AdvicePro data from AdviceUK members 2020/21

This report provides data about the cases opened and clients advised by members of AdviceUK who subscribe to the AdvicePro case management system in the twelve months up to 31 March 2021. At the time of writing 371 AdviceUK members subscribe to AdvicePro; this accounts for 55% of the total AdviceUK membership.

1. Cases opened per month by areas of social welfare law

The following tables show the number of cases opened by AdviceUK members on AdvicePro from 1 March 2020 to 31 March 2021.

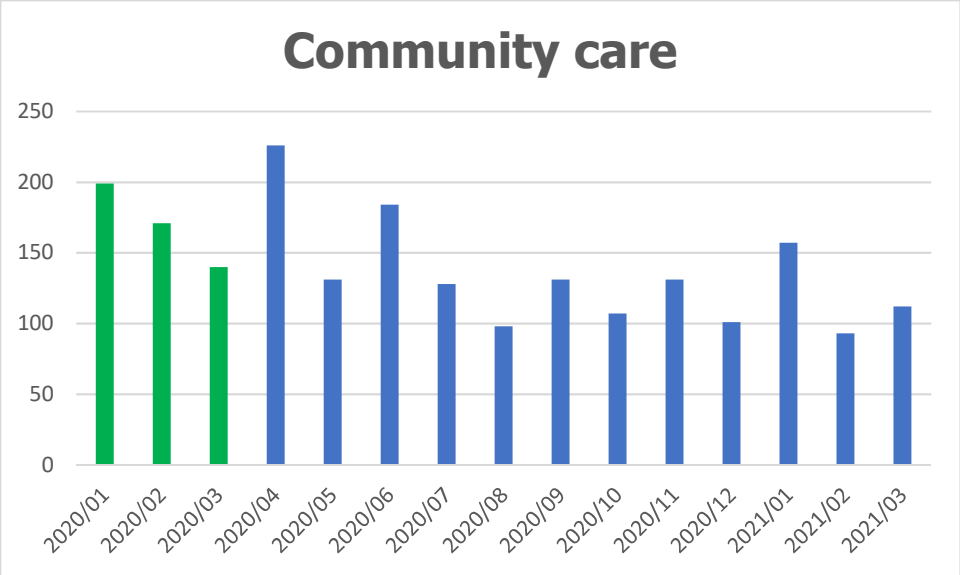
Figures for the period January - March 2020 have been included to demonstrate the impact that the onset of COVID-19 had on advice service delivery, with case volumes falling significantly in most areas of social welfare law from the beginning of the financial year as the first lockdown measures were introduced in England, Wales and Scotland.

There were several reasons for the fall in case volumes: -

- Lockdown measures meant that most AdviceUK members had to close face to face advice delivery, and it took some time before many were able to provide advice via remote delivery channels, with advisers working from home.
- Many clients of advice services are digitally excluded and are therefore reliant on face to face delivery

There were two exceptions to this overall trend: -

- New domestic abuse cases tripled in April 2020 when compared to the previous month. Throughout 2020/21 the number of domestic abuse cases opened each month were at significantly higher levels than before the pandemic.
- New employment cases rose significantly in March 2020, and this continued in April. Throughout the remainder of 2020/21 case volumes generally continued at higher levels than before the pandemic. The initial spike in cases can be attributed to concerns in relation to the introduction of the Government's furlough scheme.


