

Demographics

2026



Thurrock Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Demographics 2026

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Executive Summary:

Location

- Thurrock is located in the south of Essex, on the north bank of the River Thames, immediately east of London and has over 18 miles (about 29 kilometres) of River Thames frontage (riverside) along its southern boundary.
- The district has an area of 165 sq. kilometres and borders the London Borough of Havering, Brentwood, Basildon, and Castle Point.

Population

- The total population estimate is 180,989 as of the Mid-Year Estimate 2024.
- Thurrock has a relatively larger proportion of young population, with a higher proportion of residents aged 30 to 49 years compared to England.
- The General Fertility Rate (GFR) is declining but remains higher in Thurrock (54.6 per 1000 in 2024) than the national value (49 per 1,000).
- Mortality rate from all causes and for all ages (males, females and total) in Thurrock is higher as compared to national and regional rates (1,014 per 100K persons in Thurrock, 923 per 100K in England and 869 per 100K in EoE).

Population Groups

- Thurrock is more ethnically diverse than the regional and national averages. The Black, Black British, Caribbean or African population increased by 4% between 2011 to 2021, the largest proportional increase.
- The unemployment rate for people aged 16–64 year olds (4.3% in 2024-25) is slightly higher than regional (3.7%) and national (4%) averages.
- A higher percentage of the population (11.3%) has a main language that is not English, compared to England (9.2%) and the East of England (7.4%).
- Thurrock is noted as being more overcrowded than England and the East of England averages (Thurrock's population density: 1,074 pop/km²).
- Thurrock has a relatively higher proportion of the population living in housing that is socially rented from the Council/Local Authority (14.5%), more than twice that of the East of England (7.1%).
- Thurrock shows a slightly higher proportion of residents identifying as heterosexual (91.4%) and lower proportions identifying as gay, lesbian, or bisexual compared with England and the EoE, while non-response rates were also slightly lower (Thurrock – 6.6%, England – 7.5%, EoE – 7.2%).
- Gender identity pattern in Thurrock is very similar to EoE and England, with around 94% identifying with their sex registered at birth and only 0.5% identifying as transgender or another gender identity.

Deprivation

- Thurrock is ranked 78th out of 153 Upper Tier Local Authorities in the 2025 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), placing it around the national median.
- The key domains driving relative deprivation are lower income levels, unemployment, low education and skills, and significant barriers to housing and services.

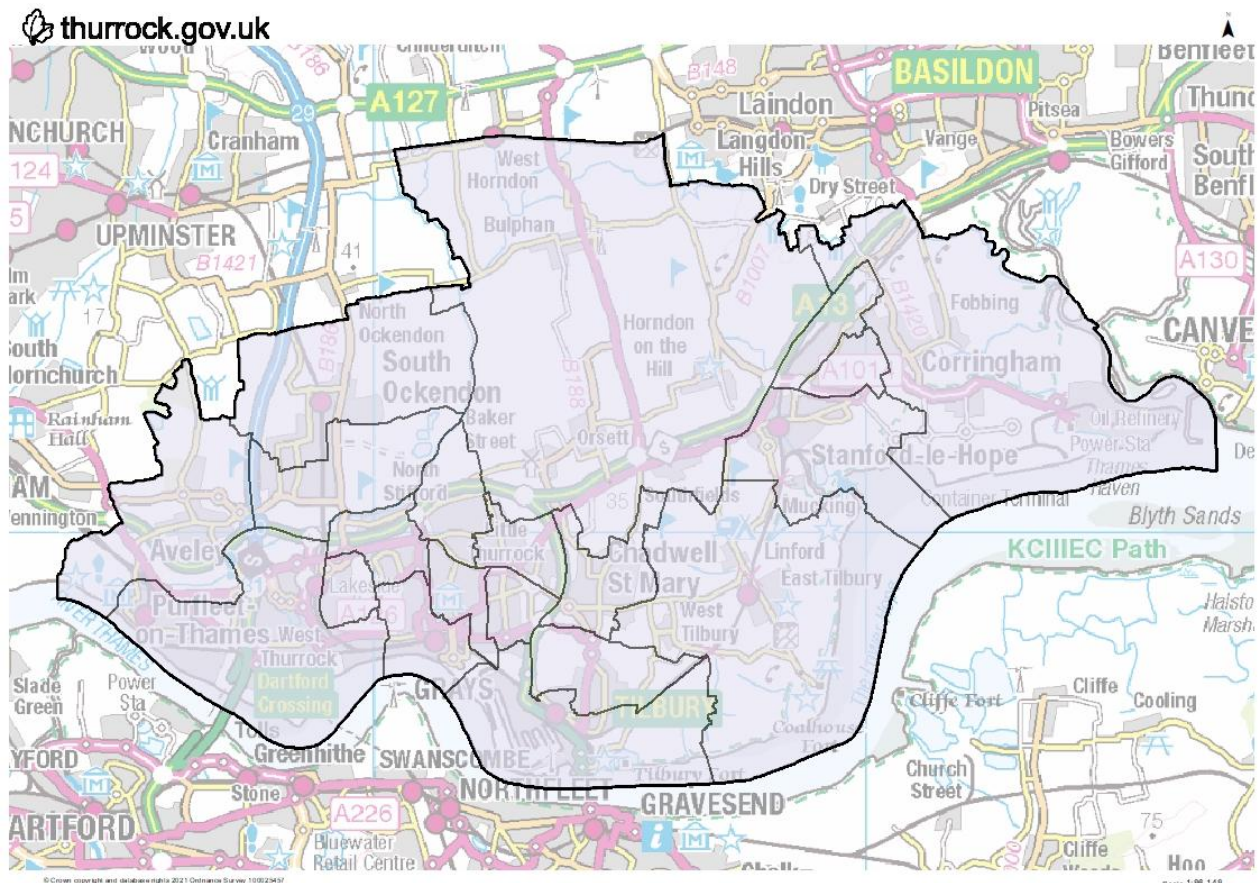
Population growth and projections

- Between 2011 and 2021, the population increased by 11.2%, a growth rate greater than both the East of England (EoE) (8.3%) and England (6.6%).
- The highest increase in population was seen in the age group 70 to 74 year (43%) olds (compared to England's 37%) in the last decade, followed by <15 age group (16%, compared to England's 1%)
- The population is projected to grow to 189,969 by 2035, a 4.6% increase over 10 years, which is similar to the projected increase for England.
- Projections indicate an ageing population over the next decade, with the highest percentage increases expected in older age groups, notably 45–49 and 65–69 years.

1. Location

Thurrock is situated in the south of Essex and lies on the north bank of the river Thames immediately East of London with an area of 165 sq. kilometres. The neighbouring districts are the London Borough of Havering, Brentwood, Basildon and Castle Point. On the opposite side of the Thames are Gravesham and Dartford in Kent.

Figure 1: Location of Thurrock on map



Source: Thurrock Public Health GIS Arc Mapping

2. Population

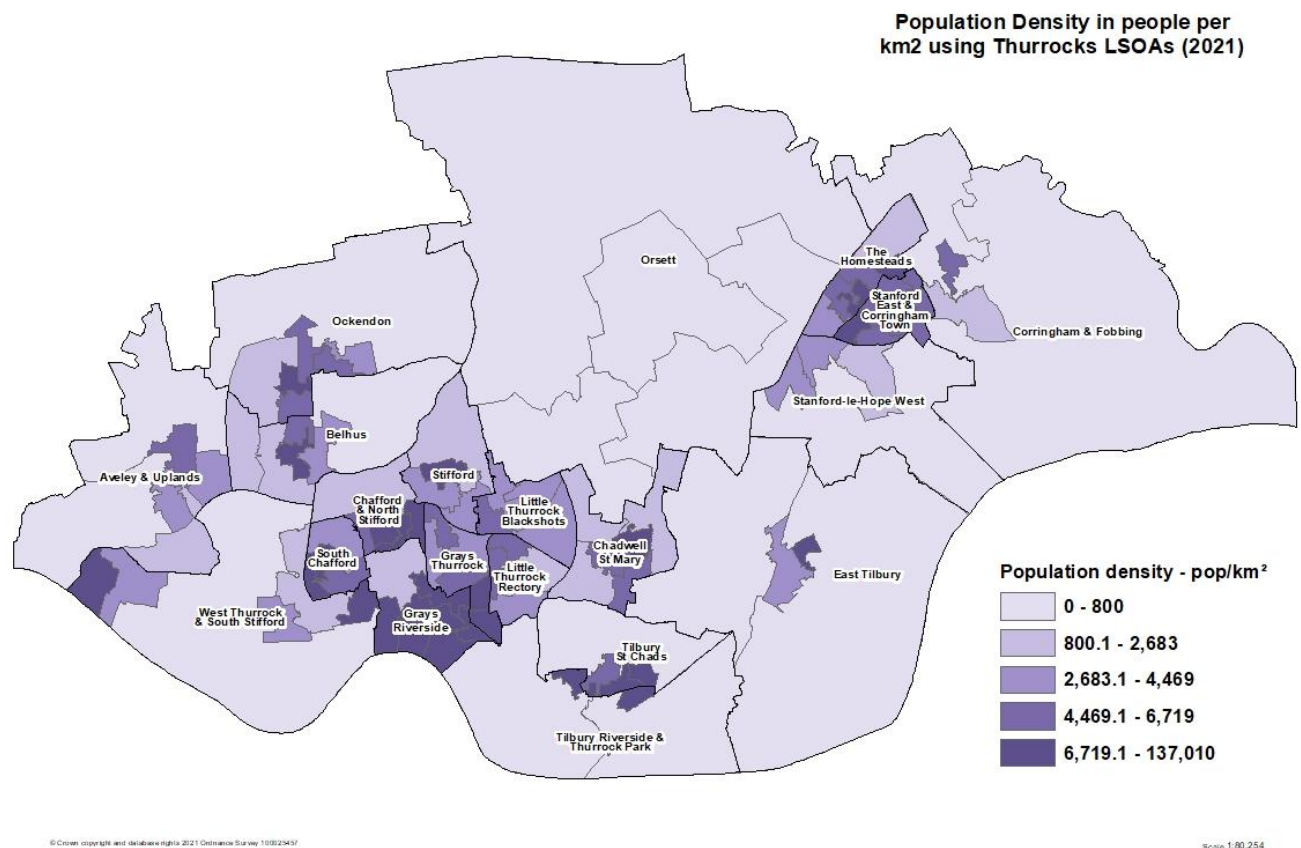
This section gives an overview of Thurrock's population (detailed demographics and population groups can be found in later sections), population density, change in population over the last decade and components of population change.

