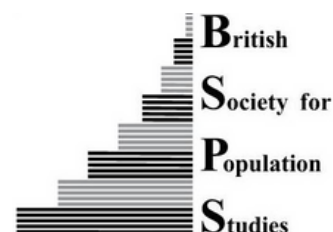


British Society for Population Studies

Est. 1973



“Furthering the scientific study of biological, economic, historical, medical, social and other disciplines connected with human populations”

Hello and welcome!

We're Ellen and Michaela, the new BSPS postgraduate representatives!

We're delighted to be taking over the reins from Izzi and Parth and aim to continue the successful format and regular publication cycle they established.

We're always open to ideas from the society! If you have any suggestions for us, including any relevant upcoming events and opportunities, demography featured in the news, great podcasts (or even something completely different!), please don't hesitate to drop us an email. We'd love to hear what content you think would be good for us to include.

This issue focuses on our recent BSPS conference, held in Swansea in September. We feature reports from each of the conference plenaries, as well as reflections and key findings from the CPC-CG Early Career Network Event. We also share some reports from BSPS members who have recently received travel grants from the Society, share recent appearances of demography in the news - including commentary on UK population growth and migration, and a recent feature in British Vogue on declining fertility rates - and highlight a selection of exciting upcoming events and opportunities that might be of interest to members.

Enjoy this month's newsletter!

Ellen and Michaela,

your BSPS Postgraduate Representatives

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A message from your new President



Hello fellow demographers and those who identify with other adjacent disciplines.

It is a great honour and pleasure to become your president for the next two years. Nicola Shelton will be a hard act to follow. I want to take the opportunity to briefly introduce myself for those of you that don't know me...

I first attended a BSPS conference in the mid-1990s when I was working at the Government Actuary's Department. While at GAD I got more and more interested in the national population projections and the making of the assumptions for them, so much so I went and did a two-year part-time Masters in Demography at LSE 1997-99. As an aside my original degree was a BSc in philosophy and Economics from LSE. In 2001 I then took up a role on fertility analysis at the Office for National Statistics. Since then, I have worked on a number of different topics and publications.

BSPS has been a fantastic organisation in developing and encouraging the study of demography for many people, including me, and long may it continue. But more than that I think we need to promote knowledge about demography more widely in many areas, such as: understanding of population dynamics; balancing commentary on migration; understanding current low levels of fertility; understanding the consequences of the success of population ageing; calling out those with eugenic or dysgenic agendas. An incomplete list of the areas where our voice needs to be a little louder both within and beyond our communities.

This leads me into a small list of things I would like to move forward as President.

- I would love to see **more day meetings organised** – there is huge value in getting groups together to discuss topics and getting to know people. I have ideas for a couple of day meetings – one loosely entitled ‘The Philosophical aspects of Demography’ and one around ‘local statistics’ – but I am sure you have better ideas. It is easy to apply for funding from BSPS for meetings using this form, and BSPS can also jointly fund meetings – so if you have something planned under another banner but maybe want to broaden its appeal why not consider involving BSPS.
- I would like to see if we can **introduce some bespoke media training**. BSPS gets requests for speakers on topics from media and it would be great if we could **build a group of trained academics who felt confident in speaking to the media**.
- I want to see if we can **rebuild our membership across national and local government** so we maintain the great track record we have of being more than just an academic society but are more engaged with what we might term ‘practical demography.’ If any of our current national and local government members have any ideas as to how we can do this do let us know.

Of course, none of the above can happen without two things.

Firstly, the support of the membership – **if you have ideas to assist in developing the society, or comments on any of my thoughts above, please share.**

Secondly, we are very blessed as a society to have a brilliant secretariat in Helen Spriggs, but she only has limited time in her week. So again, we will need to pace ourselves and chip in to make any new initiative run as smoothly as possible. Be prepared to roll up your sleeves and get involved.