Community care
250
200
150
100
50
0
2020/01
2020/02
2020/03
2020/04
2020/05
2020/06
2020/07
2020/08
2020/09
2020/10
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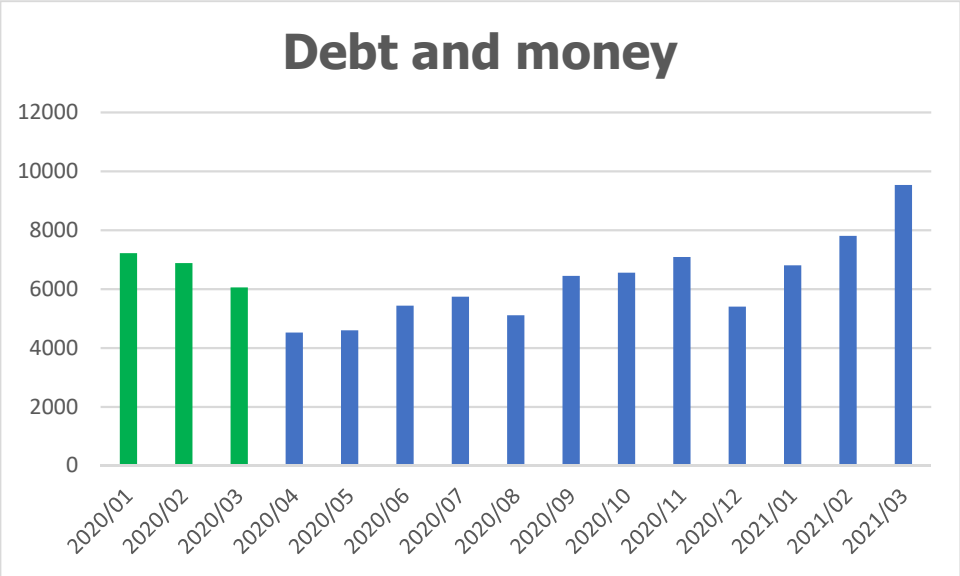
2021/01
2021/02
2021/03


Debt and money
12000
10000
8000
6000
4000
2000
0
2020/01
2020/02
2020/03
2020/04
2020/05
2020/06
2020/07
2020/08
2020/09
2020/10
2020/11
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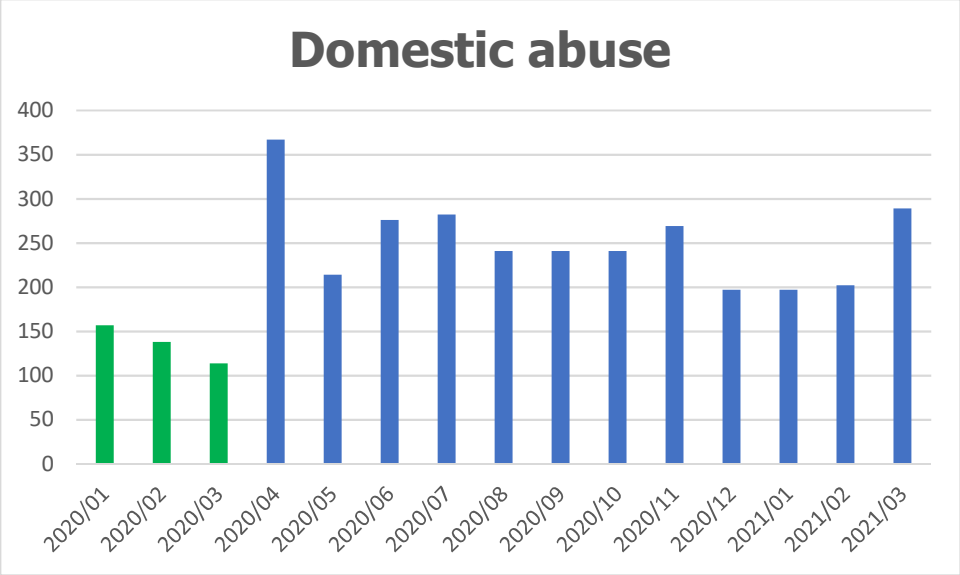
2021/01
2021/02
2021/03