2.1 Population Overview:

The total population estimate of Thurrock, according to the Mid-Year Estimate 2024, is 180,989, of which 49% are males and 51% are females. Thurrock has a relatively younger population than the national average (see **Figure 9**, Section 3.1).

2.2 Population Density:

Figure 2: Population density of Thurrock in pop/km² (Mid-Year Estimate 2024)



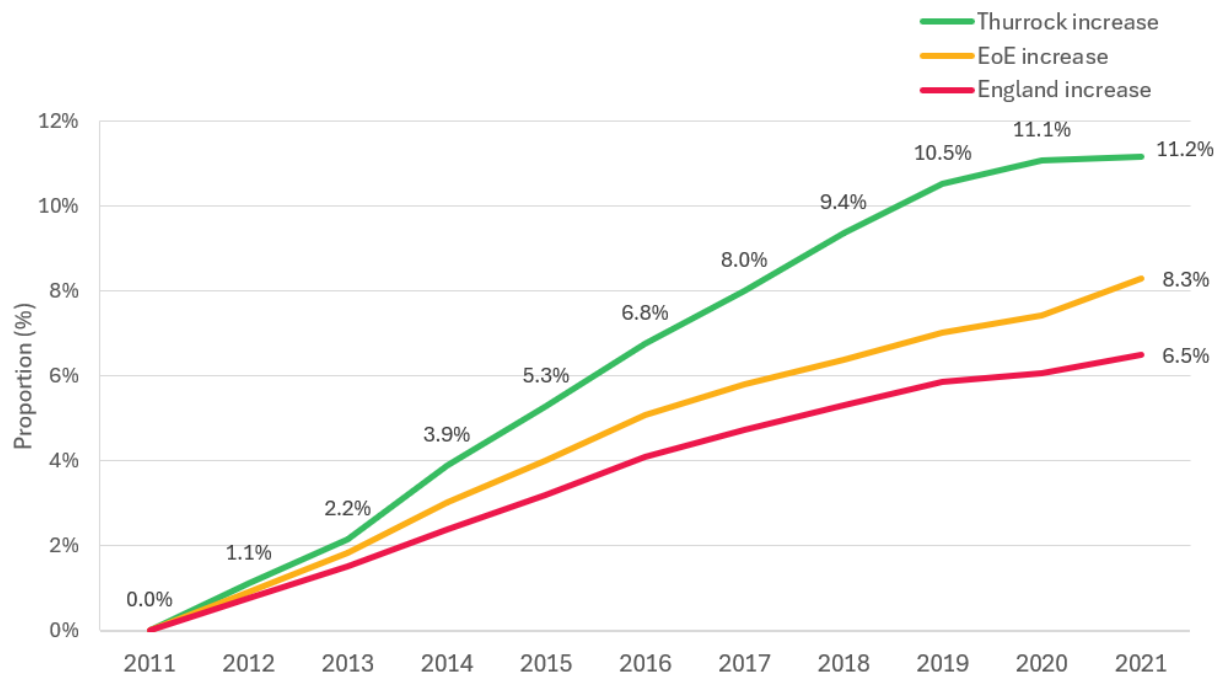
Source: ONS – Open Geographic Portal

As of 2021, Thurrock's population density is 1,074 pop/km². It is the 12th most densely populated of the East of England's 45 local authority areas, with around eight people living on each football pitch-sized area of land (compared to England - three people for every football pitch-sized piece of land). Thurrock has approximately average population density compared to other English local authority areas, based on latest census.

2.3 Population change in the last decade:

Between the last two censuses, Thurrock's population increased by 11.2% from around 157,700 in 2011 to around 176,000 in 2021. Thurrock's population increased by a greater percentage than the overall population of the East of England (8.3%), and that of England (6.6%) [Figure 3].

Figure 3: Thurrock population increase compared to EoE (East of England) and England (2011 to 2021 trend)



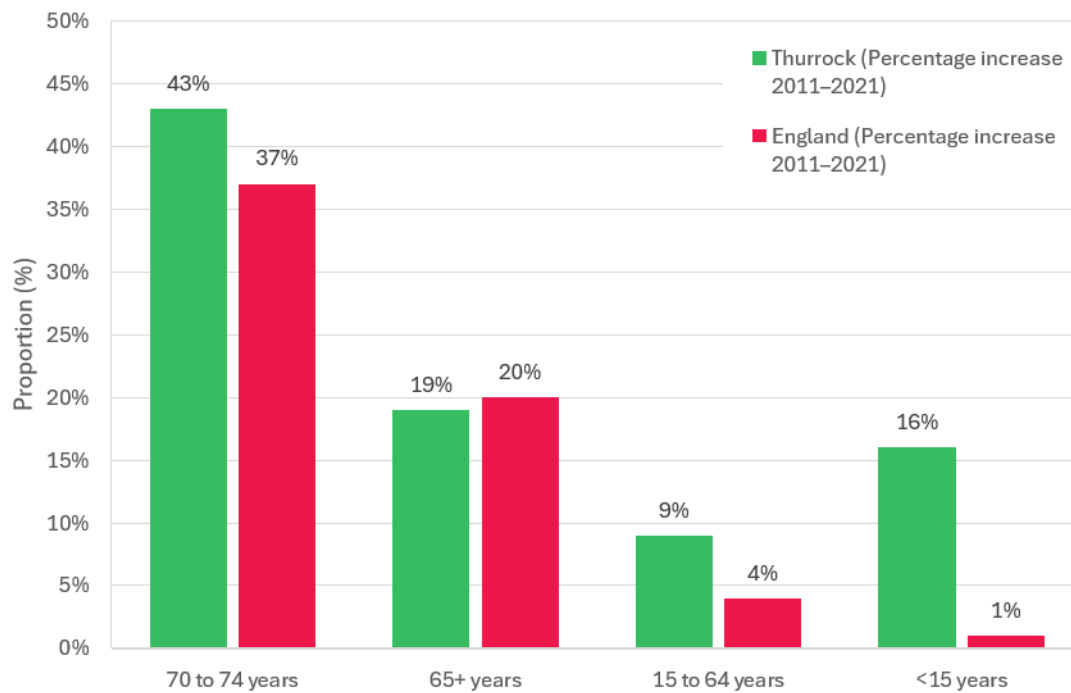
Source: Mid-Year Estimates [Office of National Statistics (ONS)] and 2011, 2021 Census (ONS)

The average (median) age remained at 36 years in Thurrock during the last two censuses. The highest increase in population (43%) was seen in the age group 70 to 74 year olds (compared to England's 37%) in the last decade **[Figure 4]**.

Additional significant increases include:

- 70-74 year olds (43% in Thurrock vs 37% in England)
- 65+ year olds (19.4% in Thurrock vs 20.1% in England)
- 15-64 year olds (8.9% in Thurrock vs 3.6% in England)
- Children <15 years (16.2% in Thurrock vs 5% in England)
- Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African ethnicities (4.1% in Thurrock vs 0.7% in England **[Figure 5]**).

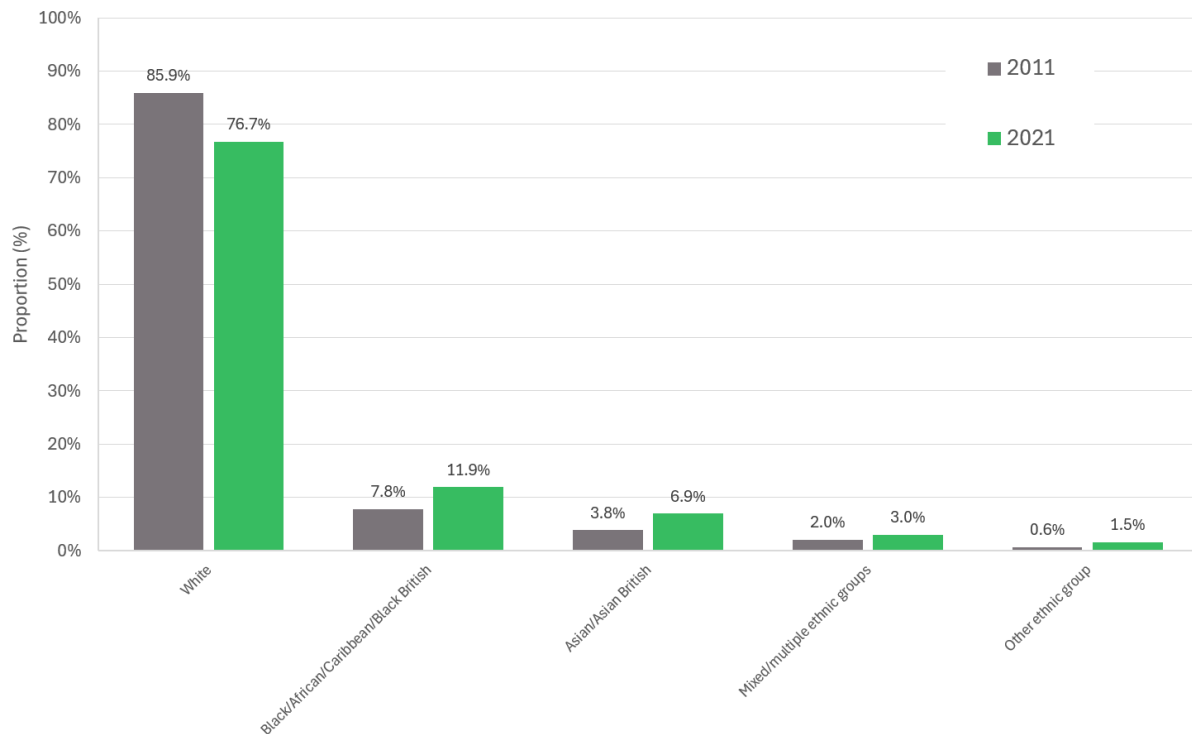
Figure 4: Percentage increase in population size in specific age groups (Thurrock vs England, 2011 to 2021)



Source: Office for National Statistics – 2011 Census and Census 2021

In 2021, 11.9% of Thurrock residents identified their ethnic group within the 'Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African' category, this increased from 7.8% in 2011, and is the largest ethnic grouping increase. **[Figure 5]**

Figure 5: Population change by ethnic groups in Thurrock (2021 vs 2011)



Source: Office for National Statistics – 2011 Census and Census 2021

2.4 Components of Population change:

Population change is primarily driven by natural change (births minus deaths) and net migration (international and internal), which determine population growth or decline over time. Births and immigration increase the population size, while deaths and emigration decrease it. These factors are essential for analysing population shift.

