

# Outer Hebrides Facts Fiosrachadh mu Innse Gall

June 2023  
An t-Òg mhios 2023



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Estimated population 26,640 in 2021  
49% men, 51% women



2021 - 12,925 households,  
average household size 2.02



£149,839 average residential property price  
2022-2023



% economically active Jan to Dec 2022  
Outer Hebrides 84.1%, Scotland 77.1%



Scotsman - top 13 seaside towns - Castlebay voted  
second



Joint highest % change in female life expectancy at  
birth at +3.8% (2001-2021)  
Highest % change in male life expectancy at birth at  
+8.6% (2001-2021)



## Population/Àireamh-sluaigh

Census Results						
Population by:	1861	1901	1981	1991	2001	2011
Outer Hebrides	36,319	46,172	30,702	29,600	26,502	27,684
Age Group %						
0-4 yrs	-	-	7	6	5	5
5-19 yrs	-	-	25	21	18	16
20-44 yrs	-	-	29	32	30	27
45-64 yrs	-	-	21	22	27	30
65-79 yrs	-	-	15	13	14	16
Aged 80+	-	-	4	5	5	6
Island Areas						
Lewis	-	-	20,720	20,159	18,489	19,658
Harris	-	-	2,489	2,222	1,984	1,916
North Uist	-	-	1,803	1,815	1,657	1,619
Benbecula	-	-	1,887	1,803	1,249	1,330
South Uist	-	-	2,432	2,285	1,951	1,897
Barra & Vatersay	-	-	1,371	1,316	1,172	1,264

Between 1901 and 2001 the population fluctuated with different rates of change between decades. However, despite an increase in population between 1901 and 1911 and again between 1971 and 1981, overall within the 100 years between 1901 and 2001 the population declined by almost 43% or 19,670 persons. There was however a 4.5% increase in the population from 2001 to 2011.

## Population/Àireamh-sluaigh

Population by:	Mid Year Estimates					Projections	
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2028	2043
Outer Hebrides	26,950	26,830	26,720	26,500	26,640	25,181	22,542
Births	240	210	189	203	172	197	178
Deaths	351	353	341	375	362	361	347
Net Migration	155	20	50	-40	320	11	28
Age Group %							
0-4 yrs	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
5-19 yrs	15	15	15	15	15	15	14
20-44 yrs	25	25	24	24	24	23	23
45-64 yrs	30	30	30	30	30	27	25
65-79 yrs	18	19	19	19	19	21	21
Aged 80+	7	7	7	7	8	10	13
Island Areas							
Lewis	19,165	19,072	18,982	18,810	18,854	-	-
Harris	1,852	1,836	1,827	1,781	1,795	-	-
North Uist	1,586	1,574	1,562	1,578	1,616	-	-
Benbecula	1,322	1,322	1,314	1,300	1,298	-	-
South Uist	1,782	1,751	1,754	1,734	1,769	-	-
Barra & Vatersay	1,243	1,275	1,281	1,297	1,308	-	-

Source: National Records of Scotland [www.nrscotland.gov.uk](http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk). Note: figures may not add exactly due to rounding.





Indicator	Outer Hebrides	Scotland
Business Gateway Start Ups, 2022/23 per 1,000 of the population <sup>1</sup>	2.4	1.1
Tourism - visits by GB tourists April to December 2021 <sup>2</sup>	-	13.6 million
GB tourist spend in 2021	-	2,991 million
National Insurance Number (NINo) allocations to adults overseas nationals entering UK 2020 <sup>3</sup>	20	17,100
Average residential property price 2021-22 <sup>4</sup>	£144,880	£201,744

Source: <sup>1</sup>Comhairle nan Eilean Siar using NRS 2021 estimates <sup>2</sup>Visit Scotland <sup>3</sup>National Records of Scotland (NRS) <sup>4</sup>Registers of Scotland

### Aircraft Movements

Airport	Total Flights^			Passengers*			Number of Direct Daily Flights to:(summer week day - mainland connections)		
	2011	2016	2021	2011	2016	2021	Glasgow	Inverness	Edinburgh
Barra	1,258	1,345	1,147	10,000	13,000	10,000	2	-	-
Benbecula	4,366	3,648	2,931	34,000	32,000	20,000	4	2	-
Stornoway	11,255	10,600	6,809	122,000	124,000	61,000	4	3	2

Source: Scottish Transport Statistics 2022 Edition (^Total flights include both commercial and non commercial)