Domestic abuse
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
2020/01
2020/02
2020/03
2020/04
2020/05
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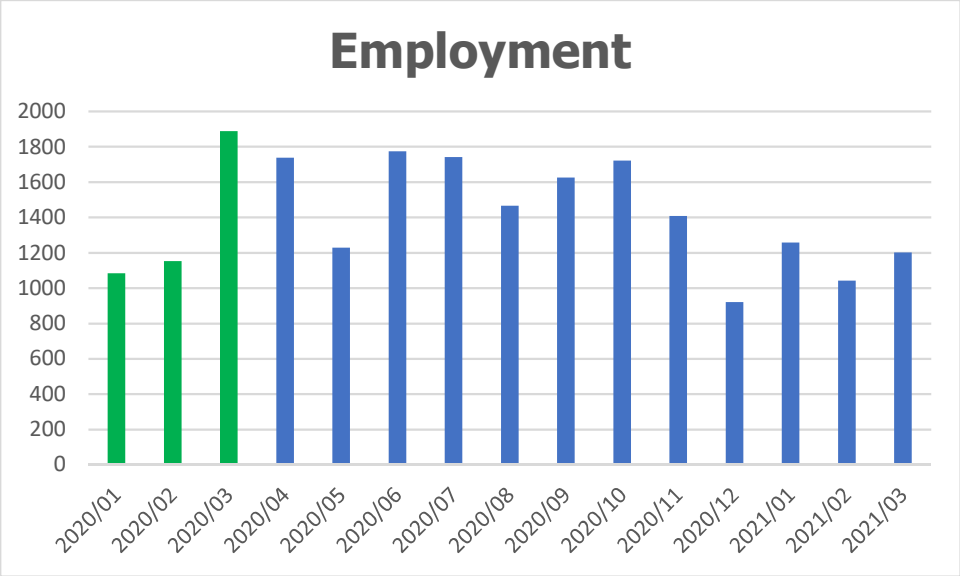
2020/07
2020/08
2020/09
2020/10
2020/11
2020/12
2021/01
2021/02
2021/03


Employment
2000
1800
1600
1400
1200
1000
800
600