Table 1: Components of population change for Thurrock between 2015 and 2024

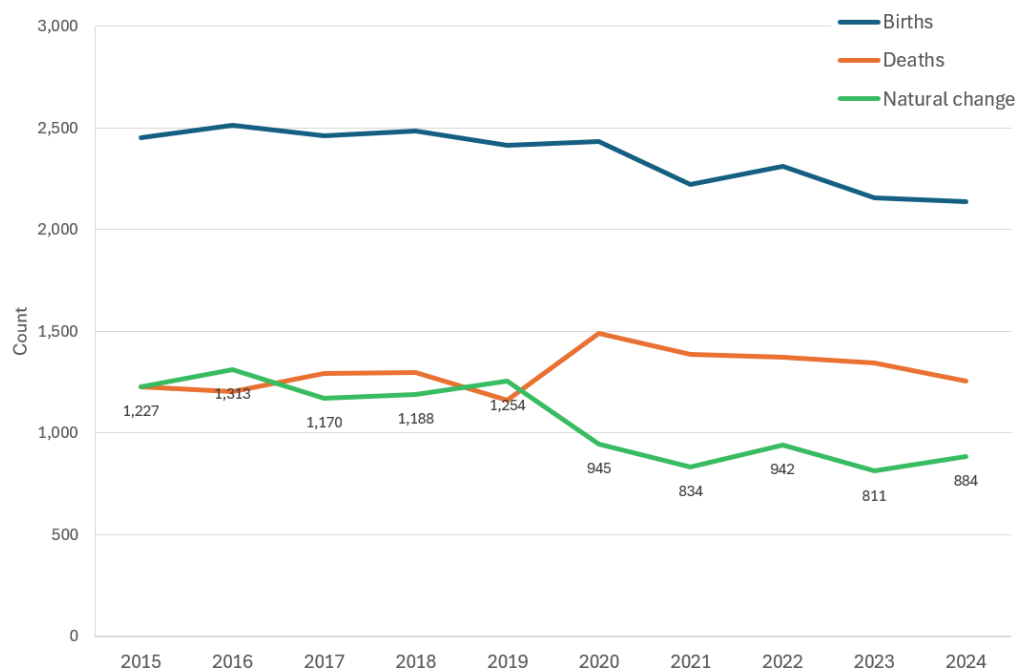
Components of Population change	Values (Count)
2015 population	167,701
Births	+21138
Deaths	-11797
Internal migration in	+84874
Internal migration out	-88118
International migration in	+16902
International migration out	-10753
Other changes	+1042
2024 population ¹	180,989

Source: Office for National Statistics

2.4.1 Natural Change

Natural change resulted in a population increase of 9,341 people between 2015 and 2024, as births were greater than deaths [Figure 6].

Figure 6: Natural change component of Thurrock's population (2015 to 2024)



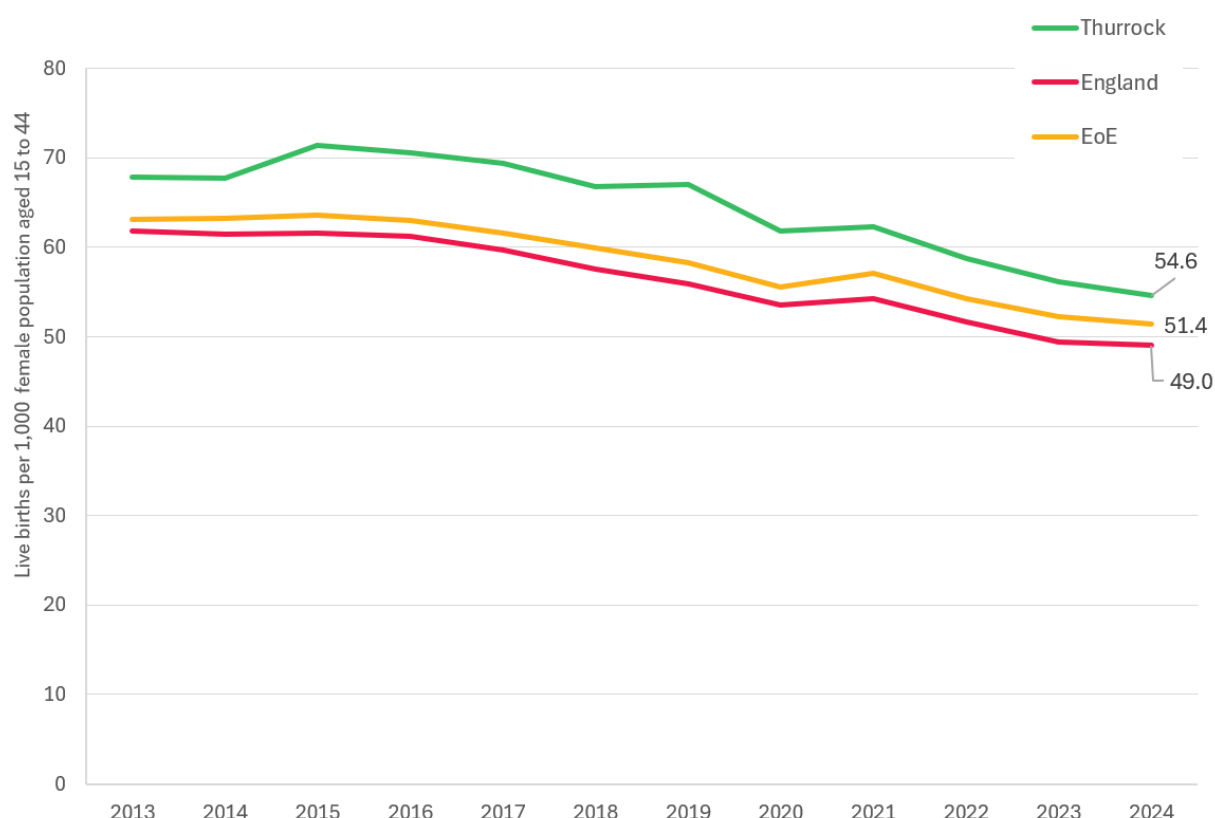
Source: Office of National Statistics

¹ This is the latest population estimate available to date

Birth rates

The General Fertility Rate (GFR) is live births per 1,000 female population aged 15 to 44, calculated using mid-year population estimates. The GFR determines reproductive trends and population growth. Thurrock had a GFR of 67.9 in 2013, which had reduced statistically significantly to 54.6 in 2024 [Figure 7]. There is a general trend of declining GFR nationally. Thurrock has a statistically significantly higher GFR (54.6 /1,000) than both regional (51.4 / 1,000) and national values (49 /1,000).

Figure 7: General Fertility Rate (GFR) – Thurrock vs EoE and England trend (2013 to 2024)



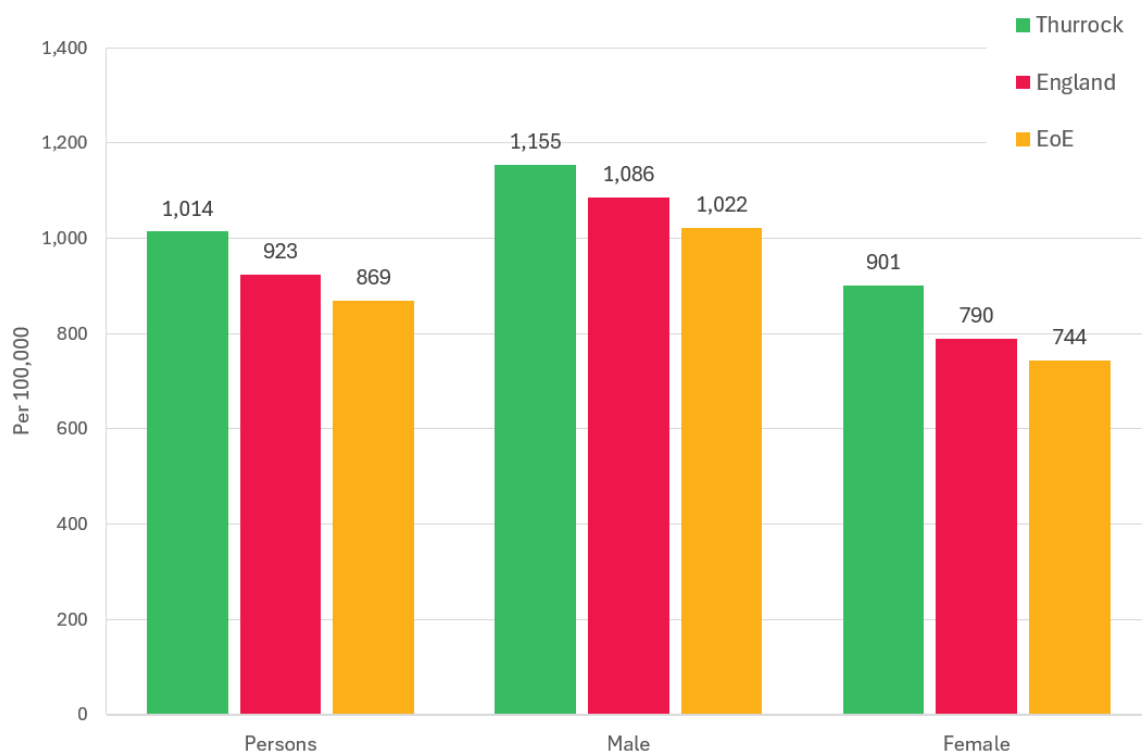
Source: NOMIS - Live births in England and Wales: birth rates down to local authority areas

Death rates

Mortality rates (directly standardised per 100,000, all age, all cause) in Thurrock are statistically significantly higher when compared to national and regional rates [Figure 8]. Within Thurrock, males have a statistically significantly higher mortality rate [1,155

per 100K] than females [901 per 100K]; similar patterns are observed in England and EoE.