A final reminder that as I am leading from a non-academic background I may need help and support where academic issues arise. I don’t fully understand the intricacies of academia – although sometimes I am not sure anyone does!

I’m looking forward to the next two years – I hope you are too.

Steve Smallwood

BSPS Conference 2025 Conference Report

The 52nd BSPS annual conference was held at Swansea University, 2-4 September 2025. Over the course of the three full days, over 230 people participated, with 170 presentations in 49 sessions.

Sessions and strands came together covering diverse topics: Ageing, Climate change and pollution, Conflict and crisis, Data and methods, Disability in LMICs, Ethnicity, Families and households, Fertility and SRH, Health and mortality, Historical demography, Violence and abuse and many more. Sessions on Gender, Queer demography and on Public concern about low fertility were new additions to [the programme for 2025](#).

There were three plenary sessions, covering themes from across population studies and beyond. The first plenary session was presented by Stuart Gietel-Basten of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology on Responding to the new world of low fertility, which was chaired by Steve Smallwood. Isabella Aboderin and Shereen Hussein continued the popular in conversation format, chaired by Laura Sochas. Later in the day, recipient of this year's Anne Shepherd new investigator plenary, Orsola Torrisi of McGill University spoke on Family, reproductive health and global violence: Demographic perspectives beyond the immediate consequences of human conflict in an early evening session chaired by Nicola Shelton. The Anne Shepherd New Investigator scheme is aimed at highlighting the achievements of early career researchers in population studies who have the potential to make a significant contribution to population studies in years to come.

Workshops and roundtable discussions included Working with migrant communities, Standards for Official Statistics on Climate and Health Interactions (SOSCHI), What is the future of critical demography research?; Priorities for research on the children of immigrants; Creative approaches to community research; Demographic statistics and analysis that serve the public good; UK-wide population and migration statistics development; Census-based longitudinal studies; Small area population estimation for urban analytics and Integrating sexuality research into population studies. There was also the ever-popular BSPS pub quiz, expertly compered by Nitzan Peri-Rotem and Parth Pandya.

The Tuesday evening poster session saw a wide range of topics and fostered enthusiastic meetings between presenters and attendees. The winners of the poster competition were Dr Joe Butterick of the University of Southampton with Parity-specific forecasts of UK kinship and Ayushi Das of International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai with Rethinking hypertension cut-offs among older Indian adults: A machine learning clustering approach using LASI biomarker data.

Abstracts from all oral presentations can be found on the BSPS conference website at <https://www.lse.ac.uk/international-development/research/british-society-for-population-studies/annual-conference>

BSPS 2026 will be held at the University of Kent at Canterbury, 8-10 September 2026.

BSPS Conference 2025: Plenary Reports

Plenary 1: 'Responding to the new world of low fertility'

Stuart Gietel-Basten (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology)

Report by Meredith Han

Stuart Gietel-Basten opened the 2025 BSPS conference with a plenary session addressing the pressing global issue of low fertility. His presentation examined how fertility patterns should be interpreted, the challenges associated with pronatalist policies, how demographers should study fertility, and ways societies might adapt to new demographic realities.

Gietel-Basten began by outlining global fertility trends. Once perceived primarily as an Asian issue, low fertility is now emerging as a worldwide phenomenon, with patterns increasingly visible in Africa, India, and major urban centres such as Bangkok. He emphasised the broad economic and social consequences of sustained low fertility rates, including population stagnation and structural shifts in labour markets and economic growth. The presentation then turned to potential responses to low fertility, including increased immigration, pronatalist policies, healthy ageing initiatives, and institutional reforms. While such measures can provide more immediate ways of addressing demographic challenges, Gietel-Basten stressed that these responses are only partial solutions.

