

The Dover District covers an area of 31,484 hectares (123 square miles), with a coastline of around 20 miles.

The district is home to the internationally famous White Cliffs and is the UK's Gateway to Europe, with easy access to London and the continent.

Over a fifth (22%) of the district is designated as part of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Of this area, 3% is classed as Heritage Coast, centred on the white cliffs on either side of Dover.

With a resident population of 116,400, the Dover District has the third-smallest local authority population in Kent, equivalent to 7.4% of the Kent population.

There were around 75,960 people living in urban areas within district in 2020 and 42,560 people in the rural areas. People living in the urban areas comprise 64% of the district population.

The district is divided into seventeen wards. Eleven wards are classed as 'urban', and six wards are classed as 'rural':

The population density of the district is 3.7 persons per hectare. In the urban areas, the population density is 12.37 persons per hectare, and in the rural areas it is 1.68 persons per hectare.

The ward with the largest population is Aylesham, Eythorne and Shepherdswell, with 11,080 people – representing 9.4% of the total resident population of the district.

The ward with the smallest population is Alkham and Capel-le-Ferne, with 3,210 people - representing 2.7% of the total resident population of the district.

- The Dover Urban Area covers an area of 4,902 hectares and has a population of 46,210 (population density 9.43).
- The Deal Urban Area covers an area of 1,240 hectares and has a population of 29,740 (population density 23.99).
- The Aylesham Rural Settlement covers an area of 3,647 hectares with a population of 11,080 (population density 3.04).
- The Sandwich Rural Settlement covers an area of 3,028 hectares and has a population of 6,600 (population density 2.19).

There are an estimated 55,439 residential properties in the Dover District, most of which are owner-occupied or privately rented (86.4% or 47,876 homes). According to council tax records, the highest proportion of these properties are Terraced (17,300 homes or 32.2%). Over a quarter of properties (26.5% or 14,250 homes) were built before 1900.

Long-term vacant homes (6+ months) equate to approximately 1.3% of the estimated dwelling stock. About 2.3% of residential properties in the district are second homes.

House prices are historically lower in the Dover district than the county and regional averages. The average property price is £325,718, compared to Kent's £390,171 and the

South East's £435,976. Since 2001, the average property price in the district has increased by +233.8% (from £97,584 in 2001). The district also has the second-lowest average monthly private rental market rent in Kent.

The district is ranked 113th (out of 317) local authorities in the English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (IoD 2019). It is the fourth (out of twelve) most deprived area in Kent (using the 'Rank of Average Score' summary measure). The urban areas of Dover have the highest levels of deprivation in the district. Five (out of the 67) Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the district are in the top 10% of most deprived areas in England.

People

Population

Over the past ten years, the district's population has risen more slowly than the county and national averages, growing by +4.2% (4,700 people) between 2011 and 2021, compared to +7.7% for Kent and +6.6% for England. The population is forecast to increase by +13.3% between 2020 and 2040, increasing the population size to 134,300. This growth is slower than the forecast population growth for Kent (+20.4%).

The district has an ageing population, with an average age of 46 years (up from 44 years between the last two censuses). This is higher than the average for the South East (41 years) and England (40 years).

The district has fewer young people aged 15 years and under (17.4%) and people aged 16 to 64 (58.6%) than the South East and national averages. Over a fifth (24%) of the district's population is of retirement age (65+), compared to 18.4% for England.

The population of the district is predominantly white, with 94.9% of all residents identifying their ethnic group within the "White" category. This is higher than the averages for Kent (89.4%), South East (86.3%) and England (81.0%). The largest ethnic minority group in the district is "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh", with 2.1% of the population identifying within this category. 95.8% of all adults in households in the district have English as a primary language.

Health

Self-reported health in the district is worse than the England average, with 79.2% of residents describing their health as either 'very good' or 'good' and 6.2% as 'bad' or 'very bad'. This compares with national averages of 82.2% for 'very good' or 'good' and 5.2% for either 'bad' or 'very bad'. Just over a fifth (21.0%) of the district's population have a long-term health problem or disability which limits their day-to-day activities in some way; this compares with 17.3% nationally.

Life expectancy at birth for males (78.6 years) and females (81.7 years) in the district is lower than the national averages (78.7 years for males and 82.6 years for females).