Figure 8: Mortality rate (Directly standardised per 100,000, all age, all cause, 2024)



Source: Office for National Statistics

2.4.2 Migration

Both internal and international migration are factors determining the increase or decrease in population. Migration can be further classified as:

- Net internal migration: people moving to and from other areas in the UK
- Net international migration: people moving to and from outside the UK

Between 2015 and 2024, net internal migration led to a fall in the population (-2%), while net international migration led to an increase in Thurrock's population (4.1%).

In total, we can observe that the population increased by 15,459 people between 2015 and 2024 [Table 1].

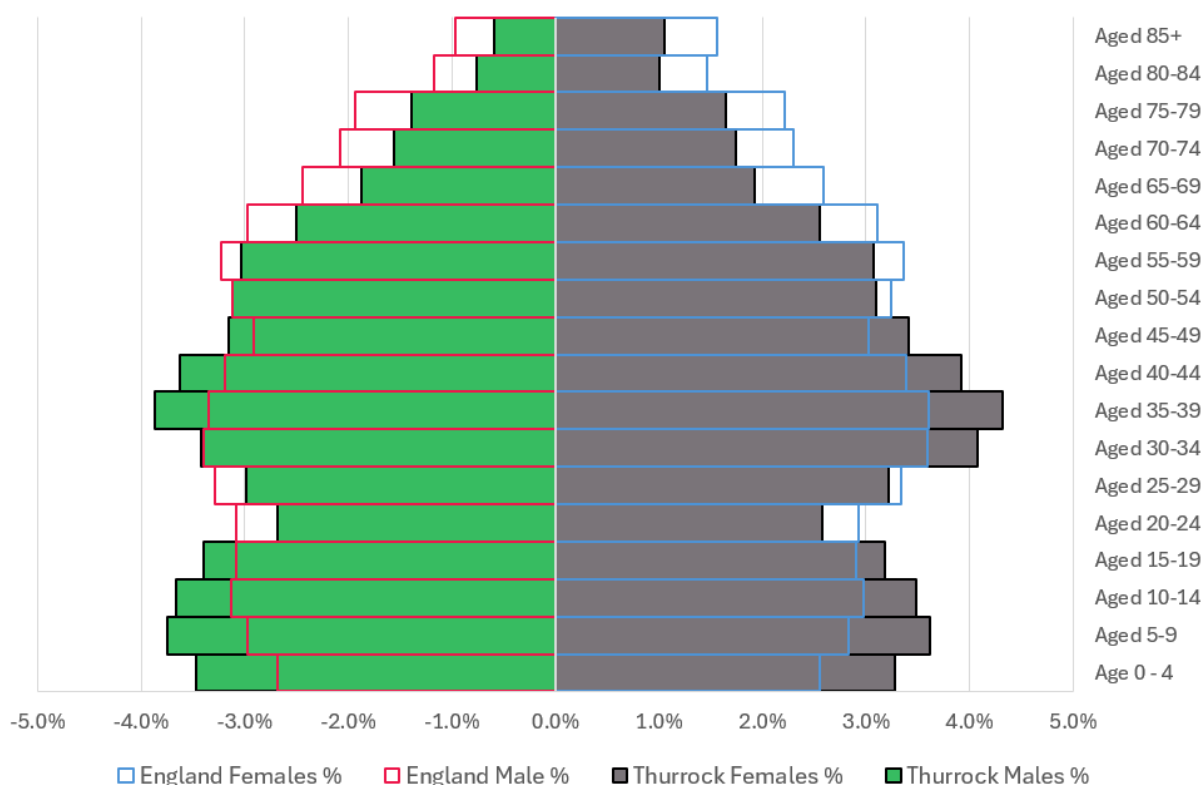
3. Population groups

This section describes Thurrock's population by age, gender, ethnicity and working population.

3.1 Age and sex structure:

Thurrock has a slightly higher proportion of females (51.2%) than males (48.8%). Thurrock has relatively larger proportion of young population (30% - aged between 30 to 49 years) than England (26%) and conversely the age groups over 50 years have a lower proportion of the total population compared to England (Thurrock – 31% Vs England – 38%) [Figure 9]. The proportion of 0 to 19 years old age group is also slightly higher in Thurrock than national average (Thurrock – 27% Vs England - 23%).

Figure 9: Thurrock population pyramid (population distribution by age groups and sex compared with England's distribution – Mid-Year Estimate 2024)



Source: Office of National Statistics

The median age in Thurrock is 37 years and by age category, Thurrock's population of 180,989 usual residents was made up of:

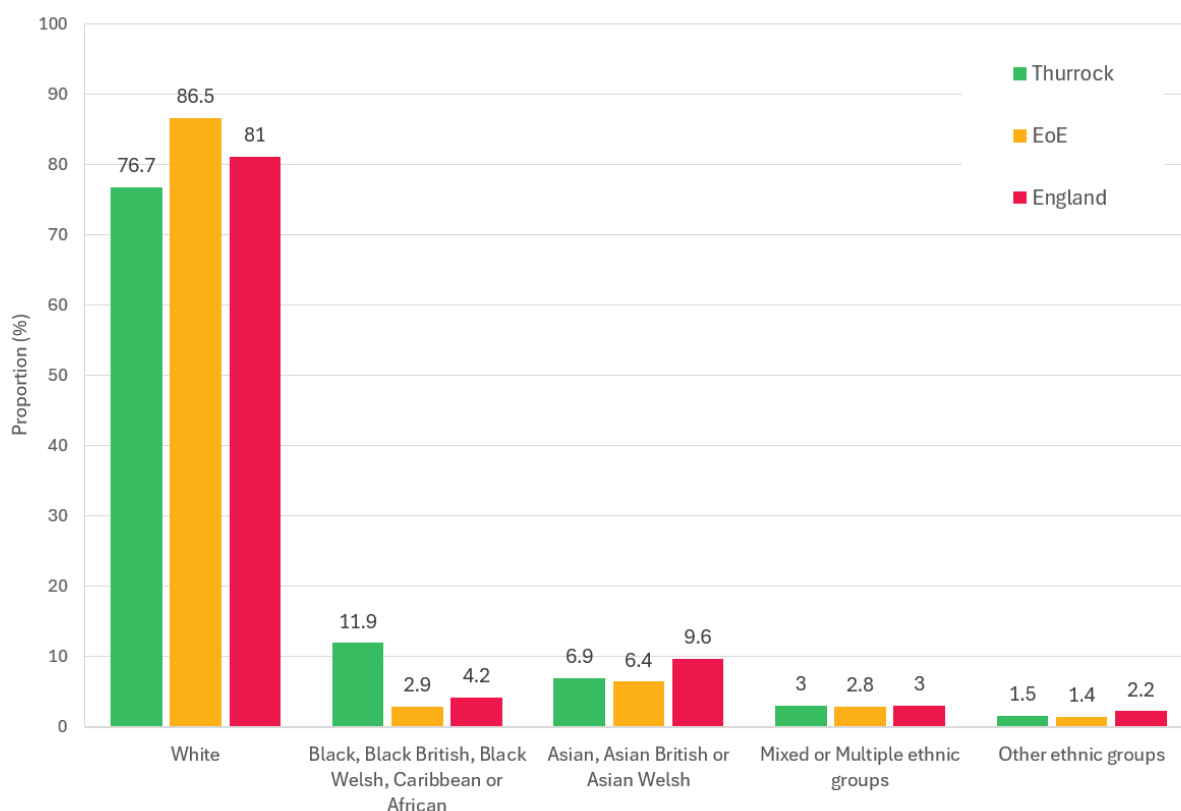
- 41,062 people aged 0 to 15 years, (22.7%)
- 115,411 people aged 16 to 64 years, (63.8%)
- 24,516 people aged 65 years and over, (13.5%).

3.2 Distribution by ethnicity:

Understanding a population's ethnic diversity underpins efficient service planning and resource allocation to meet the needs of the community. Thurrock is more ethnically diverse than the regional and national averages. Thurrock has greater proportion of Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African ethnic groups (11.9%) compared to England (4.2%) and East of England (2.9%). Conversely, it has a lower proportion of the White ethnic group (76.7%), compared to national (81%) and regional averages (86.5%) [Figure 10].

In 2021, 78.1% of Thurrock residents reported their country of birth as England. Nigeria was the next most represented [Table 2].