## Ferry Transport

Route	2011	2016	2021
	Thousands		
Oban-Castlebay/Lochboisdale			
passengers	61.6	43.3	42.4
cars	19.3	15.7	17.0
commercial & bus	1.3	1.1	1.0
Uig-Tarbert/Lochmaddy			
passengers	182.30	188.1	151.60
cars	67.6	76.7	65.1
commercial & bus	8.0	6.2	6.1
Ullapool-Stornoway			
passengers	230.9	264.1	217.7
cars	67.8	86.2	87.4
commercial & bus	15.9	12.9	14.1
Berneray-Leverburgh			
passengers	58.1	63.1	56.7
cars	23.4	28.2	26.7
commercial & bus	2.2	1.1	1.6
Ardmhor- Eriskay			
passengers	48.4	57.1	49.2
cars	17.0	22.0	21.4
commercial & bus	1.3	1.3	0.8

Source: Scottish Transport Edition 2022 Edition (Figures in 000s)



## Labour Market/Margaidh Obrach

Indicator		Outer Hebrides	Scotland
% Model based unemployment rate*	2022	2.5	3.4
	2021	3.0	3.9
	2020	3.2	4.3
	2019	2.4	3.5
	2018	3.0	4.1
% Claimant count	April 2023	2.0	3.3
All people aged 16-64 (2021)	Number of persons	15,500	3,494,100
	% of total population	58.3	63.8
	% of total female population	57.0	63.2
	% of total male population	59.1	64.4
Percentage economically active Jan - Dec 2022 (all persons)*		84.1	77.1
Percentage economically inactive Jan - Dec 2022 (all persons)*		15.9	22.9
Gross weekly pay by residence for full-time workers (2022)		£560.90	£640.30

Source: National Statistics [www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk) and <http://simd.scotland.gov.uk>\*Rates cover those aged 16 and over



## Households/Taighean

	2011 Census	Household Estimates			% Change 2017-2021	Projections	
		2017	2019	2021		2028	2043
No. of households	12,576	12,805	12,833	12,925	0.9	12,478	11,425
All Dwellings	13,857	14,714	14,734	14,856	1.0	-	-
Vacant Dwellings & 2nd Homes	-	2,008	1,951	1,978	-1.4	-	-
Occupied Dwellings	-	12,706	12,783	12,878	1.3	-	-
Mean Household Size	2.17	2.08	2.05	2.02	-2.9	1.99	1.93

Source: NRS Household Estimates 2021 and 2018 Based Household Projections [www.nrscotland.gov.uk](http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk).

Household Composition	Household Projections			% Change 2018-2043	Projections	
	2014	2016	2018		2028	2043
One adult	4,991	5,096	5,099	-4	5,214	4,910
One adult plus children	594	603	588	-19	542	475
Two adults plus children	2,214	2,113	2,097	-26	1,774	1,551
Two adults	3,938	3,996	3,885	-8	3,993	3,583
Three or more adults and no children	1,183	1,142	1,106	-18	1,014	907

Source: NRS 2018 Based Household Projections [www.nrscotland.gov.uk](http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk)





## Health/Slàinte

Life Expectancy at Birth and Healthy Life Expectancy	Outer Hebrides	Scotland
Life Expectancy Males (2019-21)	77.9	76.5
Life Expectancy Females	82.8	80.8
Healthy Life Expectancy at Birth Males (2019-21)	67.4	60.4
Healthy Life Expectancy at Birth Females	64.0	61.1

Source: NRS Vital Events [www.nrscotland.gov.uk](http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk)

Patient Activity (1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023)	2022-2023
Admissions in Western Isles Hospitals	6633
Admissions to mainland hospitals - Western Isles Residents	2293
Number of new outpatient clinic attendances	8274
Total operations performed in Western Isles Hospital (Stornoway)	2806
Total operations performed in Uist and Barra Hospitals	252

Note: Admissions data from SMR01 based on Episodes of Care. Outpatient Clinic Appointments from SMR00 - for Western Isles Clinics only. Outpatient Appointments - figure includes DNAs and CNWs (patients that Did Not Attend and did not give prior notice, and patients that attended but Could Not Wait to be seen). Outpatient Attendances excludes DNAs and CNWs.

## Health Services (GP/Consultant Data as at 1 March 2023)

Patient Activity	Location	GPs/Consultants
Western Isles Hospital	Lewis	15 WTE*
Uist and Barra Hospital	Benbecula	GP led
St Brendans Hospital	Barra	GP led
The Group Practice	Lewis	8
Broadbay Medical Practice	Lewis	4
Langabhat Medical Practice	Lewis	6
North Harris Medical Practice	Harris	2
South Harris Medical Practice	Harris	2
North Uist Medical Practice	North Uist	3
Benbecula Medical Practice	Benbecula	4
South Uist Medical Practice	South Uist	1
Barra Medical Practice	Barra	0

Consultant WTE - ("Whole Time Equivalents" includes 2 locums. GP numbers are actual GPs, not WTE.