A key theme was the reluctance of demographers to engage fully with fertility debates. Reasons include the political sensitivities of pronatalist policies, and concerns about state overreach into personal lives. However, Gietel-Basten argued that ignoring fertility does a disservice to multiple stakeholders including policymakers and stakeholders who need expert guidance to avoid leaving space for extreme or politically motivated voices. He argued that fertility is not a problem to be "fixed" but rather a downstream consequence of deeper institutional and societal systems.

Gietel-Basten called for demographers to adopt a bottom-up approach by asking people what prevents them from having the children they desire. Surveys such as the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS), including discrete choice surveys, provide valuable insights. He suggested expanding beyond total fertility rate (TFR) as the key performance indicator, instead considering outcomes such as wellbeing, workplace and home environments, and holistic measures of family life. He highlighted the importance of reclaiming population policy as multidimensional, incorporating fertility, healthy ageing, and broader demographic changes. Policies such as shared parental leave were cited as examples of initiatives that align with public aspirations and have proven effectiveness.

In concluding, Gietel-Basten urged demographers to take the lead in shaping the fertility narrative. This involves constructive dialogue, listening to diverse perspectives, and providing objective scientific evidence. He recommended proactive strategies such as preparing press packs, anticipating demographic trends, and engaging with journalists and organisations. Without such leadership, he warned, debates risk being dominated by less informed or politically motivated actors.

The session's Q&A touched on topics of the fertility gap between intentions and actual outcomes. The dangers of setting TFR as a rigid policy target, given measurement issues and framing biases. The need to support unpaid carers and tackle structural challenges such as child poverty. A shift of focus on improving the quality of children's lives rather than the number of births and the need to consider the financial costs and potential returns of implementing supportive policies.

Plenary 2: 'Population Ageing in the MENA Region – Is Demography Enough?'

Shereen Hussein (LSHTM)

Report by Zhongpu Yu

At the beginning of this presentation, Shereen gave us an overview of the ageing demographics and transition model in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, that is in combination of declining fertility rates and enhanced life expectancy, and such transitions result in changes to the whole population structure towards aged populations. In particular, the fertility and mortality rates have been declining faster than historically observed in most OECD countries, resulting in a dramatic and swift shift towards older populations.

Three main different concepts that might explain societal ageing perception were proposed and discussed,

- Cultural: collective societies have higher respect and values of older people, and this is a positive ageing view.
- Modernisation: attitudes to ageing are aligned to the level of modernisation and industrialisation level, which is a diverse ageing view.
- Speed of Ageing: the rapid and abrupt ageing process may lead to resentment toward older people (competition over resources), and this is a negative ageing view.

The societal ageing perception influences the policy and practice responses and action plans. It is noted that these theories are not independent, and none of them can fully explain how ageing perceptions are formulated. Also, each has been criticised for ignoring certain aspects or making generalisable assumption. Based on this, it is recommended that policy makers should raise awareness and perceptions of ageing to empower older people, reduce stigma, and create gender sensitive initiatives. While the MENA region needs to address the challenges associated with population ageing, different countries' economic and geo-political positioning also dictates the feasibility of adopting various policy and practice responses and action plans.

In addition, the long-term care needs model is estimated based on five main NCDS (diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, Alzheimer's and other dementias, total cancers, and Parkinson's). Through several case studies, it is concluded that the region's LTC care model primarily relies on informal care. Hence, countries in the region must start to develop new care economies and markets to meet the growing demands for LTC. Also, the new LTC economies can offer several advantages, including creating job opportunities, mobilising the labour power of the youth to counter the financial implication of increased health and social care needs associated with population ageing.

Anne Shepherd New Investigator Plenary: 'Family reproductive health and global violence: Demographic perspectives beyond the immediate consequences of human conflict'

Orsola Torrisi (McGill University)

Report by Ellen Falkingham

Orsola Torrisi opened her presentation with the stark central message: "War and Violence kill people. And hurt them. Directly and immediately." but also "indirectly and gradually, and across generations.". This statement was powerfully underpinned by photographs of Torrisi's fieldwork in refugee settlements in Beqaa Valley, Lebanon, and Fuzuli, Azerbaijan, as she explained what brought her to this research and her own lived experience of the realities of what is at stake.