Figure 10: Population distribution by ethnic group (Census 2021)



Source: Office of National Statistics

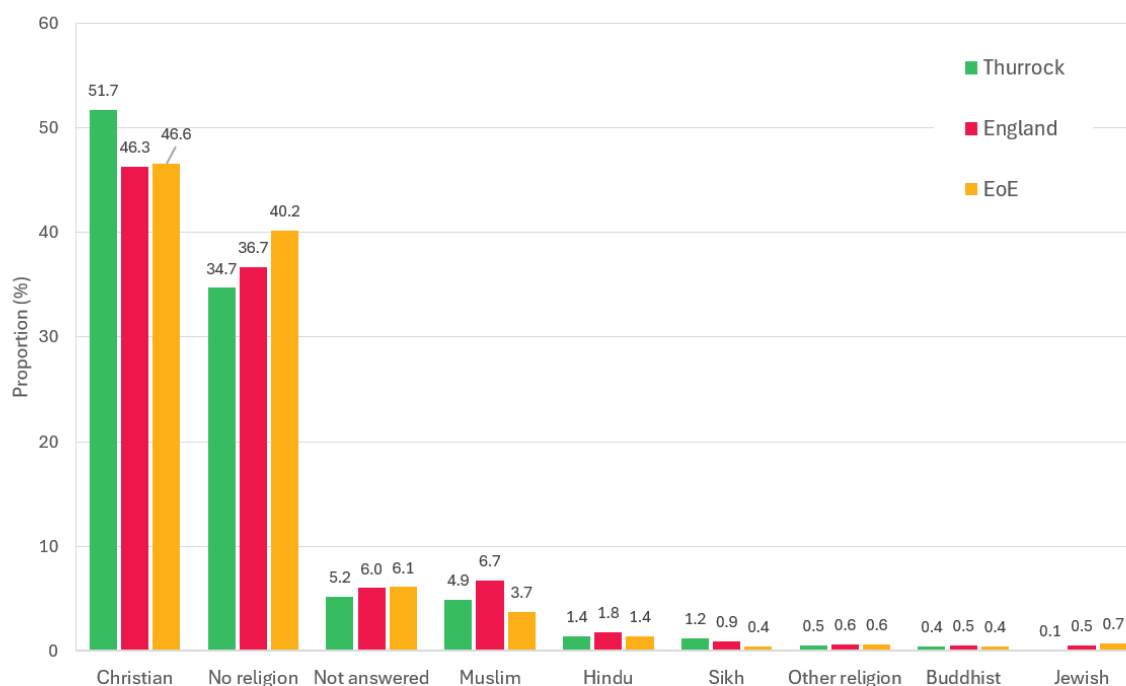
Table 2: Country of birth of Thurrock residents (Census 2021)

Country of Birth	2021 Thurrock	2021 EoE	2021 England
England	78.1%	83.1%	80.3%
Nigeria	3.1%	0.4%	0.5%
Romania	2.9%	1.1%	0.9%
Lithuania	1.7%	0.6%	0.3%
Poland	1.7%	1.3%	1.3%

Source: Office for National Statistics

3.3 Distribution by religion:

Thurrock has a predominantly Christian population, with over half of residents identifying as Christian (51.7%), which is higher than both EoE (46.6%) and England (46.3%) [Figure 11]. While a substantial proportion of residents report having no religion (34.7%), this group is smaller than the regional (40.2%) and national (36.7%) averages. Thurrock is also home to a diverse range of faith communities, including Muslims (4.9%), Hindus (1.4%), and Sikhs (1.2%). Smaller religious groups include Buddhists (0.4%), Jewish residents (0.1%), and those identifying with other religions (0.5%) [Figure 11].

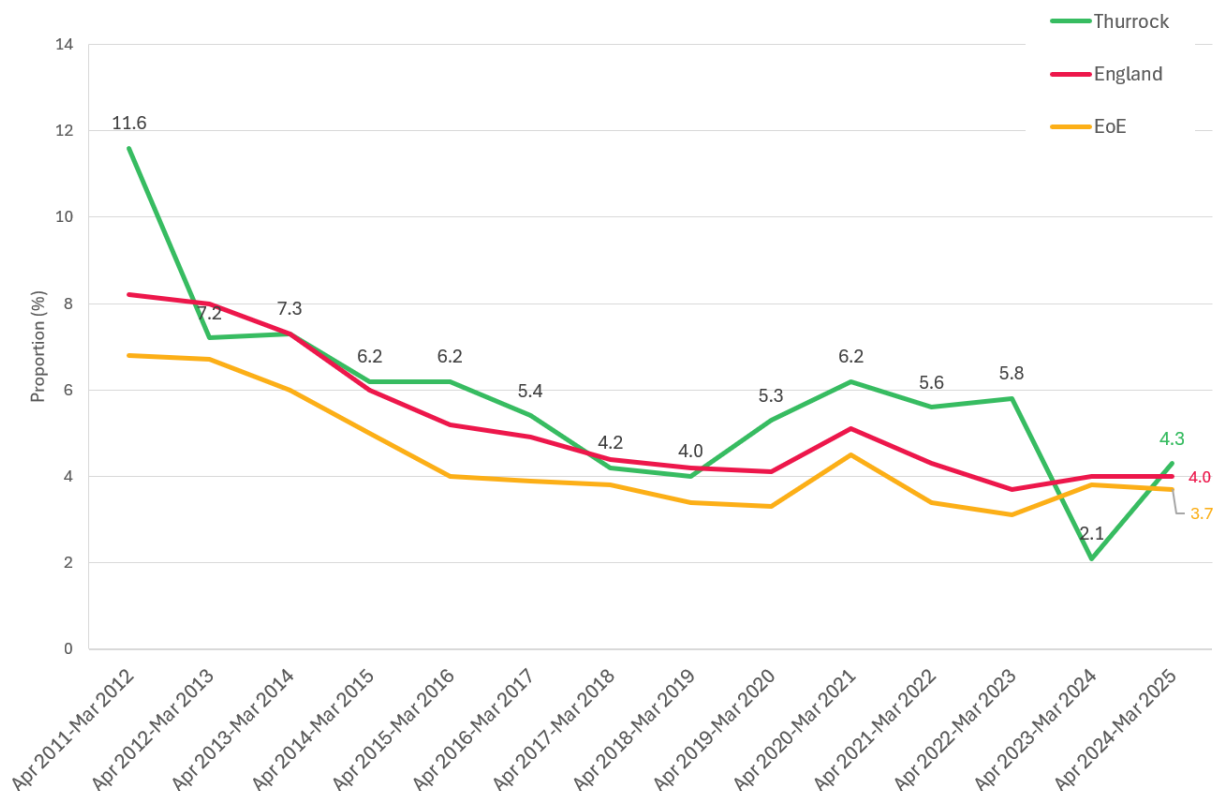
Figure 11: Population distribution by religion (Census 2021)

Source: Office of National Statistics

3.4 Working Population:

The working population drives economic growth, and determines the dependency ratio, which measures the pressure on the active workforce to support non-working, older, or younger dependents. The rate of unemployed people aged 16 - 64 has decreased since the last decade and is in line with regional and national averages. It is notable that the rate for Thurrock dipped to 2.1% in 2023-24 [Figure 12]

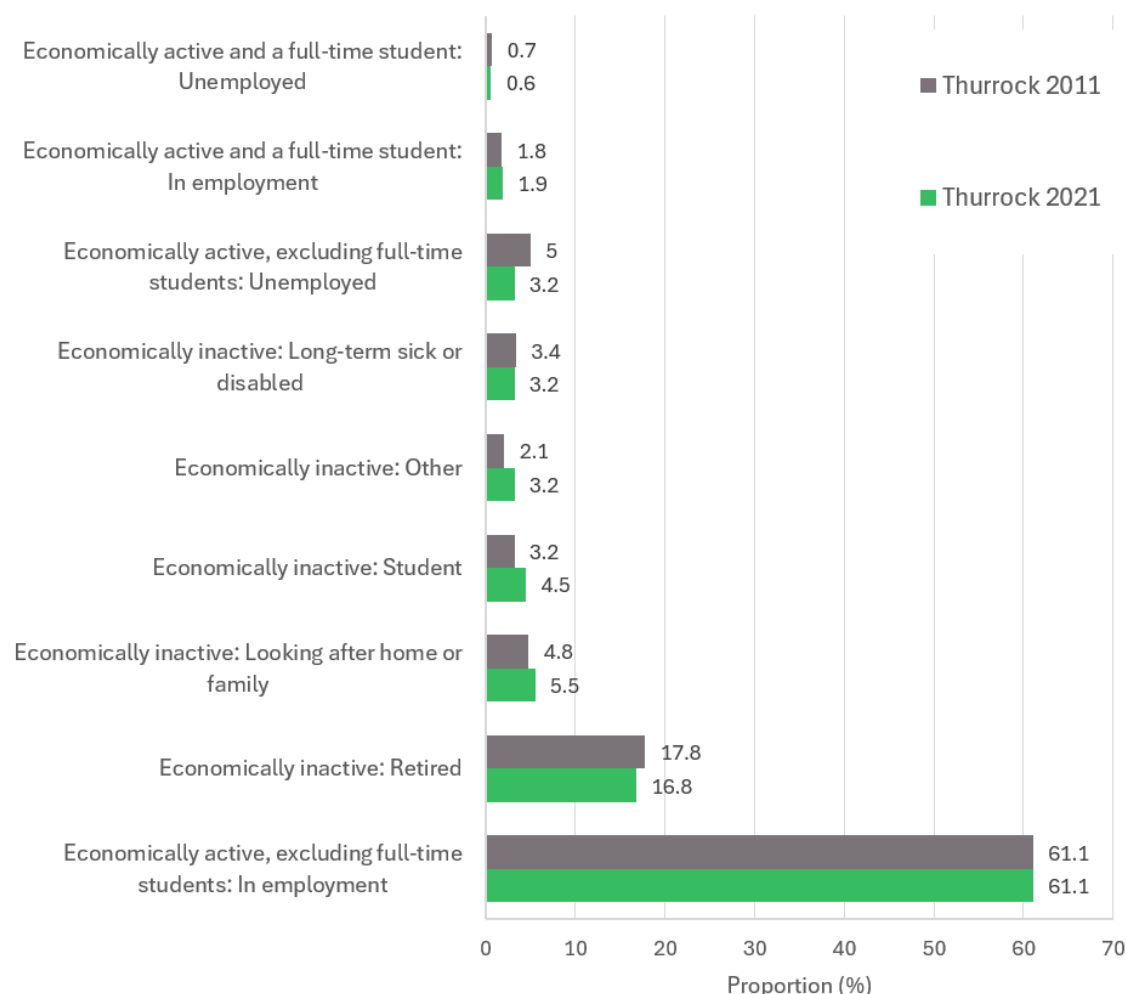
Figure 12: Unemployment rate (Aged 16 - 64) – Thurrock vs England and EoE (2011 to 2025)



Source: Office of National Statistics

Thurrock saw the East of England's joint largest percentage-point fall from 5.0% in 2011 to 3.2% in 2021(decrease of 1.8 percentage points) in the proportion of people aged 16 years and over (excluding full-time students) who were unemployed [Figure 13].