400
200
0
2020/01
2020/02
2020/03
2020/04
2020/05
2020/06
2020/07
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2020/09
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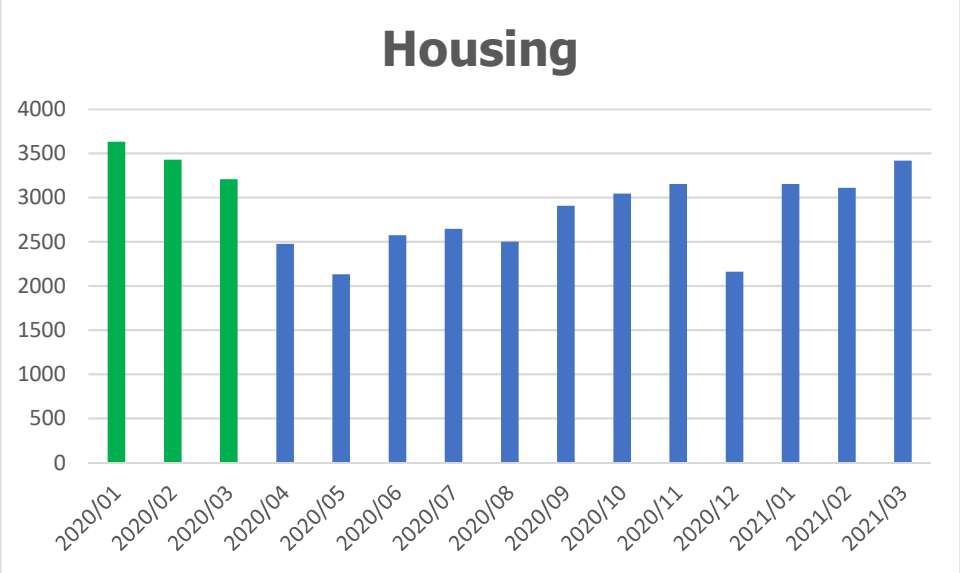
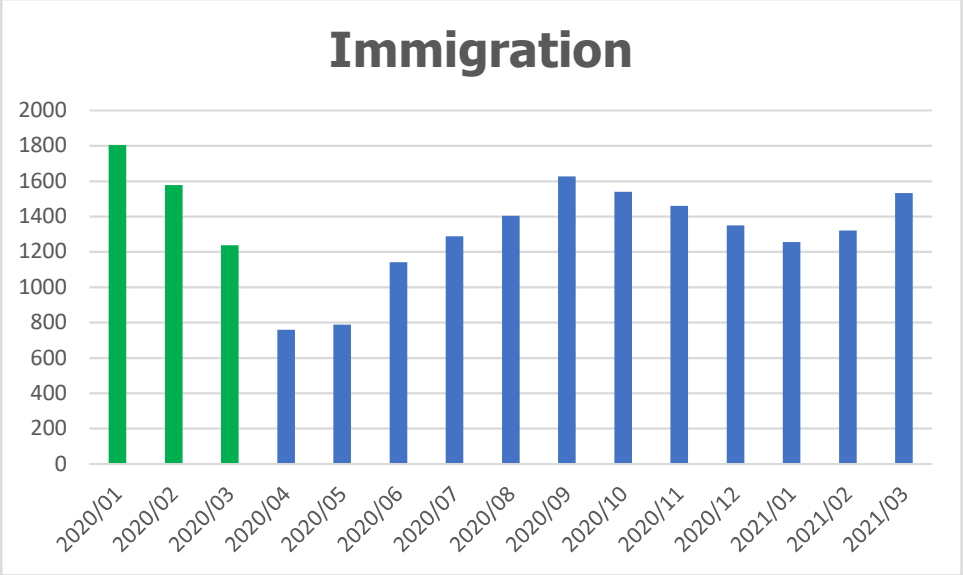
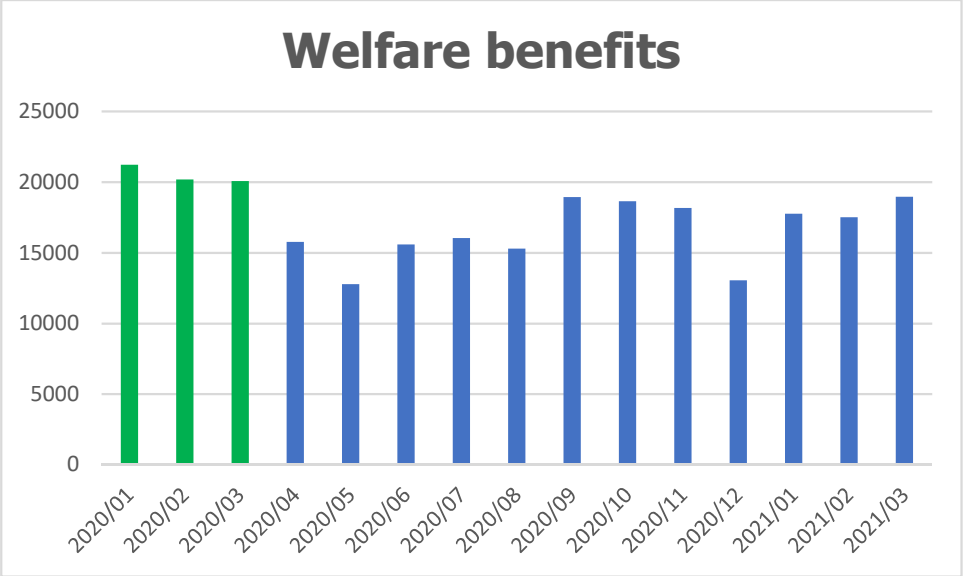
2021/01
2021/02
2021/03