First, Torrisi provided a brief introduction to the Demography of Conflict as an emerging field centred on the demographic consequences of armed conflict. She then examined violence across the life-course, presenting family reproductive health as a prism through which to understand the indirect and long-term consequences of violence. Finally, she presented her conclusions on the lack of a single uniform answer to the impacts of conflict, and her thoughts on the future of this field of research.

In her plenary, Torrisi distinguished between two approaches to studying conflict:

The 'fast demography' of direct consequences: the focus on immediate, direct, self-evident consequences of violence, such as mortality, inequality in survival, and migration. She presented evidence of these human costs identified in her own research including excess mortality, loss of life expectancy and migration.

The "slower demography" of indirect consequences: the transition to studying the indirect, gradual, and long-term consequences of violence, which play out in the arena of the family and reproductive health. Studying these outcomes is key because family processes are the central determinant of mid- to long-term population change, and the family unit is often the first place to reveal hidden challenges imposed on civilians, especially women, girls and future generations. This is evident in: early marriage and union formation; trends in childbearing and reproduction and in violence within the family.

She reiterated that, aside from increases in mortality, the demographic responses to violence are complex and hard to predict. Understanding them requires historical and life course perspectives, as past tensions and institutional norms shape both the violence and a population's potential for change. She explicitly stated that there is "No universal 'Demography of Conflict'" but rather called for a "Demography of Conflicts & Violence".

She concluded with a powerful call to action, stating that because war and violence are part of the human condition, demographers have a moral duty to study the changes they bring to populations. This responsibility requires them to constantly ask: "is this research ethical?"

BSPS Conference 2025: CPC-CG Early Career Network Event at the British Society for Population Studies

Chairs of the CPC-CG ECR Network Rachel Wilkie and Alice Butler-Warke (University of St Andrews), with BSPS Postgraduate Council Members, Parth Pandya (St Andrews) and Izzi Carter (LSE), coordinated a BSPS side meeting attended by around 50 population studies early career researchers.

Dr Jo Mhairi Hale, Connecting Generations Research Fellow and Senior Lecturer at the University of St Andrews, presented hints and tips for navigating an academic career. Here Teresa McGowan summarises her advice, adds a bit of her own, and includes suggestions from the audience.



Managing your supervisor or line manager

Navigating your relationship with a supervisor requires initiative, respect and clear communication. It is important to make the most of your interactions and ensure supervisory time is productive. Some simple ways to achieve this include:

1. Taking ownership of meetings

Set a clear meeting agenda by preparing a focused list of topics or questions you want to discuss before each meeting. This helps guide the conversation and ensures your priorities are addressed. Treat the meeting as your responsibility, know what outcomes you need to progress and steer the conversation accordingly.

Remember, your supervisor likely oversees multiple people and projects. Be concise and purposeful in your discussions to make the most of their knowledge. If meetings are hard to secure, check the expected frequency (e.g. weekly, monthly) and escalate to department heads or administrators if necessary to ensure you get time in your busy supervisor's diary.

2. Make your work easy to review

Simple strategies like labelling everything clearly helps anyone looking at your work, and you! Use descriptive filenames and headers so your supervisor can quickly identify the purpose of each document and date them. Include summaries, questions, or specific areas where you need feedback to streamline their review process. Depending on the frequency of your meetings it is good practice to share work at least two days before the meeting to give supervisors time to review it. A reminder email the night before can also be helpful but check with your supervisor to see what works for them.

3. Be proactive with administrative tasks

Offer to draft documents for your supervisor to edit. Whether you need reference letters, official forms, or reports, volunteering to create first drafts or sharing examples saves your supervisor time. Find out how your supervisor likes to work, they may or may not utilise your drafts but offering to share the load shows initiative. Be sure to provide context so your supervisor knows the who, what, when, where and why for any drafts you send them.

