

#### 4.2.4. Resident Population Forecasts

People's need for prescribed medicines increases with age. As well as growing in terms of the overall number of people in the population, the population is living longer and there will be a proportionately higher growth in the number of people in age groups over 60.

Prescribing need can be assessed using a measure called the item ASTRO-PU 2013, which is a national weighting formula that weights different age groups based on their current usage of medicines. Using ASTRO-PU 2013 weighted populations and population projections we can predict future need.

Population projections are produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). In simple terms they consider the following factors: the number of births minus the numbers of deaths; the numbers of people moving into Cheshire East from other areas of the country minus Cheshire East residents moving out to other parts of the country (internal migration) and people moving into Cheshire East from abroad minus Cheshire East residents moving to other parts of the world (international migration) to predict future growth or contraction of the population by age.

The census provides the most accurate snapshot of the population at a specific point in time, so once the results are available, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) adjusts (rebased) previous population estimates to align with the new, more accurate data. This helps correct any discrepancies that may have built up over the years due to estimation errors, migration, births, and deaths

Calculations in the 2022-2025 PNA<sup>1</sup> were based on the previous population projection release from ONS. This showed most of the increase in population size to occur in the age groups 60 and above. The number of people aged between 60 and 84 was predicted to increase by 21.2%, and the number of very elderly people aged 85 and over increased by 33%. The 16- to 18-year-old age group would also see an increase of 22% between 2019 and 2029. There were only small changes predicted in the size of other age groups in the population. However, these population projections were based on ONS 2018 population estimates<sup>2</sup>. ONS Census 2021 data and the consequent population estimates have proved these to be inaccurate and understating the growth seen within Cheshire East.

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<sup>1</sup> Cheshire East Public Health Intelligence Team. Cheshire East PNA 2022-2025, published September 2022 [Cheshire East PNA 2022-2025](#)

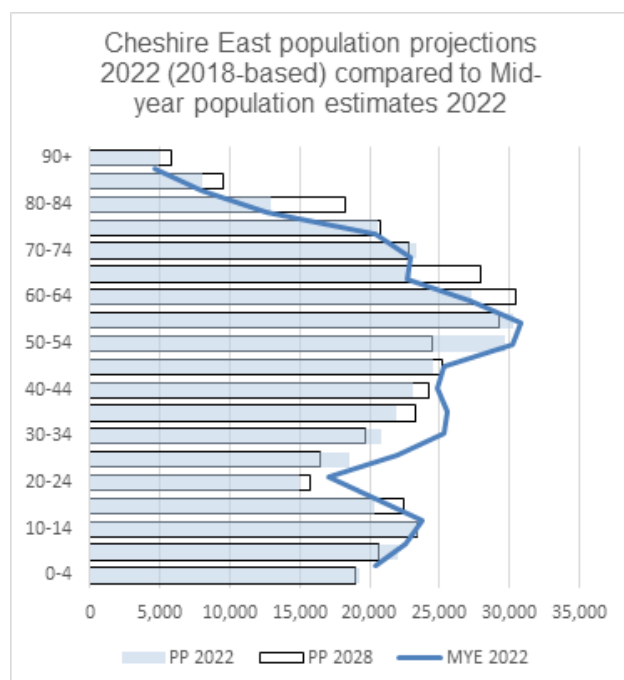
<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics – Subnational Population Projections for England (2018 Based). <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/subnationalpopulationprojectionsforengland/2018based>

The table and graph clearly show the differences between the current Mid-year estimate, based on Census 2021 data (MYE-2022)<sup>3</sup> and the previously published population projections for the same year (PP 2022)<sup>4</sup>. The older age bands, 65 and over had been expected to increase by more, and the younger and working age bands had been predicted to be lower.

**Table 1: Comparison of ONS 2022 population projections<sup>4</sup> and ONS 2022 mid-year population estimates<sup>3</sup>**

Age Range	PP 2022		MYE 2022		Difference MYE & PP
	Number	%	Number	%	
0-4	19,259	4.95%	20,383	5.01%	-1,124
5-19	65,884	16.93%	66,662	16.40%	-778
20-59	183,872	47.26%	200,926	49.42%	-17,054
60-74	73,532	18.90%	72,889	17.93%	643
75+	46,502	11.95%	45,727	11.25%	775
All	389,049	100.00%	406,587	100.00%	-17,538

**Figure 1: Comparison of ONS 2022 population projections<sup>4</sup> and ONS 2022 mid-year population estimates<sup>3</sup> by 5 year age-bands**



