

Article

# Roma populations, England and Wales: Census 2021

Exploring the outcomes for Roma populations compared with the usual resident population of England and Wales using Census 2021 data.

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## Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Definition](#)
3. [People who identified as Roma in Census 2021](#)
4. [Age and sex](#)
5. [Main language](#)
6. [Housing](#)
7. [Education](#)
8. [Labour market \(occupation and employment status\)](#)
9. [Health, disability and unpaid care](#)
10. [National identity and country of birth](#)
11. [Roma population data](#)
12. [Glossary](#)
13. [Data sources and quality](#)
14. [Related links](#)
15. [Cite this article](#)

# 1 . Main points

- 103,020 usual residents of England and Wales identified their ethnic group as Roma through a tick box or write-in response in Census 2021 (0.2% of the population).
- Those who identified as Roma had a younger age profile; 75.0% were aged 40 years and under, compared with 50.9% of the population of England and Wales.
- Most common main languages reported by people who identified as Roma were English (English or Welsh in Wales), Romanian, Italian, Portuguese and Slovak, and outcomes differed by main language spoken.
- Elementary occupations and skilled trades were the most common job types held by employed people aged 16 to 64 years who identified as Roma (28.5% and 16.2%, respectively).
- 30.9% of those who identified as Roma had "No qualifications", compared with 18.2% of the population of England and Wales.
- People who identified as Roma reported higher levels of "Bad" or "Very bad" health for those aged 65 to 69 years (20.2%) compared with 9.8% for England and Wales, but slightly higher rates of "Very good" or "Good" health for those aged 20 to 44 years.

## 2 . Definition

In this article we refer to people who identified as Roma as those people who stated their ethnic group as Roma in Census 2021.

This includes people who selected the "Roma" tick-box under the "White" high-level ethnic group category. It also includes people who reported "Roma" through one of the write-in responses under any of the five high-level ethnic group categories.

More information on how people identified their ethnic group is in [Section 12: Glossary](#).

## 3 . People who identified as Roma in Census 2021

In the 2021 Census, 103,020 usual residents in England and Wales identified their ethnic group as Roma (0.2% of the population). Of these, 98.2% (101,135) lived in England.

The highest number of those who identified as Roma at Lower Tier Local Authority (LTLA) level resided in Sheffield (2,710) while the highest number in a Welsh LTLA was in Cardiff (605).

### Figure 1a: Distribution of the Roma ethnic groups across England and Wales

Percentage of the Roma ethnic group in each Lower Tier Local Authority (LTLA), England and Wales, Census 2021

### Figure 1b: Distribution of the Roma ethnic groups by top five main language groups across England and Wales

Percentage of the Roma ethnic group in each Lower Tier Local Authority (LTLA) by top five main language groups, England and Wales, Census 2021

The map in Figure 1a shows how those who identified as Roma were spread across England and Wales, while the map in Figure 1b shows a language breakdown across England and Wales for the five main language responses from those who identified as Roma. The main language groups represent different communities, which have distinct cultural differences as well as different outcomes.

We evaluate these differences by examining the groups by main language reported. This allows us to look at groups with origins from different parts of Europe.

At a regional level, we see main language group clusters.

English ("English or Welsh" in Wales) was the most common main language reported by those who identified as Roma in the following regions:

- Wales, 47.3%
- South East, 34.7%
- South West, 32.9%
- North East, 32.5%
- North West, 26.7%

Romanian was the most common main language reported by those who identified as Roma in:

- West Midlands, 41.3%
- East Midlands, 36.9%
- East of England, 30.4%

In Yorkshire and The Humber, the most common main language reported by the Roma ethnic group was Slovak (29.2%) and in London it was Italian (34.4%).

## 4 . Age and sex

Of those who identified as Roma in England and Wales, 55.3% were male and 44.7% were female. The distribution of those who identified as Roma across age bands was similar for males and females.

### **Figure 2: People who identified as Roma had a younger age profile compared with the population of England and Wales**

**Percentage of Roma ethnic groups and the population of England and Wales at each year of age, split by sex, England and Wales, Census 2021**

The population pyramid in Figure 2 shows those who identified as Roma were younger compared with the England and Wales population. For those who identified as Roma, 75.0% were aged 40 years and under, compared with 50.9% of the England and Wales population.