4. Embrace constructive feedback

Your supervisor has likely spent years in the field and their insights are based on hard-earned knowledge. Value their experience and avoid dismissing feedback outright. Even if you disagree, reflect on the reasoning behind it and ask clarifying questions. Accept that your supervisor likely knows the broader landscape to the topic in more depth than you and use any feedback as an opportunity to grow, improve your work, and deepen your understanding of the field.

Maximising efficiency and structuring your time

Dr Hale suggests the following behaviours to optimise your time and resources:

1. Read

It might sound obvious but at busy times it is easy to forget to dedicate time to reading. Regular reading builds foundational knowledge and sparks new ideas. Stay current by making a habit of tracking recent publications or updates in your field to stay informed and relevant.

2. Use accessible tools

University provided tools are often paid for by subscription. You may not always have access to these therefore it is pertinent to future-proof your skills by using open source software. Make time to learn code or analyse data in open platforms like R or Python, so you're not dependent on expensive or restricted software.

Writing apps like Scrivener, Obsidian, and Notion can also help you to structure your literature through tagging and linking, making retrieval easier. Help yourself as you go along by creating concise summaries, highlighting important quotes, and keeping a note of your reflections to make future referencing easier.

3. Understand your personal productivity style

Spend some time identifying your personal productivity preferences. Do you work better with looming deadlines or steady progress? In silence or with background noise? Alone or with others? Use that knowledge to choose workspaces and schedules that align with your natural rhythms. For example, use noise-cancelling headphones if you're easily distracted, or set artificial deadlines if you thrive under pressure. If you're a morning person, schedule demanding tasks early. If you're more creative at night, reserve that time for brainstorming or writing.

Taking care of your mental health and building resilience

Academic and professional environments can be demanding, so it's essential to care for your mental health. Strategies include:

1. Prioritise your wellbeing

Remember that your identity isn't defined solely by your research, job, or output. Reduce stress by engaging in activities that bring joy and balance, whether it's painting, hiking, gaming, or gardening. Nurture your personal interests and relationships. Set boundaries to protect your time and energy and learn to say no when needed and avoid overcommitting.

2. Handle critical feedback constructively

Even top academics face rejection and revision. Critical comments are part of the process, not a reflection of your worth. Address feedback calmly and professionally. Clarify misunderstandings and revise content where needed. Don't withdraw or give up after setbacks, continue to submit your work, apply for opportunities, and keep showing up. On the flip side, don't waste your time. If you are not ready, or if you don't have the experience, do what you need to do to get that experience. Take courses, volunteer, or collaborate on smaller projects to gain the experience you need. Preparation builds confidence and credibility. Rushing into high-stakes situations without readiness can be counterproductive. Focus on sustainable progress.

Navigating the job market: Staying flexible and passionate

The academic job market is especially competitive, with permanent or tenured roles in short supply. From her experience, Dr Hale suggests you follow your interests, look for positions that align with your passions, values, and long-term goals. Enthusiasm for your work often translates into stronger applications and better performance. A role that energises you is more sustainable than one that looks impressive but leaves you disengaged.

That said, it's common for researchers and professionals to pivot across topics or disciplines, as long as they are things you are interested in. The job market rarely rewards rigid adherence to a single niche. Transferable skills matter: communication, data analysis, project management, and teaching experience can open doors across sectors.

Even if your main job diverges from your PhD topic and you want to keep up with that topic, you can still publish or collaborate on related research in your own time. Side projects help you stay engaged with your original field and may lead to future opportunities or collaborations. But ensure any side work doesn't interfere with your primary responsibilities, use it to enrich, not overwhelm (remember your wellbeing). It is important to include public engagement and teaching where possible as these broaden your appeal to employers.

Finally, network thoughtfully: attend conferences, join professional groups, and connect with peers to stay visible and informed.

