all age mortality from breast cancer³⁰. (OHID Mortality profile, 2025).

Our mental health influences our physical health, as well as our capability to lead a healthy lifestyle and to manage and recover from physical health conditions. 15% of Bolton adults have depression, as recorded on practice disease registers, and 7% say

they often or always feel lonely, these figures are similar to England (OHID adult mental health and wellbeing profile, 2025).

Amongst children and young people, 35% of 5 year olds have visually obvious dental decay (worse than England's rate of 22%) , and 90% of children have at least one dose of MMR by age 2 (similar to England), – measles is a highly infectious vaccine preventable viral infection which can cause serious disease, the target is 95% vaccine coverage nationally (OHID Health protection profile 2024/25).

Our people - references

Bolton JSNA – Population [Population – Bolton JSNA](#)

Bolton JSNA – Ethnicity [Ethnicity – Bolton JSNA](#)

Bolton JSNA – Deprivation [Deprivation – Bolton JSNA](#)

Mid 2024 population estimates. ONS. (2025) [Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

2022 based population projections. ONS (2025). Population projections for local authorities by five-year age groups and sex, England
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2>

Census 2021 NOMIS. [TS021 - Ethnic group - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics](#)

Census 2021 NOMIS [TS029 - Proficiency in English - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics](#)

Indices of Deprivation 2025, MHCLG (2025). [English indices of deprivation 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

Mid 2024 LSOA population estimates. ONS (2025). [Lower layer Super Output Area population estimates \(supporting information\) - Office for National Statistics](#)

DWP. (2024). Children in low income families: local area statistics. [Children in low income families: local area statistics - GOV.UK](#)

Our place – references

Bolton JSNA – Built & natural environment [Built and natural environment – Bolton JSNA](#)

Bolton JSNA – Deprivation [Deprivation – Bolton JSNA](#)

Bolton JSNA – Useful websites: GM Residents survey [Useful websites – Bolton JSNA](#)

DEFRA (2025). Rural Urban Classification, based on the 2021 census. [Rural Urban Classification - GOV.UK](#)

DLUHC (2022). Land use in England, 2022. [Land use in England, 2022 - GOV.UK](#)

Indices of Deprivation 2025, MHCLG (2025). [English indices of deprivation 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

Historic England. (2025). Search the National Heritage List for England [National Heritage List for England | Historic England](#)

DEFRA Magic Mapping [Magic Map Application](#)

Census 2021 [Accommodation type - Census Maps, ONS](#)

Department for Energy Security & Net Zero. Domestic Energy Map. Fuel poor households 2023. [domesticenergymap.uk](#)

NOMIS Labour Market Profile. [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics](#) (Oct 2024 - Sep 2025).

ONS (2025). Earnings and hours worked, place of work by local authority: ASHE Table 7. [Earnings and hours worked, place of work by local authority: ASHE Table 7 - Office for National Statistics](#) 2024 revised edition.

OHID (2025). Obesity, physical activity and nutrition profile [Obesity, physical activity and nutrition - Data | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care](#)

OHID (2025). Public Health Outcomes Framework [Public Health Outcomes Framework - Data | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care](#) adult overweight/ obesity: 2023/24; 5 a day: 2023/24; physically active adults 2023/24.

GM residents survey, all waves to wave 20, calculated from login-only dashboard. [Resident Surveys - Greater Manchester Combined Authority](#)

Our health and wellbeing - references

Bolton JSNA – Life expectancy [Life expectancy – Bolton JSNA](#)

Bolton JSNA – Mental health and wellbeing [Mental health and wellbeing – Bolton JSNA](#)

Bolton JSNA – vaccination [Vaccinations – Bolton JSNA](#)

OHID (2025). Local Authority Health Profiles. [Local Authority Health Profiles - Data | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care](#)

2022-2024 ONS (2025). Life expectancy for local areas of the UK. [Life expectancy for local areas of the UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

MSOA life expectancy at birth, 2019-2023. OHID (2025). Fingertips Local Health. [Local health, public health data for small geographic areas - Data | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care](#)

NICE (nd). What are health inequalities [What are health inequalities | NICE](#)

OHID. (2025). Segment tool. [Segment Tool](#)

OHID (2025). Mortality profile. [Mortality Profile - Data | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care](#) persons, 3 year range, 2022-24, directly standardised rates

OHID (2025) Adult mental health and wellbeing profile [Adult mental health and wellbeing - Data | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care](#)

OHID (2025). Health protection profile. [Health Protection | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care 2024/25 data](#)

Reviewed February 2026