Some outcomes explored in this article may reflect the younger age profile of the Roma group. It is important to compare age groups to reduce this bias.

## 5 . Main language

For main language, we looked at individuals aged 3 years and over.

Table 1: English (English or Welsh in Wales), Romanian and Italian were the most common main languages among those who identified as Roma  
Percentage of people who identified as Roma who reported each listed language as their main language, 10 most common languages, England and Wales, Census 2021

Main Language	England and Walespercentage	Englandpercentage	Walespercentage
English (English or Welsh in Wales)	27.8	27.5	47.3
Romanian	23.0	23.2	13.4
Italian	22.0	22.1	17.4
Portuguese	7.4	7.4	2.8
Slovak	5.0	5.0	3.1
Spanish	3.5	3.6	3.1
Polish	2.0	2.0	1.1
Czech	2.0	1.9	7.6
Bulgarian	1.1	1.1	1.1
Hungarian	1.0	1.0	1.1

Source: Census 2021 from the Office for National Statistics

### Notes

1. Percentages have been calculated using rounded data, as such totals may not add to 100%.
2. For confidentiality reasons counts have been rounded to the nearest 5 and counts below 10 are suppressed.

Table 1 shows that for those who identified as Roma, English (English or Welsh in Wales) was the most common main language (27.8%), followed by Romanian (23.0%) and Italian (22.0%).

A much larger proportion of those who identified as Roma reported “English or Welsh” as their main language in Wales (47.3%) than reported “English” in England (27.5%).

For those who identified as Roma, and who reported that they spoke a main language other than English (English or Welsh in Wales) there were differences in English language proficiency, though the majority of people who identified as Roma reported speaking English well regardless of their main language.

Higher levels of English language proficiency were reported by those who said their main language was Italian or Spanish: 89.2% and 88.3%, respectively, reported speaking English "Well" or "Very well".

English language proficiency levels were lower for those who reported their main language was Romanian (72.8%), Portuguese (70.5%) and Slovak (67.1%).

### **Figure 3: People who identified as Roma and reported their main language was Italian had a higher proportion of people aged in their 20s and 30s than those who reported other main languages**

**Percentage of people who identified as Roma in each age group, split by the most commonly reported main languages, England and Wales, Census 2021**

The bar charts in Figure 3 show that those who identified as Roma in England and Wales, and reported their main language was Slovak or English (English or Welsh in Wales), had a higher proportion of the population who were children and young people than those who identified as Roma and reported other main languages. Of the people who identified as Roma and reported their main language was English (English or Welsh in Wales), 31.3% were under 20 years of age. Of those who reported their main language was Slovak, 38.6% were under 20 years of age.

Among those who identified as Roma, a low proportion of children and young people reported their main language was Spanish or Italian. Only 6.9% of those reporting Italian and 8.5% of those reporting Spanish as their main language were aged under 20 years, compared with 22.4% of all those who identified as Roma.

## **6 . Housing**

This section is about people living in households so it does not include data on people living in communal establishments, such as university halls of residence or care homes. The analysis also looks at percentages of people, rather than percentages of households. This is because ethnic group is individual. It therefore differs from our [Housing, England and Wales: Census 2021](#) release, which is household-based.

### **Occupancy rating for bedrooms**

The occupancy rating for bedrooms provides a measure of whether accommodation is overcrowded or under-occupied. A full definition can be found in [Section 12: Glossary](#).

### **Figure 4: Those who identified as Roma were more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation than the population of England and Wales**

**Percentage of Roma ethnic groups and population of England and Wales with overcrowded bedroom occupancy rating, by age, England and Wales, Census 2021**

The bar chart in Figure 4 shows that across all age groups, those who identified as Roma were more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation than the population of England and Wales. Just over a quarter (26.5%) of those who identified as Roma lived in overcrowded accommodation compared with 8.4% of the England and Wales population. Of people who identified as Roma, by age, those aged 10 to 14 years were most likely to live in overcrowded accommodation (41.2%) while those aged 80 to 84 years were least likely to (4.0%).

Those who identified as Roma and responded their main language was Slovak were the most likely to live in overcrowded accommodation (54.0%) followed by those who reported Romanian as their main language (33.2%). Those who reported their main language was Italian or Portuguese were the least likely to live in overcrowded accommodation (17.1% and 21.3%, respectively). For those who identified as Roma and reported their main language was English (English or Welsh in Wales), 22.7% lived in overcrowded accommodation, compared with 8.4% of the England and Wales population.