Resources

The British Academy Early Career Researcher Network

<https://thebritishacademyecrn.com/>

Find out if your institution is a signatory to The Concordat for Researcher

Development <https://researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk/>

Join a CPC-CG seminar https://www.cpc.ac.uk/activities/full_events_calendar/

New podcast episodes

Stats in a Wrap, Collaboration with Universities and Statistical Innovation

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/news/podcasts#estat-inpage-nav-heading-1>

Description:

This episode examines how innovation shapes official statistics through collaboration between Eurostat, national statistical institutes, and universities. It highlights efforts to modernize data collection, enhance privacy protection, and integrate technologies such as microdata, AI, and smartphones. Featuring Aleksandra Bujnowska of Eurostat, Sofia Rodrigues of Statistics Portugal, and researcher Peter Lugtig, the discussion with Jonathan Elliott explores how academic partnerships drive technological and methodological advances in the field.

Population Healthy Podcast, Housing, health, and hope: A conversation on impactful collaboration

<https://sph.umich.edu/podcast/season7/housing-health-and-hope-a-conversation-on-impactful-collaboration.html>

Description:

In this episode, the University of Michigan's Margaret Dewar and Roshanak Mehdipanih discuss the intertwined challenges of housing access, stability, and inequity. Drawing on their interdisciplinary work, they examine the national housing crisis, particularly in cities like Detroit, highlighting how collaboration between urban planning and public health can promote housing equity and improve health outcomes.

The Economist, Honey, we shrunk the kids: population fall

<https://www.economist.com/podcasts/2025/09/16/honey-we-shrunk-the-kids-population-fall>

Description:

This episode of The Intelligence from The Economist explores three pressing global trends: the economic and social implications of a shrinking world population, the growing debate over political bias in artificial intelligence, and the worrying decline in reading and writing literacy. Economist correspondent Cerian Richmond Jones examines how population decline might reshape economies and societies without necessarily causing catastrophe; U.S. technology editor Henry Tricks investigates claims that large language models like ChatGPT are “woke”; and culture correspondent Catherine Nixey reflects on how dwindling reading habits threaten critical thinking and cultural depth.

Travel Grant Reports

Report by Rebecca Jane Harris, 30th International Population Conference (IPC2025) in Brisbane, Australia, between 13–18 July, 2025

The 30th International Population Conference (IPC2025), held in Brisbane this July, brought together over 2,000 demographers, policymakers, and practitioners from more than 100 countries. Organised every four years by the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), the conference provides an unparalleled opportunity to engage with global demographic research and policy discussions.

With support from the British Society for Population Studies (BSPS), I attended IPC2025 to present findings from my PhD

research on the mental health outcomes associated with childhood exposure to domestic violence and abuse in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Beyond presenting my own work, I was struck by a powerful and urgent theme that shaped many discussions throughout the week: we are living in a population data emergency.



My contribution and experience

I presented my research in a session on "Gender-based violence within and outside the home", sharing findings from a cross-country analysis of Violence Against Children and Youth Survey (VACS) data across 10 LMICs. My paper, "Mental Health Outcomes Associated with Childhood Exposure to Domestic Violence and Abuse in Low- and Middle-Income Countries" (available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5335163>), examined the prevalence and associated mental health outcomes of childhood exposure to domestic violence, highlighting the severe lack of comparable, disaggregated, nationally representative data in this field.

Presenting to a global audience was a valuable experience, not only for the feedback and questions I received, but also for seeing how my research resonated across different contexts. Several attendees shared experiences of trying to measure violence and mental health outcomes in difficult settings, underscoring again the centrality of the data emergency to global demographic work.

Integrating IPC insights into research and teaching

Attending IPC2025 has reinforced my commitment to promoting equitable research practices, ensuring that UK-based researchers working in LMICs do so collaboratively, ethically, and in ways that strengthen local data ecosystems rather than extract from them. This is particularly important in a time of data scarcity and uneven global capacity.