## Community and Education/Coimhearsnachd agus Foghlam

### School Rolls in the Outer Hebrides

Island Area	No. of Primary Schools		No. of secondary schools with at least 1st and 2nd year		Primary Roll		Secondary Roll	
	2012	2022	2012	2022	2012	2022	2012	2022
Barra	2	2	1	1	90	106	84	91
Benbecula	1	1	1	1	97	109	293	282
Harris	3	2	1	1	84	110	117	85
Lewis	15	12	3	1	1351	1234	1151	1058
North Uist	3	1	0	0	75	70	0	0
South Uist	3	2	0	0	159	126	0	0
Totals	27	20	6	4	1856	1755	1645	1516

Source: Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Education and Children's Services Department as at September of year stated

### School Leaver Destinations 2021-22

Number of School Leavers	Higher Education	Training	Employment
267	30%	3%	47.9%

Source: Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, No. 5: 2023 Edition



### Gaelic Speaking - Outer Hebrides and Scotland (2001 and 2011)

Age	Population speaking Gaelic (No) Outer Hebrides		Population speaking Gaelic (%) Outer Hebrides		Population speaking Gaelic (%) Scotland	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
Outer Hebrides All ages 3+	15,723	14,066	61.1	52.2	1.2	1.1
Civil Parishes						
Barra	778	760	68.5	62.2	-	-
Barvas	2,281	2,034	74.7	64.1	-	-
Harris	1,447	1,207	69.9	60.2	-	-
Lochs	1,097	939	62.5	53.3	-	-
North Uist	1,022	887	68.6	61.5	-	-
South Uist	2,079	1,885	67.3	60.4	-	-
Stornoway	5,973	5,484	51.2	43.4	-	-
Uig	1,046	870	69.9	55.5	-	-

Source: NRS "Scotland's Census 2001 - Gaelic Report" [www.nrscotland.gov.uk](http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk)  
Scotland's Census 2011 [www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk)

### Crimes and Offences 2021-22 and 2022-23

Rate per 10,000 population	Outer Hebrides		Orkney		Shetland		Scotland	
	2021-22	2022-23	2021-22	2022-23	2021-22	2022-23	2021-22	2022-23
Total crimes	232	308	164	228	198	278	523	528
Sexual Offences	23	21	27	40	26	25	27	27
Non-sexual Crimes of Violence	73	90	43	60	43	79	126	126
Crimes of Dishonesty	38	59	32	50	37	54	169	189
Damage and Reckless Behaviour	33	41	35	35	29	34	81	79
Percentage crimes/offences cleared up	74.5	73.3	70.8	72.2	72.1	57.1	54.0	53.3

Source: Scottish Government Statistics [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

## Natural and Cultural Heritage

Environmental Designations	Number	Total area covered
World Heritage Site (dual natural and cultural status)	1	St Kilda 25,270 ha
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	52	40,917.24 ha
National Nature Reserves (NNR)	1	871.86 ha
Special Protection Areas (SPAs)W	16	276,907 ha
Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)	16	1,490,8359.22 ha
National Scenic Area (NSAs)	3	116,600 ha
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	1	Loch Stiapabhat, Lewis 13.5 ha
RAMSAR	4	71,329 ha
Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs)	465	throughout island chain
Listed Buildings (British Listed Buildings) (covers buildings and structures)	359	throughout island chain

Source: nature.scot





## Geographical Facts/Fiosrachadh mun àite

Geography		Measurement			
Number of islands		119 officially named islands (approx.)			
Number of inhabited islands: 14					
Baleshare		910 ha			
Barra		6,173 ha			
Benbecula		8,498 ha			
Berneray		1,056 ha			
Eriskay		754 ha			
Flodda		145 ha			
Great Bernera		2,240 ha			
Grimsay (North)		833 ha			
Grimsay (South)		117 ha			
Lewis and Harris		217,820 ha			
North Uist		35,479 ha			
Scalpay		702 ha			
South Uist		32,094 ha			
Vatersay		953 ha			
Number of named beaches		97 beaches (SNH Report No. 109,1984)			
Length of island chain		209 km (130 miles)			
Length of coastline at high water mark		2,687 km (1669 miles)			
Land area		2,898 km <sup>2</sup> (excludes freshwater & intertidal)			
Percentage of land in crofting tenure		70% (approx. 6000 crofts)			
Freshwater		15% of UK's freshwater surface area			
Distance between St Kilda & Rubha Ghriminis, North Uist		66 km (41 miles)			
Highest point		Clisham, Isle of Harris 799 m			
Distance in miles (as crow flies):		Stornoway	Tarbert	Balivanich	Castlebay
	to Inverness	94m	99m	117m	127m
	to Glasgow	180m	171m	164m	145m
	to Edinburgh	197m	190m	191m	177m
	to Aberdeen	174m	182m	199m	202m

Note: these figures are approximate and subject to variation