<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS), Middle layer Super Output Area population estimates (Accredited official statistics), released 25 November 2024: [Middle layer Super Output Area population estimates \(Accredited official statistics\) - Office for National Statistics](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/middlelayerpopulationestimatesforengland/2022based) [accessed 12/12/24]

<sup>4</sup> Office for National Statistics – Subnational Population Projections for England (2022 based). <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/subnationalpopulationprojectionsforengland/2022based>

Updated population projections were released by ONS on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2025.<sup>4</sup> This was after the 2025-2028 PNA public consultation. However, we are now able to use these to review our previous predictions regarding population growth that we presented in the pre-consultation draft. These new population estimates and projections show that the potential adult working age group of 19 to 59 year olds was previously underestimated and form a larger proportion of the population. The new estimates for 2019 put this age group as 50.8% of the overall population whereas previously it was 49.6%. This may seem small, but it represents nearly an additional 8,000 people. The over 60s are now a smaller proportion of the total population, the new proportion for 2019 is 28.5% compared with 29.3% previously predicted. This represents a thousand less people. Please remember that the overall population of Cheshire East is growing year on year, but different age groups are growing or contracting at different rates which changes the proportion of the overall population that they represent.

The remodelling shows that the largest percentage increases still occur in the age groups 60 and above. The largest percentage increase occurs in the 85 and over age band, followed by the 60 to 64 age band. However, if we look further into the future the 64-84 age band becomes the second highest. The number of very elderly people aged 85 and over, those that will have potentially biggest need will increase by 35%.

**Table 2: Remodelled predicted prescribing need for Cheshire East, 2019 to 2029<sup>3,4</sup>**

Age Band	Year			Percentage change 2019 to 2024	Percentage change 2024 to 2029	Percentage change 2019 to 2029	Eligibility for free prescriptions
	2019	2024	2029				
0 to 4	20012	20194	19939	0.91%	-1.26%	-0.36%	Under 16
5 to 15	48509	51752	51286	6.68%	-0.90%	5.72%	
16 to 18	12281	13739	15092	11.87%	9.85%	22.89%	Aged 16 - 18 and in full-time education
19 to 59	198277	207167	212929	4.48%	2.78%	7.39%	
60 to 64	23995	29390	31417	22.48%	6.90%	30.93%	Aged 60 and over
65 to 84	75696	81529	90775	7.71%	11.34%	19.92%	
85+	11786	13287	15854	12.73%	19.32%	34.51%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>390556</b>	<b>417058</b>	<b>437292</b>	<b>6.79%</b>	<b>4.85%</b>	<b>11.97%</b>	

**Table 3: Predicted prescribing need for Cheshire East, 2022 to 2033<sup>4</sup>**

Age Band	Year			Percentage change 2022 to 2028	Percentage change 2028 to 2033	Percentage change 2022 to 2033	Eligibility for free prescriptions
	2022	2028	2033				
0 to 4	20383	19815	20289	-2.79%	2.39%	-0.46%	Under 16
5 to 15	50737	51584	50505	1.67%	-2.09%	-0.46%	
16 to 18	13257	14917	14960	12.52%	0.29%	12.85%	Aged 16 - 18 and in full-time education
19 to 59	203594	211607	220402	3.94%	4.16%	8.26%	
60 to 64	27243	31161	30362	14.38%	-2.57%	11.45%	Aged 60 and over
65 to 84	78764	89219	96210	13.27%	7.84%	22.15%	
85+	12609	14980	19976	18.80%	33.35%	58.43%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>406587</b>	<b>433282</b>	<b>452704</b>	<b>6.57%</b>	<b>4.48%</b>	<b>11.34%</b>	

Using Item ASTRO-PU 2013 weighted populations, there will be a 10.5% growth in medicines use by 2028, considerably higher than previously predicted. There will be

a further 6.9% increase by 2033, giving a total increase in medicines use of 18.1% over the ten year period.

Changes in prescribing behaviour and trends, alongside demographics, over time, necessitated that the 2013 weighting needed to be refreshed to ensure that it remains accurate. New 2024 weightings have been developed. Unfortunately, we are unable to apply these accurately as they break down the elderly populations i.e. over 75s into 5-year age bands up to age 110+. Our populations are not broken down beyond 90+ but rough calculations show the new growth to be approximately 10.8% between 2022 and 2028.