The insights I gained in Brisbane will feed directly into my ongoing work on gender-based violence, cross-national comparison, and creative approaches to addressing data gaps. They will also shape my role as a lecturer on the BSc Population Sciences course and several MSc programmes at the University of Southampton. By incorporating the debates, methods, and global perspectives from IPC into my teaching, I can help prepare future demographers for a research landscape where international collaboration, methodological adaptability, and ethical responsibility are essential.

I am grateful to BSPS for supporting my attendance at IPC2025. The conference offered an important reminder that demography is both global and local, and that our ability to respond to population challenges depends on a strong, ethical, and inclusive population data infrastructure. As British demographers, we have a responsibility to contribute to and advocate for that infrastructure, at home and overseas. IPC2025 was a powerful reminder that investing in robust, ethical, and inclusive data systems is not optional but essential to the future of our discipline.

Report by Abhishek Gupta, 30th International Population Conference (IPC2025) in Brisbane, Australia, between 13–18 July, 2025

The International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) held its 30th International Population Conference in Brisbane, Australia, from 13–18 July, 2025. The conference brought together a global community of scholars and practitioners to present and discuss the latest research on a wide array of population issues. The extensive program featured 205 regular scientific sessions and four daily poster sessions, with papers having undergone a rigorous peer-review process, ensuring a high standard of academic quality.



A central theme connecting many of the discussions was the multifaceted nature of global demographic challenges and the critical need for evidence-based policies. The scientific sessions covered a vast range of topics, from fertility and family dynamics to migration, health, and mortality. This diversity fostered an environment of interdisciplinary collaboration, allowing researchers to explore complex population issues from various perspectives and geographical contexts.

I presented my paper, “Regional Variation of Child Malnutrition Indicators in Uttar Pradesh, India: Evidence from NFHS 2019-2021,” in a session titled “Inequities in Food Security and Children's Nutritional Status.” Chaired by Professor Sayeed Unisa, the session was incredibly focused and insightful. It featured compelling research from around the world, including a study on undernutrition indices in Kinshasa, an analysis of tribal household food insecurity in Maharashtra, a look at child nutrition dynamics in India through the lens of women's empowerment, and an examination of food insecurity and early childhood development in Nigeria. The session highlighted the diverse quantitative and mixed-methods approaches being used to tackle the persistent challenges of child malnutrition and food insecurity.

The sheer breadth of topics and the depth of the research presented made IPC2025 an exceptionally rewarding and intellectually stimulating conference. The opportunity to engage with leading experts and junior scholars from across the globe was invaluable. The next IUSSP International Population Conference 2029 will take place in Barcelona, and I would strongly recommend it to any researcher in the field of population studies.

I am very grateful for the generous financial support from the British Society for Population Studies that made my attendance and participation in this important conference possible.

Information on the BSPS international travel grant, eligibility and how to apply can be found on the BSPS webpage [here](#)

Demography in the News

Fertility Rates in the UK Have Reached An All-Time Low. The Reasons Aren't As Simple As You Think - Gillian Orr, British Vogue, 23 Oct 2025

<https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/fertility-rates-investigation>

Bringing findings from academic demographic research and the issues at stake to mainstream audiences, this article examines the UK's record low fertility rate (1.41 children per woman) and the complex, interconnected factors driving the decline. Featuring BSPS former President Professor Jane Falkingham, Evolutionary Anthropologist, Dr Paula Sheppard, and Professor Geeta Nargund, founder of the Create Health Foundation, the discussion highlights the economic burden of housing and childcare, the fundamental shift from a male-breadwinner to a dual-earner model, and the challenges of modern dating culture that often lead to women being "childless by circumstance." The piece concludes by emphasising that increasing gender parity in relationships and implementing effective family supports, such as subsidised childcare and parental leave, are more impactful than simple cash incentives.

