**Hampshire and Solent Mayoral Constituency**

The Mayoral Constituency comprises two distinct counties: Hampshire, a county located on the southern coast of England, with a mix of urban centres, coastal communities, and rural countryside including national parks; and the Isle of Wight, an island off the south coast of Hampshire, separated from it by the Solent and known for its coastal beauty.

The area is administered by Hampshire County Council and three unitary authorities: Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight.

**Demographics**

According to the most recent estimates from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Hampshire (excluding the unitary authorities of Southampton and Portsmouth) has a population of approximately 1.4 million people. Including Southampton and Portsmouth, the total population rises to over 1.8 million, making Hampshire one of the most populous counties in the UK. Population growth in Hampshire has been steady over the last two decades.

According to the 2021 Census, the population of the Isle of Wight was 140,500. Growth on the island is relatively slow, with the Office for National Statistics projecting only marginal increases in the coming decades, mainly among older age groups.

Hampshire has a relatively balanced demographic profile. Around **18%** of Hampshire's population is aged 0–15, while around **62%** are working-age adults (16–64), and **20%** are aged 65 and older. This age distribution is broadly in line with national trends.

The Isle of Wight has one of the oldest populations in the UK, with 27% of residents aged 65 or above. The proportion of children (under the age of 15) is below the national average at around 15% and working-age adults (16-64) make up about 58%.

In terms of ethnicity, Hampshire is less diverse than major urban areas in the UK. According to the 2021 Census, **92.3%** of the population identifies as White but only 80.7% of the population of Southampton identifies as White and only 85.5% of the population in Portsmouth identifies as White.

Over 96% of residents on the Isle of Wight identify as White, according to the 2021 census.

**Economics and regional partnerships**

Economically, Hampshire is relatively prosperous. It boasts **higher-than-average employment rates,** with key sectors including defence, advanced manufacturing, education, and information technology. The presence of major employers such as BAE Systems, IBM, and the Ministry of Defence supports this economic strength. Additionally, Hampshire benefits from its proximity to London and its accessibility via the M3 and M27 motorways, as well as several key railway lines, making it an attractive area for both commuters and businesses.

The Isle of Wight’s economy is heavily service-oriented, with key sectors including tourism and hospitality (especially in towns like Ryde, Sandown, and Shanklin), healthcare and social work, and marine and renewable energy technologies (notably near Cowes and East Cowes).

Unemployment rates on the Isle of Wight tend to be slightly higher than the national average, partly due to seasonal fluctuations and limited industry diversification.

Access to mainland services from the Island are cross-Solent to Portsmouth, Southampton, and Lymington. Transportation costs and connectivity are barriers to economic development. Additional costs associated with island status are estimated to be, for example, 13% higher for adult social care, 29% for children's services, and 70% higher for highway maintenance than those of statistical neighbours.

There are some key collaborations within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight with neighbouring authorities and regional agencies. For instance:

* **Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)** works with businesses and local councils to drive economic development in parts of Hampshire.
* The **Solent LEP** supports economic growth around the Solent maritime corridor (Southampton, Portsmouth, and the Isle of Wight).

Hampshire is among the least deprived authorities in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019. However, there are pockets within Hampshire that fall within the most deprived areas in the country, including parts of Rushmoor, Havant, Gosport and Eastleigh. 10% of children in Hampshire aged 0 to 15 years are living in income-deprived families.

The Island is the 80th most deprived authority in England (out of 317) according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019.

**Housing**

Housing in Hampshire is a primary concern due to rising demand, particularly in areas close to London and along the south coast. House prices are higher than the national average, and affordability is a key issue in many localities, particularly for younger and first-time buyers.

The Isle of Wight has a significant proportion of older housing stock, and demand for housing—particularly retirement homes—has driven up prices in some areas. Average house prices are lower than those in mainland Hampshire but have been steadily rising. Affordability to rent and buy is also a key issue particularly as incomes on the Island are significantly lower than in the south-east of England.

**Political picture**

The 2024 General Election saw the Liberal Democrats gain 3 MPs in the area: North East Hampshire (Alex Brewer), Winchester (Danny Chambers), and Eastleigh (Liz Jarvis). The Lib Dems came second in four constituencies, including narrowly in East Hampshire, and Romsey and Southampton North. There are 6 Labour MPs in Hampshire and 10 Conservative MPs.

The Isle of Wight has 1 Conservative MP and 1 Labour MP.