Previous population projections presented in the last PNA showed the majority of the growth between the base year 2019 and 2029 taking place in the Bollington, Disley, Poynton Care Community (5.6%) and the Knutsford Care Community (5.4%). There was relatively little population growth in the Crewe area (2.8%).

Remodelling the population change between 2019 and 2029 using the new 2022 based population projections produces larger percentage changes between all time periods for all care communities. The care communities of Congleton, Holmes Chapel and SMASH show the highest growth, which tallies with the housing development predictions. Crewe Care Community, despite seeing lower growth, will remain the largest population area in the borough.

**Table 4: Remodelled population changes for Cheshire East care communities, 2019 to 2029<sup>3,4</sup>**

Care Community	Year			Percentage change 2019 to 2024	Percentage change 2024 to 2029	Percentage change 2019 to 2029
	2019	2024	2029			
Alderley Edge, Chelford, Handforth, Wilmslow	45125	48237	50727	6.90%	5.16%	12.41%
Macclesfield	62914	65505	68646	4.12%	4.80%	9.11%
Bollington, Disley, Poynton	26761	27966	29440	4.50%	5.27%	10.01%
Knutsford	25602	26675	28143	4.19%	5.50%	9.92%
Congleton, Holmes Chapel	41230	44906	47143	8.92%	4.98%	14.34%
Nantwich and Rural	39516	42707	44851	8.08%	5.02%	13.50%
Crewe	80012	85698	89425	7.11%	4.35%	11.76%
SMASH	69396	75363	78917	8.60%	4.72%	13.72%
<b>Cheshire East</b>	<b>390556</b>	<b>417058</b>	<b>437292</b>	<b>6.79%</b>	<b>4.85%</b>	<b>11.97%</b>

The new population projections show that Bollington, Disley, Poynton Care Community (7%) and the Knutsford Care Community (7.1%) have the largest percentage increases over the lifetime of this PNA. All the care communities except Crewe and CHOC have population projections higher than the predicted population using planned housing development calculations presented within this PNA. (see section 4.3).

**Table 5: Predicted prescribing need for Cheshire East care communities, 2022 to 2033<sup>4</sup>**

Care Community	Year			Percentage change 2022 to 2028	Percentage change 2028 to 2033	Percentage change 2022 to 2033
	2022	2028	2033			
Alderley Edge, Chelford, Handforth, Wilmslow	47014	50204	52664	6.79%	4.90%	12.02%
Macclesfield	63824	68043	70968	6.61%	4.30%	11.19%
Bollington, Disley, Poynton	27237	29148	30596	7.01%	4.97%	12.33%
Knutsford	26006	27861	29205	7.14%	4.82%	12.30%
Congleton, Holmes Chapel	43770	46686	48903	6.66%	4.75%	11.73%
Nantwich and Rural	41672	44425	46482	6.60%	4.63%	11.54%
Crewe	83599	88716	92279	6.12%	4.02%	10.38%
SMASH	73464	78199	81606	6.44%	4.36%	11.08%
<b>Cheshire East</b>	<b>406587</b>	<b>433282</b>	<b>452704</b>	<b>6.57%</b>	<b>4.48%</b>	<b>11.34%</b>

### In summary

People's need for prescribed medicines increases with age. As well as growing in terms of the overall number of people in the population, the population is living longer and there will be a proportionately higher growth in the number of people in age groups over 60.

- The overall Cheshire East population is growing more rapidly than previously predicted.
- Cheshire East is experiencing above-average population growth compared to both regional and national levels.
- Different age groups have grown or contracted at different rates than previously predicted which has changed the proportion of the overall population that they represent. The working age group 19 to 59 is larger than previously predicted (nearly 8,000 higher representing 51% of the overall population), and the over 60s is smaller (just over 1,000 less and representing 29% of the overall population).
- Furthermore, different age groups will grow or contract at different rates changing the proportion of the overall population that they represent over the lifetime of this PNA.
- The age group with the highest pharmaceutical need i.e. 60 and over will increase over the lifetime of this PNA, predicted growth of 14% between 2022 and 2028.
- Using Item ASTRO-PU 2013 weighted populations, we have calculated a 10.5% growth in medicines use by 2028, considerably higher than previously predicted.
- Modelling at a care community level between 2022 and 2028 shows that most areas have population projections that are higher than the calculated predicted populations based on housing development (see section 4.3). The exceptions are Crewe and CHOC. These two areas will need to be monitored using population estimates and GP registrations to see if the pharmaceutical provision remains adequate.