What do the immigration figures for the UK really show? - Michael Goodier, The Guardian, 14 Sept 2025

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/sep/14/what-do-the-immigration-figures-for-the-uk-really-show>

This analysis dissects the gap between high public concern over immigration—which recently hit near-record levels, second only to the 2015 migrant crisis—and the complex, official data from the ONS. The article confirms that while net migration saw a post-Brexit spike (the "Boriswave"), it is now falling due to recent government rule changes, particularly concerning health, care, and student visas. Fact-checking claims that migrants are not working, the report features insights from Dr Madeleine Sumption of the Migration Observatory, revealing that asylum seekers account for less than 5% of arrivals. Crucially, the data shows that significant numbers of dependants (e.g., 67% of health and care worker dependants) and family visa holders are active earners via PAYE, with median non-EU immigrant earnings comparable to UK-born workers, complicating the political narrative that immigrants will 'cost the UK a fortune.'

Year to 2024 sees UK record second largest population growth in 75 years - Matt Spivey, BBC News, 26 Sept 2025

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cm2djl9jem7o#:~:text=Nigel%20Henretty%2C%20from%20the%20ONS,growth%20has%20not%20been%20consistent.>

This report summarises data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) highlighting that the UK population grew by over three-quarters of a million people in the year to June 2024, the second-largest annual increase since the late 1940s, bringing the total estimated population to 69.3 million. The key finding is that net international migration was the overwhelming driver, accounting for 98% of the overall growth (a net increase of 738,718). In contrast, natural change (births minus deaths) contributed only a fraction, with the total number of births recorded at the lowest level in at least 42 years. The article also notes regional variation, with England seeing the fastest growth rate, while Scotland and Wales experienced more deaths than births due to older population structures.

2026 BSPS Conference
8-10 September 2026
University of Kent, Canterbury
CALL FOR SESSIONS AND STRANDS

[Submit here](#)

The British Society for Population Studies welcomes **proposals for sessions or strands** at the 2026 Conference, which will be held in person. Sessions should last 60 or 90 minutes. A strand is a series of themed sessions.

[See previous Conference programmes here.](#)

Topic areas might include, and are not limited to:

- Population & the environment/climate change
- Families and households
- Demography of crisis
- Historical demography
- Ageing
- Health and mortality
- Migration
- Ethnicity
- Sexual and reproductive health
- AI and automation
- Data and methods
- Demographic challenges
- Official population statistics
- Influencing policy
- Disability studies
- Philosophical aspects of demography
- 2021/22 Census outcomes
- Qualitative population studies

Format variations are welcome:

- Networking/conversation/meet-up sessions
- Workshops or panel sessions with convenor
- Sessions with discussant (discussions with a convenor and moderator or with invited discussants)
- Conversation formats – which have proved popular as a plenary & could be extended to session formats
- Training sessions

BSPS welcomes sessions aimed at early-career researchers or other constituencies where BSPS can widen understanding of and participation in population studies, such as local authorities/NGOs/policy makers.

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CALL FOR SESSIONS AND STRANDS

[Submit here](#)

Session suggestions can be submitted as stand-alone or as part of a strand with a specific focus in mind: a single session could focus on a particular methodological or substantive topic or a specific data set. Each session would need to attract at least 3 to 4 high-quality submissions to be viable.

Organizers of strands and sessions will be expected to:

- Actively solicit papers outside of the regular call for papers, with international perspectives in mind
- Assess submissions and allocate accepted papers into a session or sessions
- Invite presenting authors to participate once accepted and manage replacements if needed
- Identify session Chairs and ensure Chairs and presenters have the information required for their session

You may also be called upon by Council to assist with assessing submissions' priority for bursary funding, if needed.

Strand and session suggestions will be considered by BSPS Council at their first meeting following the deadline, after which BSPS will let you know the outcome and the call for papers will be issued.

Please submit suggestions by 16 January 2026 at:

<https://forms.office.com/e/xybKz4akGi>