## Tenure

Tenure is whether a household rents or owns their accommodation.

People who identified as Roma were most commonly in households living in rented accommodation (84.5%), in particular private rented or lives rent free (75.1%). Whereas the population of England and Wales were more likely to live in owned properties, both outright and with a mortgage, loan or shared ownership (62.7%). As Figure 5 shows, this finding holds across age groups.

For the population of England and Wales, living in accommodation that was owned outright or with a mortgage, loan or shared ownership was lowest for those aged 20 to 24 years, with 44.6% of this age band living in owner-occupied accommodation. This compared with only 9.0% of people who identified as Roma in the same age band and lived in owner-occupied accommodation.

### **Figure 5: Those who identified as Roma were less likely to own their home compared with the England and Wales population**

Percentage of Roma ethnic groups and England and Wales population in each age group, by housing tenure, Census 2021

The bar charts in Figure 5 show the biggest difference within the “owned outright” category was for the age band 65 to 69 years where only 22.3% of those who identified as Roma owned their property outright, compared with 67.0% of people in England and Wales in the same age group.

## 7 . Education

In Census 2021, respondents aged 16 years and over were asked to record the level of qualifications they had achieved.

Those who identified as Roma were more likely to report “No qualifications” (30.9%) compared with the population of England and Wales (18.2%).

### **Figure 6: Level 4 or above qualifications were less common for those who identified as Roma than the population of England and Wales at equivalent ages**

Percentage of Roma ethnic groups and population of England and Wales aged 16 years and over in each age group by highest qualification, England and Wales, Census 2021

The bar charts in Figure 6 show of those who identified as Roma, those aged 30 to 34 years were least likely to report "No qualifications" (28.1%). This compares with 9.7% of the population of England and Wales in this age group. All age groups among those who identified as Roma had notably higher levels of "No qualifications" compared with England and Wales.

Those who identified as Roma were less likely to report [Level 4 or above qualifications](#) across all age groups except 16 to 19 years. For those who identified as Roma aged 25 to 29 years, 35.2% reported holding Level 4 or above qualifications. This compares with 48.0% of the England and Wales population in this age group.

Those who identified as Roma had higher levels with apprenticeship and other qualifications as their highest level qualification than the population of England and Wales. This aligns with the findings from occupation type where we found those who identified as Roma were more likely to hold skilled trade positions, which tend to be taught through apprenticeship schemes.

Those who identified as Roma and reported Slovak as their main language were most likely to state they had "No qualifications" (62.9%). For those who reported Romanian as their main language, this figure was 40.8%. The proportion for Roma ethnic groups who reported English (English or Welsh in Wales) as their main language was 27.8%.

Additionally, of those who identified as Roma and reported Slovak as their main language, only 7.3% had attained Level 4 or above qualifications, compared with 33.8% in the population of England and Wales. Conversely, those people who identified as Roma and reported their main language was Italian or Portuguese had higher levels of Level 4 or above qualifications than the population of England and Wales: 41.1% and 36.0%, respectively.

## 8 . Labour market (occupation and employment status)

This section looks at the employment status and occupation among those aged 16 to 64 years based on Census 2021 data.

Census 2021 was conducted during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and it is possible that this affected the way people responded. See our [Comparing Census 2021 and Labour Force Survey estimates of the labour market, England and Wales: 13 March 2023 article](#) for further information about interpreting census labour market data.

### Employment status

The Roma ethnic groups had higher proportions of those who were self-employed (16.9%) compared with the population of England and Wales (11.3%). They also had lower proportions of those who were employees (54.0%) compared with the population of England and Wales (59.6%).

Looking at the largest age band for those who identified as Roma (30 to 34 years), 61.5% were employees compared with 69.0% in England and Wales. In the same age band, 17.7% of those who identified as Roma were self-employed compared with 11.2% in England and Wales. Overall, those who identified as Roma had lower proportions of economic inactivity (22.9%) compared with the population of England and Wales (24.7%).