Inequality in life expectancy at birth, by deprivation level, is 7.3 years for males and 6.1 years for females (period 2018-20). At age 65, the values are 3.7 years for males and 2.4 years for females.

Employment

The number of people claiming out-of-work benefits in the district as of January 2023 is 2,630 (3.9%). This claimant count is higher than in the South East (2.8%) and Great Britain (3.6%). 58.6% (68,300 people) of the population in the district are of working age (aged 16 to 64 years), which is below the regional and national averages.

72.4% of the resident working-age population (54,000 people) are economically active, meaning they are either at work or actively looking for a job. This is below the averages for the South East (80.4%) and Great Britain (78.4%).

The remaining 27.4% (18,700 people) of the working-age population in the district are economically inactive. These people are not in employment, nor are they looking to work. This includes those who are retired, looking after their home and family, students, or permanently sick or unable to work. This is higher than the average for the South East (19.4%) and Great Britain (21.6%).

70.4% of the Dover district working-age population are employed, comprising 59.6% employees and 10.8% self-employed.

As of January 2023, district unemployment was 3.9% (2,630 people). Although this is up (+0.4%) from the previous month, it is down -14.2% (-425 people) from the prior year.

Youth unemployment (aged 18-24 years) in the district, at 6.3%, is above county (4.9%) and national (4.7%) averages.

In the district, as of January 2023, four Dover Urban wards (Town and Castle 8.6%, Tower Hamlets 7.3%, St. Radigunds 6.1%, and Buckland 5.0%) had the highest rates of unemployment. All of these wards are above the district average of 3.9%.

Educational attainment

Over a quarter of residents aged 16 years and over in the district have a level 4 qualification or above (27.0% or 25,951 people). This is below the averages for the South East (35.8%) and England (33.9%).

The percentage of those with no qualifications (19.5% or 18,706 people) is higher than the averages for the South East (15.4%) and England (18.1%).

Prosperity

GVA per head in the district, estimated to be £21,559, places Dover firmly in the middle of district GVA in Kent (sixth out of twelve) and the 19th lowest in the South East. For full-time workers, the average weekly earnings by place of work are £614.10. This is lower than the averages for the South East (£664.30) and Great Britain (£642.00). Male full-time workers (average £624.50 pw) earn more than female full-time workers (average £559.80 pw).

Businesses

As of 2021, there are 3,875 active enterprises based in the Dover District. Although this is up 90 enterprises (+2.4%) over the year, it is a fall of -715 enterprises (-20.4%) since 2016. The district had the lowest number of active enterprises in Kent.

In 2021, of the Kent districts, only Dover and Dartford saw a decrease in new enterprise births over the year (-9.5% and -12.8%, respectively). The enterprise birth rate in the district of 11.1% is lower than the averages for Kent (11.7%) and England (12.5%) but above the average for the South East (10.8%).

In 2021, although Dover saw the fewest enterprise deaths across the county (390), this is still 70 more than seen in 2020 (+21.9%). The enterprise death rate in the district of 10.1% is lower than the averages for Kent (10.6%), South East (10.8%) and England (11.2%).

The proportion of businesses in the district surviving three years following their birth has increased from 58.2% in 2020 to 65.4% in 2021. This is above the average for Kent (62.2%), South East (60.6%) and England (57.5%).

Most enterprises in the district are small businesses, as is the case nationally and regionally. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs), employing less than 250 people, account for 99.9% of firms in the district. Micro businesses (from 0-9 employees) account for 89.5% of total enterprises in the district. Only 0.13% of businesses have more than 250 employees.

Most enterprises in the district are private-sector companies (98.9%). Nearly 60% of enterprises in the district have a turnover of £100k and above. Seventy enterprises have a turnover of £5m plus.

Types of companies

The top five categories for enterprises in the district are the construction industry group (17.9%), professional, scientific and technical industry group (14.1%), retail (9.3%), accommodation and food services (9.0%), and business administration & support services (7.3%).

The Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles sector, Transportation and Storage, and Human Health and Social Work Activities sectors employ the highest proportion of people aged 16-64 years in the district (all three sectors 12.9%).

Information source: Dover District Council