Housing
4000
3500
3000
2500
2000
1500
1000
500
0
2020/01
2020/02
2020/03
2020/04
2020/05
2020/06
2020/07
2020/08
2020/09
2020/10
2020/11
2020/12
2021/01
2021/02
2021/03



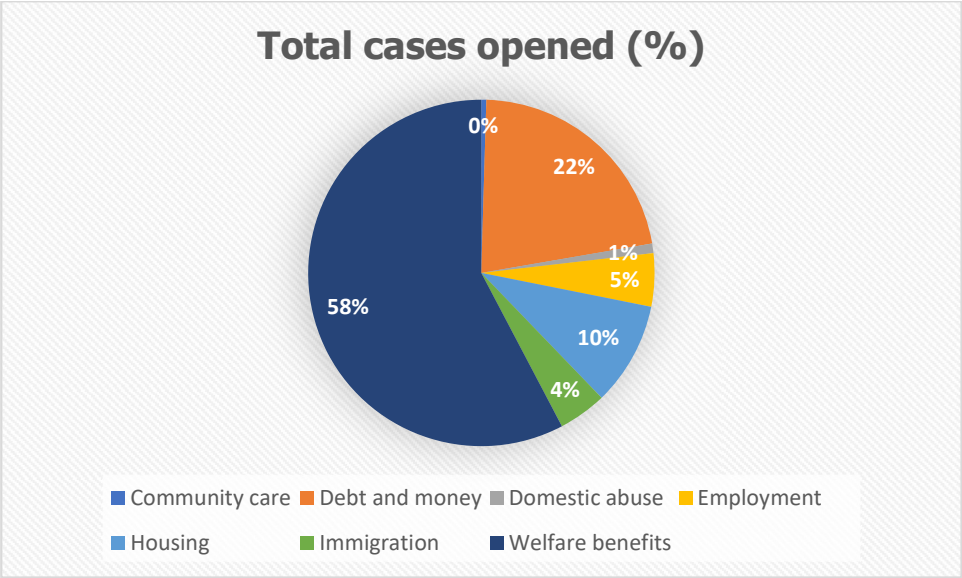


2. Total cases opened by area of social welfare law

The table below shows the total number of cases opened by area of social welfare law for the 12 months from 1 April 2020: -

Area of social welfare law	Number of cases
Community care	1599
Debt and money	75045
Domestic abuse	3016
Employment	17123
Housing	33274
Immigration	15458
Welfare benefits	198460
TOTAL	**343,975**

The pie chart below presents this data to show the percentage of total cases opened by area of social welfare law: -



Welfare benefits was the largest area of social welfare law, accounting for more than half of the total number of cases opened in 2020/21, followed by debt and money, housing and then employment. Community care was the smallest area of social welfare law, with less than 1% of the total number of cases opened.

3. Top issues

Debt and money

The top six debts for clients with debt and money cases were as follows: -

Type of debt	Number of cases
Utilities	13001
Consumer credit	10487
Rent arrears	9546
Council Tax	8953
Benefit overpayments	2469
Court fines	2024

Employment

Looking at the top three employment enquiries, it is clear that they were driven by the pandemic: -

Issue	Number of cases
COVID-19	2070
Pay & entitlements	1882
Redundancy	940

Welfare benefits

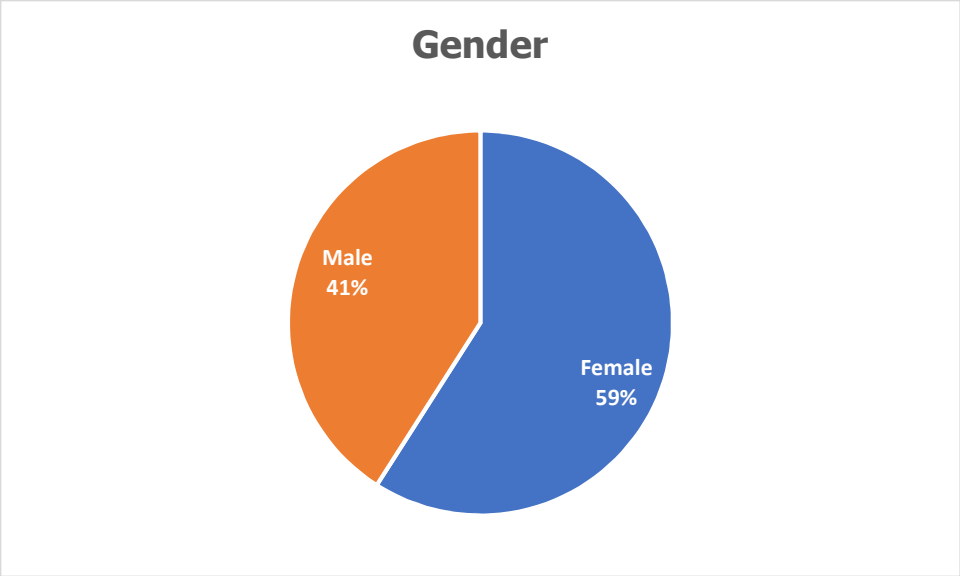
The top five welfare benefits issues were as follows: -

Issue	Number of cases
Eligibility	3129
Claiming process	2830
Mandatory reconsideration & appeals	2142
Personal Independence Payment	1539
Universal Credit	1258

4. Client demographics

Gender

Where specified, the gender of clients seen by AdviceUK members who subscribed to AdvicePro in 2020/21 breaks down as follows: -