The Conservatives lead Hampshire County Council with 50 Conservative councillors out of 78. Southampton is a Unitary Authority and has been under Labour majority control since 2022. There is no overall control of Portsmouth Unitary Authority, but the council has been run by a minority Lib Dem administration since 2018. The Isle of Wight Unitary is a very hung council. In May 2025, it moved to a committee system. The leader of the council is from the Alliance Group. The deputy leader of the council is a Lib Dem. There is no formal administrative agreement between the groups.

Much of Hampshire outside of the Unitary Authorities is Parished.

At the District/Borough council level, the Lib Dems have strongholds in Eastleigh and Winchester.

The Government is currently considering local government reorganisation for this area, which would see the end of the County Council and District and Borough councils with administration split between Unitary authorities.

**For more information see the two tables below.**

**Borough, District, County and Unitary councils in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Council** | **Current control** |
| Hampshire County Council | Con  |
| Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council | NOC since 2022, Minority administration comprising Lib Dems and ‘Independent Forum’ |
| East Hampshire District Council  | NOC - is led by a coalition between the Conservatives and local party Whitehill & Bordon Community Party |
| Eastleigh Borough Council | LD  |
| Fareham Borough Council | Con |
| Gosport Borough Council | LD  |
| Hart District Council | NOC - led by a coalition of Lib Dems and local party Community Campaign (Hart) |
| Havant Borough Council | NOC – led by coalition of Labour, Lib Dems and the Green Party |
| New Forest District Council | Con |
| Rushmoor Borough Council | Labour – took control for the first time in 2024 |
| Winchester District Council | LD |
|  |  |
| **Unitary Authorities**  |  |
| Portsmouth City Council | LD minority administration |
| Southampton City Council | Lab |
| Isle of Wight | NOC – led through a committee system since May 2025 |

**Hampshire and Isle of Wight MPs, Nearest Rivals, Votes, and Majorities (2024 General Election)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Constituency** | **Electorate** | **Elected MP** | **Votes** | **Nearest Rival** | **Majority** |
| Aldershot | 78,569 | Alex Baker | Lab | 19,764 | Leo Docherty | Con | 5683 |
| Basingstoke  | 78,487 | Luke Murphy | Lab |  20,922 | Maria Miller | Con | 6484 |
| East Hampshire  | 70,659 | Damian Hinds | Con | 18,509 | Dominic Martin | LD | 1275 |
| Eastleigh  | 69,965 | Liz Jarvis | LD | 15,970 | Samuel Joynson | Con | 1546 |
| Fareham & Waterlooville  | 76,947 | Suella Braverman | Con | 17,561 | Gemma Furnivall | Lab | 6079 |
| Farnham & Bordon\* | 75,920 | Greg Stafford | Con | 18,951 | Khalil Yousuf | LD | 1349 |
| Gosport  | 73,261 | Caroline Dinenage | Con | 17,830 | Edward Batterbury | Lab | 6054 |
| Hamble Valley | 76,478 | Paul Holmes | Con | 19,671 | Prad Bains | LD | 4802 |
| Havant | 72,323 | Alan Mak | Con | 12,986 | Stefanie Harvey | Lab | 92 |
| Isle of Wight East | 55,855 | Joe Robertson | Con | 10,427 | Sarah Morris | Ref | 3323 |
| Isle of Wight West | 55,406 | Richard Quigley | Lab | 13,240 | Bob Seely | Con | 3177 |
| New Forest East  | 70,618 | Julian Lewis | Con | 17,412 | Sasjkia Otto | Lab | 8495 |
| New Forest West  | 68,644 | Desmond Swayne | Con | 16,412 | Sally Johnston | Lab | 5600 |
| North East Hampshire  | 76,923 | Alex Brewer | LD | 21,178 | Ranil Jayawardena | Con | 634 |
| North West Hampshire  | 78,629 | Kit Malthouse | Con | 17,770 | Andy Fitchet | Lab | 3288 |
| Portsmouth North | 70,446 | Amanda Martin | Lab | 14,495 | Penny Mordaunt | Con | 780 |
| Portsmouth South | 73,711 | Stephen Morgan | Lab | 18,857 | Mark Zimmer | Ref | 13,155 |
| Romsey & Southampton North | 71,871 | Caroline Nokes | Con | 19,893 | Geoff Cooper | LD | 2191 |
| Southampton Itchen | 68,379 | Darren Paffey | Lab | 15,782 | Sidney Yankson | Con | 6105 |
| Southampton Test | 65,520 | Satvir Kaur | Lab | 15,945 | Ben Burcombe-Filer | Con | 9333 |
| Winchester  | 78,289 | Danny Chambers | LD | 29,939 | Flick Drummond | Con | 13,821 |

\* partly in Surrey