# London faces funding crisis as 2021 Census undercounts population by nearly 300,000



London's looming funding crisis exposes the flawed reliance on 2021 Census data, which undercounts the city’s true population by nearly 300,000—an error driven by the undignified chaos of the pandemic era. With the census coinciding with the third national COVID-19 lockdown, many residents fled the city’s confines, skewing figures and jeopardizing vital public funding allocations.

This misrepresentation risks depriving Londoners of the resources they desperately need. Over £4 billion of government funding for local authorities hinges on these dubious census figures, threatening to slash investments in healthcare, policing, and fire services when the city is again experiencing a resurgence in population and activity. London Councils' concerns are justified: the pandemic’s unprecedented circumstances, including high numbers of students, migrant workers, and younger professionals temporarily leaving the city, mean the data cannot be trusted to reflect current realities.

What likely began as a temporary dip—estimated at around 75,000 due to migration outflows—has now reversed, with evidence pointing to London’s population surpassing previous records. Yet, the flawed 2021 data stubbornly persists, suggesting a perception of shrinking needs that are, in fact, only increasing. The discrepancy exposes the failure of the government’s outdated funding formulas, which are predicated on a census that no longer corresponds with the post-pandemic landscape.

This situation demands urgent correction. Left unaddressed, the misallocation of funds will only deepen London's infrastructure and service deficits, undermining the quality of life for residents and eroding confidence in our public institutions. The new government’s complacent acceptance of these flawed figures reveals a concerning lack of oversight and understanding of London’s true needs.

In truth, the official 8.8 million figure grossly underestimates the city’s current population. Policymakers must recognize the critical necessity of reassessing and updating these statistics to reflect the real circumstances. Only through decisive action can we ensure London receives the fair funding it rightly deserves—funding that aligns with its actual demands and supports a thriving, resilient city.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/business/london-fair-funding-review-sadiq-khan-b1249288.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.onlondon.co.uk/census-figures-for-london-should-be-treated-with-extreme-caution-says-cross-party-body/> - London Councils has expressed concerns that the 2021 Census significantly undercounted London's population, potentially due to the third national lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. The census recorded London's population as 8.8 million, nearly 300,000 lower than previous projections. This undercount could impact future funding allocations for public services, as approximately £4 billion of local authorities' government funding is linked to population data from the census.
3. <https://www.governmentbusiness.co.uk/news/29062022/councils-warn-missing-londoners-census-data> - In response to the 2021 Census results, London boroughs have cautioned that London's population may have been significantly undercounted, potentially leading to issues in future funding allocations. The census data indicates a population of 8.8 million in March 2021, almost 300,000 lower than the Office for National Statistics' previous prediction for 2021. This discrepancy could affect funding for public services such as the NHS, police, and fire services.
4. <https://archive.londoncouncils.gov.uk/members-area/member-briefings/local-government-finance/2021-census-first-data-release> - The 2021 Census recorded London's population as 8.8 million, an increase of 7.7% from 2011. However, this figure is nearly 300,000 lower than the Office for National Statistics' projection for 2021. The undercount is attributed to the census being conducted during the third national lockdown, when many residents, especially students and migrant workers, may have temporarily relocated outside the capital. This undercount could impact future funding allocations for public services.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-68598622> - A report by Centre for Cities found that London's population fell by 75,000 during the COVID-19 pandemic, primarily due to migration out of the city to the countryside. However, the city's population has since rebounded and is now thought to be higher than ever. The report highlights that people aged 30 to 45 left London in 'abnormally large numbers' during the pandemic, leading to a net loss of 93,600 people in that age group.
6. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/census-2021-london-s-population-increases-england-wales-record-largest-population-yet-b1008834.html> - Initial results from the 2021 Census show that London's population increased by 626,000 over the decade, reaching 8.8 million in 2021. However, London Councils has raised concerns that the census may have significantly undercounted the capital's population, potentially due to the third national lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. This undercount could impact future funding allocations for public services.
7. <https://www.localgov.co.uk/Inaccurate-census-could-cost-Londoners/54446> - London Councils has warned that the 2021 Census may have significantly undercounted London's population, potentially due to the third national lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. The census recorded a population of 8.8 million, nearly 300,000 lower than previous projections. This undercount could affect future funding allocations for public services, as approximately £4 billion of local authorities' government funding is linked to population data from the census.