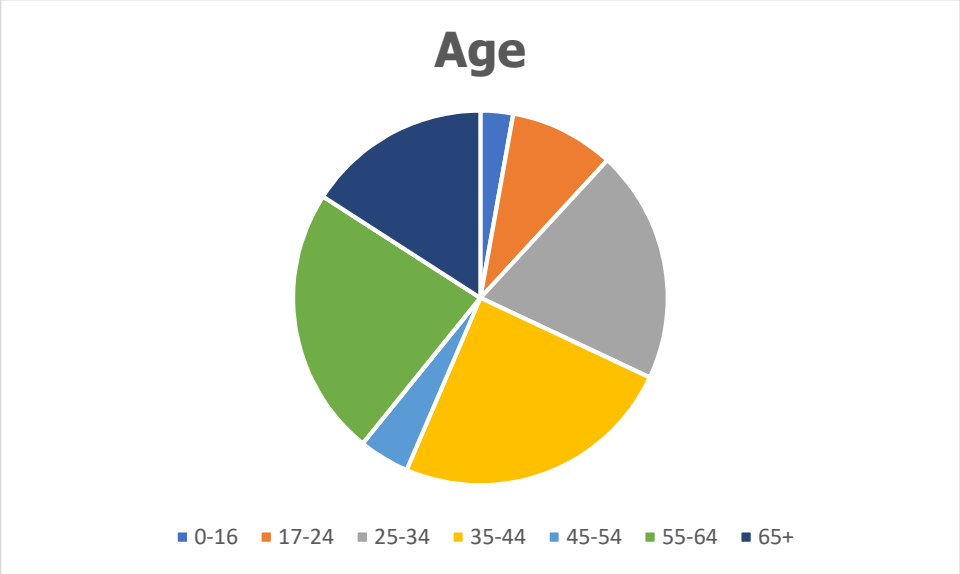


By comparison, the female population of the UK was reported at 50.61 % of the total population in 2019, according to the World Bank collection of development indicators, compiled from officially recognized sources.[1]

[1] https://tradingeconomics.com/united-kingdom/population-female-percent-of-total-wb-data.html

Age

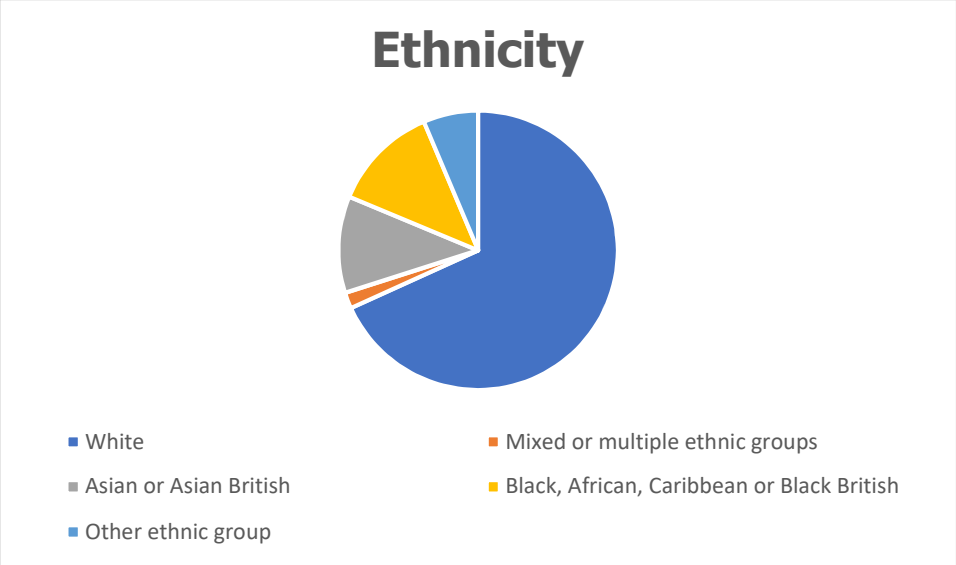
The age profile of clients advised was as follows: -



12% of clients helped were aged under 25, 72% between 25 and 64, and 16% over the age of 65.

Ethnicity

The ethnic profile of clients advised was as follows: -



68% of clients identified themselves as White; 32% identified themselves as from another ethnic group. This compares to the most recent figures available from the UK Government, which shows that 86% of the population is White.[2]

[2] https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/population-of-england-and-wales/latest