Figure 13: Economic activity of usual residents aged 16 years and over – Thurrock (Census 2021)



Source: Office of National Statistics

4. Inclusion Health Groups

Inclusion health groups represent socially excluded populations that experience extreme health inequalities compared to the general population. In this section we will look at the following inclusion health groups – homeless, Gypsy/ Roma travellers, carers, people with disability, people with a language barrier, people who are vulnerable as a result of their housing conditions and LGBTQ+ population (under sexual orientation and gender identity groups).

4.1 Homeless:

Homelessness is more than people sleeping outdoors or ‘rough sleeping’. It includes people living in sheds, garages, shelters and other unconventional buildings. In Thurrock, there were 579 households that were homeless (owed a relief duty - April 2024 to March 2025). Thurrock Council is aware of 11 rough sleepers in the borough (as of July, 2026).

4.2 Gypsy, Roma and Travellers:

Gypsy, Roma and Travellers whilst often grouped together, these communities are diverse with differing needs. The terms are used to describe a range of ethnic groups or people with nomadic ways of life who are not from a specific ethnicity. According to census 2021, Thurrock has a higher proportion of Gypsy or Traveller community (count - 428) than national and regional averages and a similar proportion of Roma population (322) [Table 3]. The national Traveller Caravan count shows there were 237 Traveller Caravans in Thurrock in July 2025 (including both authorised and unauthorised caravans).

Table 3: Proportion of Gypsy, Roma and Travellers (Thurrock vs England and EoE, Census 2021)

	Thurrock	England	EoE
Gypsy or traveller	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Roma	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%

Source: Office for National Statistics

Note: This could be an underestimate of the actual numbers, as this is just capturing those who filled in the Census that day; and given that some are transient, and some maybe less likely to complete the Census, it is possible the number in Thurrock is greater.

4.3 Carers:

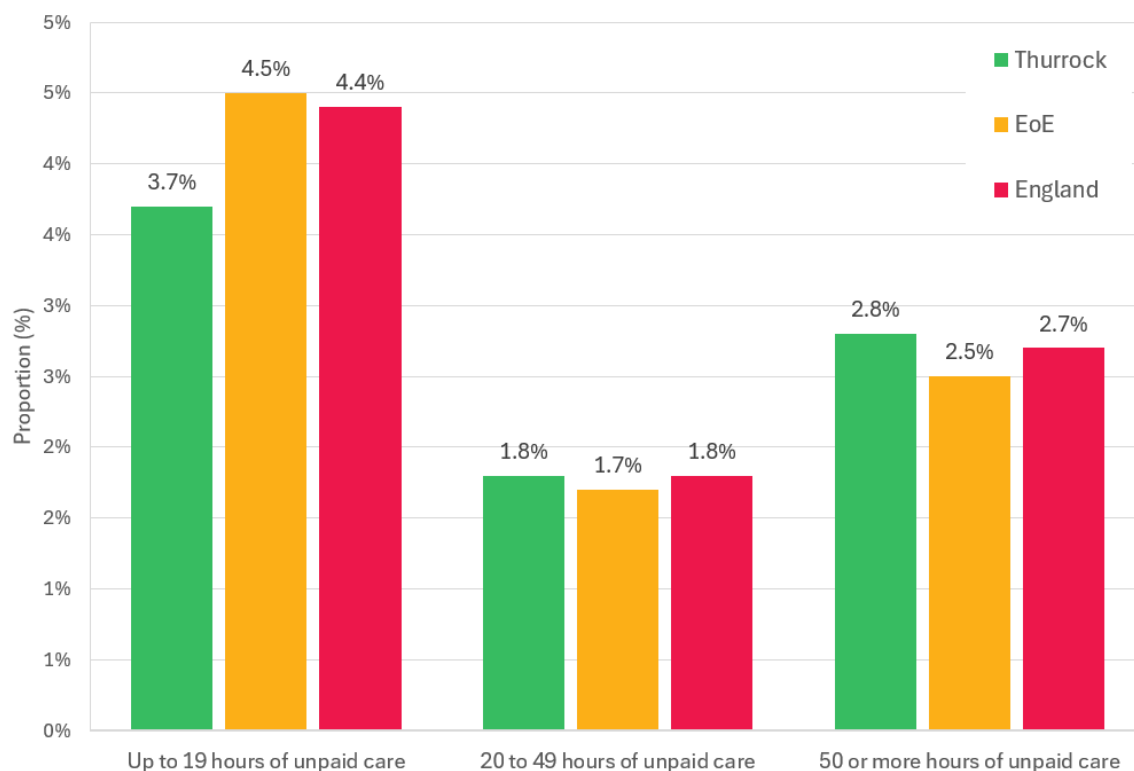
In 2021 (census), there were 5,732 people [Table 4] providing 19 hours or less unpaid care a week in Thurrock. This is 3.7% of the total population which is a decrease from 6.2% in 2011 and is less than the national and regional proportions [Figure 14]. England and East of England also saw decreases since 2011, with the England average of 4.4% providing 19 hours or less of unpaid care a week in 2021, compared to 7.2% in 2011. In 2021, just under 1 in 50 people (1.8%) reported providing between 20 and 49 hours of unpaid care each week, compared with 1.6% in 2011.

Table 4: Number of people providing unpaid care in Thurrock (Census 2021)

Provision of unpaid care – Thurrock 2021	Count
Provides 19 hours or less unpaid care a week	5,732
Provides 20 to 49 hours unpaid care a week	2,856
Provides 50 or more hours unpaid care a week	4,083

Source: Office for National Statistics

Figure 14: Proportion of population providing unpaid care (Census 2021)

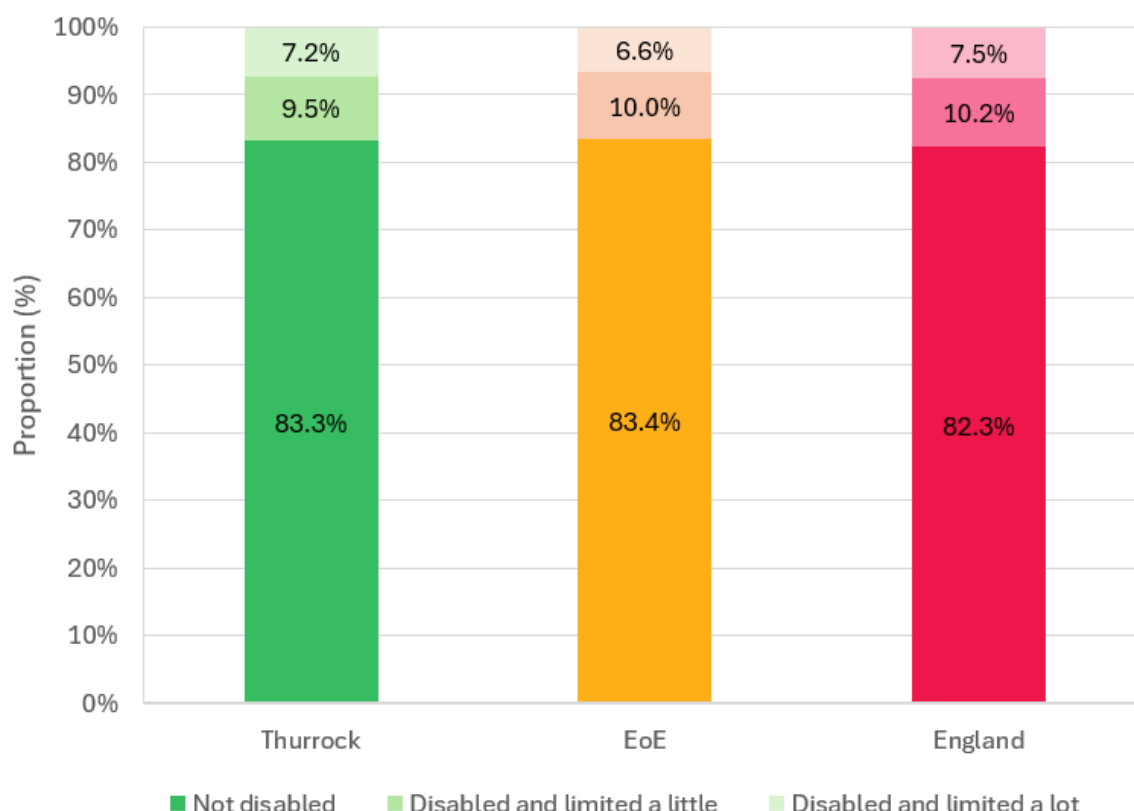


Source: Office of National Statistics

4.4 Disability:

People who assessed their day-to-day activities (according to 2021 census) as limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses are considered disabled for this section. Thurrock has a similar proportion of people with a disability which limits them a little (9.5%) or a lot (7.2%) compared to the national and regional average. **[Figure 15]**

Figure 15: Disability in Thurrock vs England and EoE (Census 2021)



Source: Office of National Statistics

4.5 People with a language barrier:

Thurrock has a higher percentage of the population (all usual residents aged 3 and over) whose main language is not English [Table 5]. Thurrock has over 4,200 households (6.4%) whose main language is not English.

Table 5: English proficiency in Thurrock residents (Census 2021)

Proficiency in English	Thurrock	England	EoE
Main language is not English	11.3%	9.2%	7.4%

Source: Office for National Statistics

There are just over 3,000 people who cannot speak English very well or cannot speak English at all in Thurrock. The proportion of people who cannot speak English very well or cannot speak English at all are similar to the national and regional averages [Table 6].

Table 6: English proficiency in Thurrock residents (detailed classification) (Census 2021)

Proficiency in English language	Main language is English	Main language is not English			
		Can speak English very well	Can speak English well	Cannot speak English well	Cannot speak English
Thurrock	88.7%	4.8%	4.7%	1.6%	0.3%
England	90.8%	4.0%	3.3%	1.6%	0.3%
EoE	92.6%	3.4%	2.7%	1.1%	0.2%

Description: How well people whose main language is not English (English or Welsh in Wales) speak English.

Source: NOMIS – Proficiency in English

Table 7: Other languages spoken in Thurrock – Census 2021

Other languages summary	Thurrock
Any other European languages	5.4%
Romanian	2.9%
Polish	1.5%
Lithuanian	1.4%
Any other South Asian languages	0.5%

Source: Office of National Statistics

4.6 Vulnerabilities associated with housing conditions:

While housing data is reported on a household level rather than an individual level, it is an important indication of poverty, social mobility and vulnerabilities. Indicators include:

- Living in overcrowded conditions; implies low income and poor conditions which directly impact physical and mental health.
- Living in socially rented, particularly council, housing; implies low income and financial insecurity and high levels of vulnerability and other social needs
- Single parent households; could indicate low income and struggles related to childcare and fatigue/health/mental health
- Older people living alone; could lead to loneliness, frailty, and worsening of physical and mental health

Thurrock has poorer housing conditions than nationally and regionally [**Table 8**].

Table 8: Housing conditions in Thurrock as compared to England and EoE (Census 2021)

Percentage of households which are:	Thurrock	England	EoE
Overcrowded ²	5.9%	3.6%	3%
Very overcrowded	0.9%	0.7%	0.4%
Socially rented (council/Local Authority)	14.5%	8.3%	7.1%
Socially rented (other)	3.2%	8.8%	8.4%
Single family household with lone parent	13.5%	11.1%	10.2%
One person household (aged 66 and over)	10.2%	12.8%	13.2%

Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021

4.7 Sexual orientation:

The 2021 census indicates Thurrock has a slightly higher proportion of individuals identifying as heterosexual (91.4%) compared to both England (89.4%) and the East of England (90.2%) [Table 9]. Conversely, the proportions of individuals identifying as gay or lesbian (0.9%) and bisexual (0.8%) are lower than national (1.5% and 1.3%) and regional averages (1.2% and 1.1%). The percentage of people identifying with other sexual orientations is consistent across all areas at 0.3%. Additionally, Thurrock has a lower rate of non-response (6.6%) compared to England (7.5%) and the East of England (7.2%).

Table 9: Sexual orientation distribution (Thurrock vs England and EoE, Census 2021)

Sexual orientation	Thurrock	England	EoE
Straight or Heterosexual	91.4%	89.4%	90.2%
Gay or Lesbian	0.9%	1.5%	1.2%
Bisexual	0.8%	1.3%	1.1%
All other sexual orientations	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Not answered	6.6%	7.5%	7.2%

Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021

4.8 Gender identity:

In terms of gender identity, patterns are highly consistent across all regions, with approximately 94% identifying with their sex registered at birth and very small

² Calculated by comparing the number of bedrooms the household requires to the number of available bedrooms. An occupancy rating of -1 or less implies that a household's accommodation has fewer bedrooms than required (overcrowded).

proportions identifying as transgender (0.1% transgender woman and 0.1% transgender man) or other gender identities [Table 10].

Table 10: Gender identity distribution (Thurrock vs England and EoE, Census 2021)

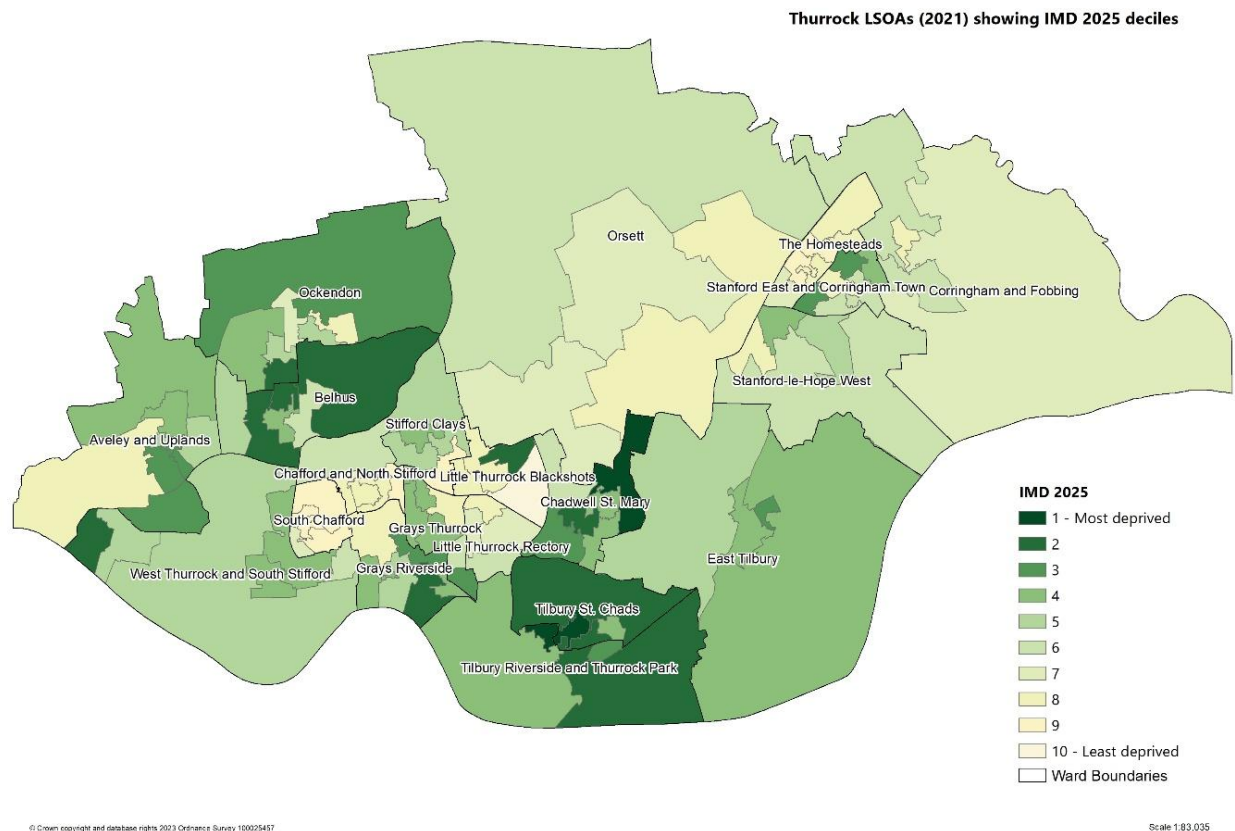
Gender identity	Thurrock	England	EoE
Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth	93.8%	93.5%	93.9%
Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Transgender woman	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Transgender man	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
All other gender identities	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Not answered	5.7%	6.0%	5.6%

Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021

5. Deprivation

Deprivation measures relative disadvantage to analyse inequalities. A more detailed report on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) in Thurrock is available: [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment | Public Health | Thurrock Council](#).

Figure 16: 2025 IMD map of Thurrock (LSOA IMD 2025)



Source: IoD 2025

Key messages for Thurrock

- Thurrock is ranked 78th out of 153 Upper Tier Local Authorities (UTLAs) in England by the 2025 IMD, where number 1 is most deprived. Thurrock is around the median (i.e. it is ranked at around the halfway point).
- Within the East of England's 11 upper-tier local authorities, Thurrock is the 5th most deprived overall. It is ranked 4th most deprived for both income and education, and 3rd most deprived for crime and barriers to housing and services.
- Despite changes to the methodology in the IoD 2025, the result shows many similar patterns in deprivation within the borough both geographically, and by domain of deprivation as seen in IoD 2019.
- In IMD 2025, Thurrock has three LSOAs in the most deprived 10% nationally and 11 LSOAs in the second most deprived decile. This pattern is similar to IMD 2019, where four LSOAs were in the most deprived decile and seven were in the second-most deprived decile.
- In IMD 2025, 45% of Thurrock LSOA fall within IMD deciles 6 to 10 (relatively low deprivation), compared to 42% falling within similar deciles in IMD 2019. This represents some improvement from IMD 2019.

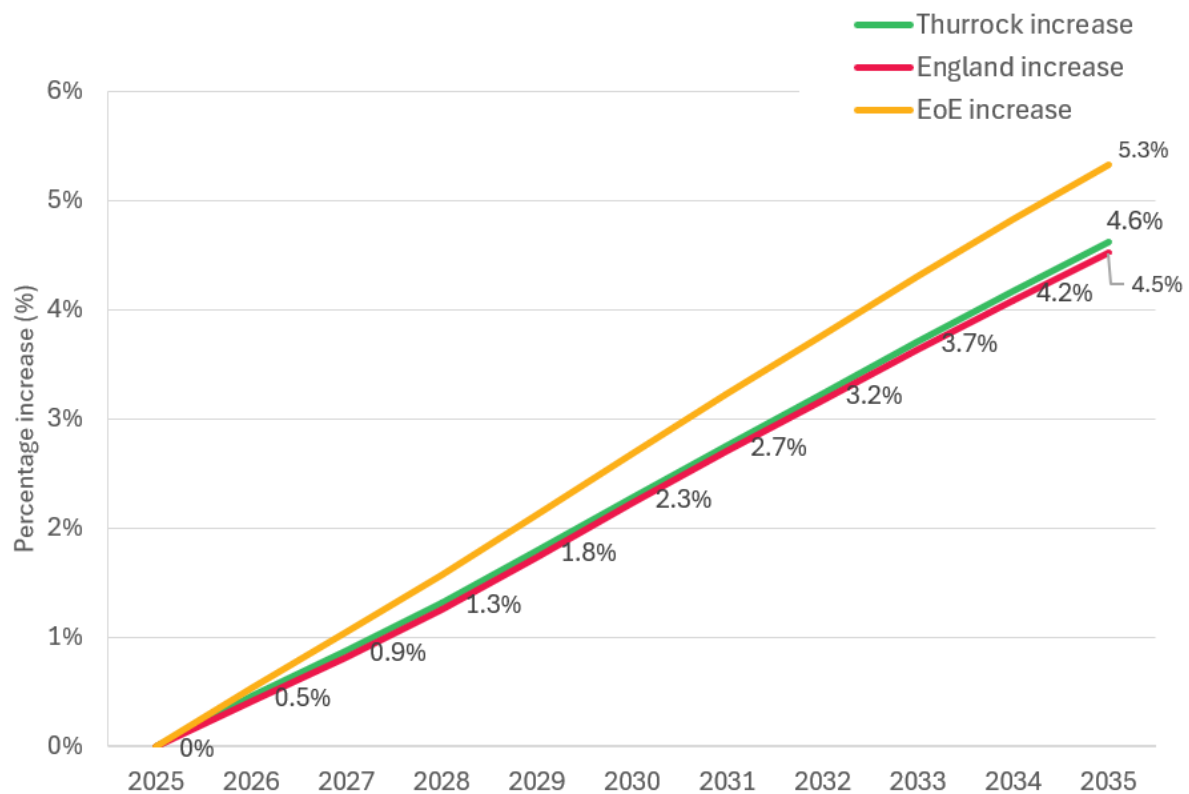
- At ward level, four of Thurrock's 20 wards fall within the most deprived 20% nationally. Tilbury Riverside & Thurrock Park and Tilbury St Chads are in IMD decile 1, while Belhus and Chadwell St Mary fall into decile 2.
- Seven of Thurrock's 20 wards (35%) are ranked in IMD deciles 7 to 10, indicating lower levels of deprivation in these areas.
- The domains that are largely impacting relative deprivation in Thurrock across all deprivation deciles are lower income levels, unemployment, low education and skills, and significant barriers to housing and services.
- In the 20% most deprived deciles, the domains having the largest impact on deprivation are lower income levels, unemployment, and low education and skills. Crime, health and housing deprivation then impact similar amounts to overall deprivation at this level.
- The barrier to housing domain map shows a high % of Thurrock LSOAs falling in Deciles 1, 2, and 3 (High relative deprivation).
- Thurrock is ranked 88th out of 153 upper-tier local authorities for the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI). Only 3% of its LSOAs fall within the most deprived 10% nationally for this measure. (For context, rank 1 is most deprived).
- For the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI), Thurrock ranks 72nd out of 153 upper-tier local authorities. Five percent of Thurrock's LSOAs are within the most deprived 10% nationally on this indicator.

6. Population projections for the next decade

Population projections estimate the future population size of an area. This is essential to enable evidence-based planning to inform long-term policy, infrastructure and resource allocation.

Thurrock's population is estimated to increase from 2025 to 2035 by 4.6% (about 8000 people over 10 years), compared to 4.5% increase in England and 5.3% increase in EoE **[Figure 17]** The population of Thurrock is projected to grow to 189,969 by 2035. Thurrock's projected population increase in the next 10 years is similar to that of England's increase. It is important to note that these projections are trend based and that projections are not predictions; they are based on assumptions about the future.

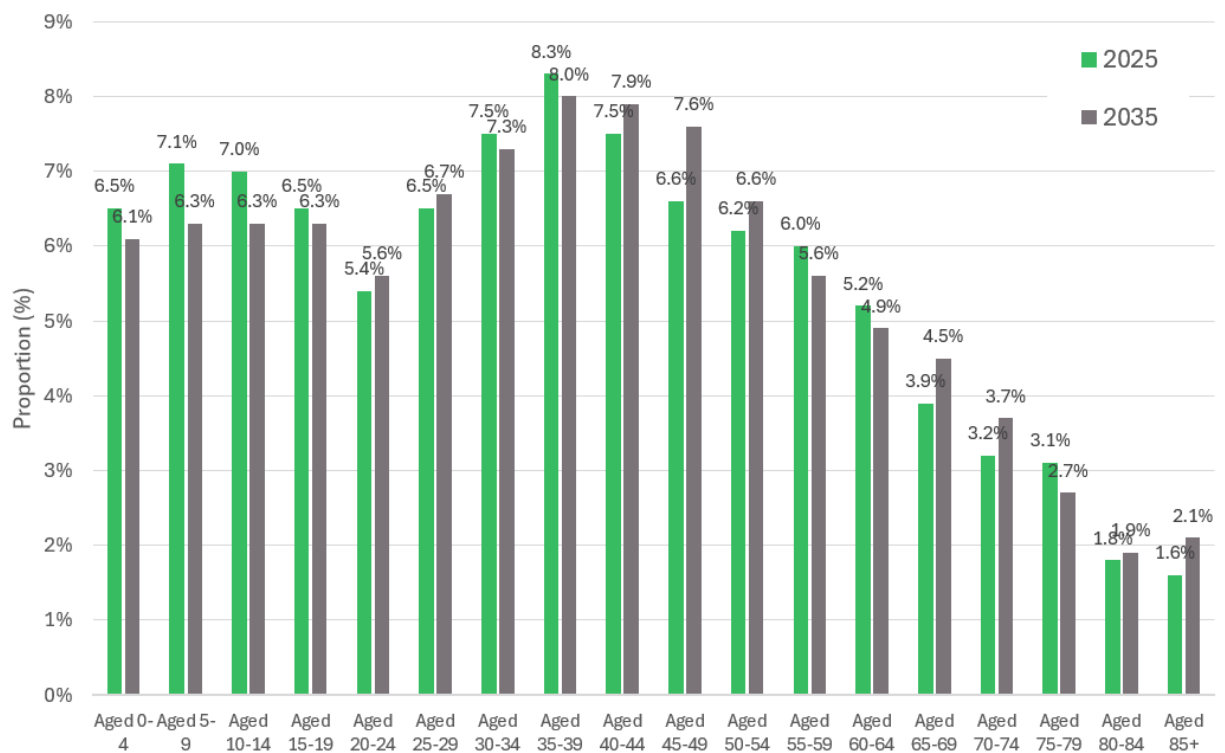
Figure 17: Population Projection (2025 to 2035)



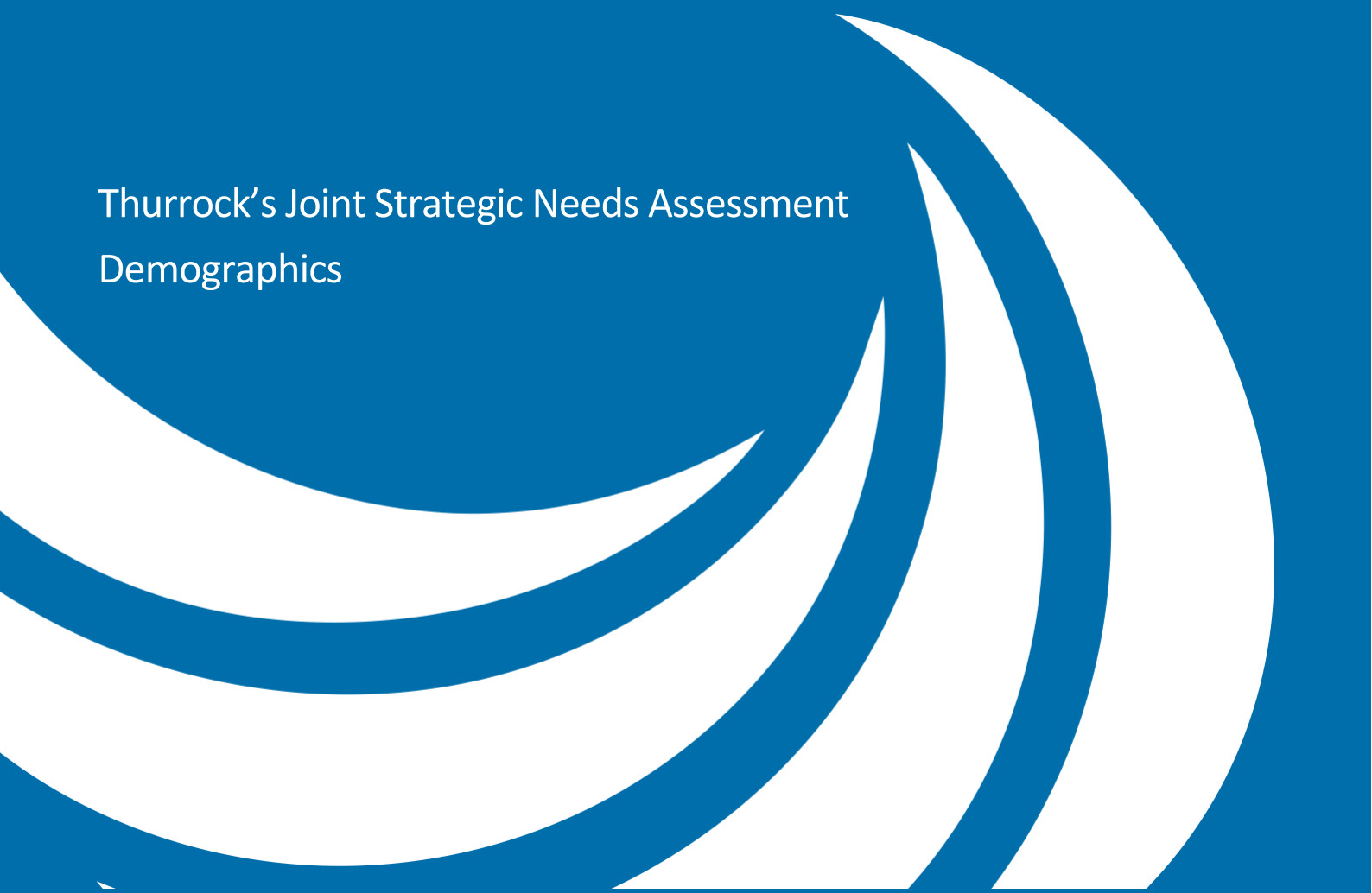
Source: Office of National Statistics

The population distribution by age has an impact on the level of need for health services. There is an increase in projected population distribution from 2025 to 2035 in almost every 40+ age group and decrease (or almost no change) in population aged 0 – 40 years **[Figure 18]**. The age group that shows the highest percentage increase is 45-49 years (1%), followed by 65-69 years (increase by 0.6%). This indicates an ageing population over the next decade.

Figure 18: Proportion of Thurrock residents by age group (2025 vs 2035 projected)



Source: Office of National Statistics



Thurrock's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Demographics