### Figure 7: People who identified as Roma were more likely to be self-employed than the population of England and Wales

Percentage of those who identified as Roma and the population of England and Wales aged 16 to 64 years in each employment status split by sex, England and Wales, Census 2021

Figure 7 shows for those who identified as Roma, males were more likely to be self-employed (22.3%) than females (9.9%). This difference is also seen in the population of England and Wales, but it is not as wide.

Females who identified as Roma were more likely to be "Economically inactive due to looking after home or family" (13.2%) compared with males who identified as Roma (2.6%). This is similar to the pattern found in the England and Wales population, but the difference was wider for those who identified as Roma.

### **Figure 8: Those who identified as Roma and reported Slovak as their main language were more likely to be economically inactive than the England and Wales population**

**Percentage of those who identified as Roma and the population of England and Wales aged 16 to 64 years in each main language group, by employment status, England and Wales, Census 2021**

Figure 8 shows employment status for those who identified as Roma varied depending on what main language was reported. Those who identified as Roma and reported English (English or Welsh in Wales) as their main language had a higher proportion of people who were "Economically inactive" (29.6%) compared with the population of England and Wales (24.7%).

Those who identified as Roma and reported Slovak as their main language had a higher proportion "Economically inactive" (62.8%) compared with the overall Roma ethnic groups proportion (22.9%). They also had higher proportions of those "Economically inactive: long-term sick" (8.1%) compared with 2.5% of all who identified as Roma, as well as higher proportions of "Economically inactive: looking after home or family" (24.8% compared with 7.2% of all who identified as Roma).

## **Occupation**

For this section, we looked at the occupations of employed people aged 16 to 64 years (including self-employed).

### **Figure 9: The most common occupations held by those who identified as Roma were “skilled trades” and “elementary occupations”**

**Percentage of those who identified as Roma and population of England and Wales aged 16 to 64 years in each occupation type, England and Wales, Census 2021**

The bar chart in Figure 9 shows that 28.5% of employed people who identified as Roma held elementary occupations (such as cleaners, postal workers and bar staff), 16.2% held skilled trades occupations (such as carpenters, farmers and chefs) and 12.5% held process, plant and machine operatives' occupations.

These percentages are higher than for the population of England and Wales (10.5% for elementary occupations, 10.1% for skilled trades occupations and 6.9% for process, plant and machine operatives' occupations) and hold across the age range. In England and Wales, professional occupations were the most common (20.4%) in the adult population. For those who identified as Roma, 10.3% held professional occupations.

Across the main language groups, 57.2% of those who identified as Roma and reported their main language was Slovak were in elementary occupations, higher than the overall Roma ethnic groups. Those who identified as Roma and reported their main language as English (English or Welsh in Wales) had the highest proportion of people in managers, directors and senior officials (11.8%), associate professional (10.7%), administrative secretarial occupations (5.3%) and sales customer services (6.6%) when compared with the other Roma main language groups.

## **9 . Health, disability and unpaid care**



## Health

Of those who identified as Roma, 90.6% reported “Good” or “Very good” health compared with 82.0% of the England and Wales population. This is likely because of the younger age profile of those who identified as Roma.

### **Figure 10: People who identified as Roma more commonly reported “Bad” or “Very bad” health at older ages compared with the population of England and Wales**

Percentage of those who identified as Roma in each age group by reported health category, England and Wales, Census 2021

The bar chart in Figure 10 shows people aged 20 to 44 years who identified as Roma reported higher rates of "Very good" or "Good" health (93.7%) compared with the population of England and Wales (89.4%).

People aged 55 years and older who identified as Roma reported lower levels of "Very good" or "Good" health compared with the population of England and Wales. The largest difference was for those aged 65 to 69 years (55.7% for people who identified as Roma compared with 67.8% for the population of England and Wales). This age group also reported higher levels of "Bad" or "Very bad" health: 20.2% of Roma ethnic groups reported this compared with 9.8% of the England and Wales population.

## Disability

In line with the [Equality Act \(2010\)](#), people who assessed their day-to-day activities as limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses were considered disabled. Those who stated that they had a condition that did not limit their day-to-day activities or had no condition were considered non-disabled.

A lower proportion of people who identified as Roma were disabled (6.9%) compared with the England and Wales population (17.5%). This may be because of the younger age profile in the Roma ethnic groups as disability rates tend to increase with age.

### **Figure 11: The proportion of people with disabilities was lower for people who identified as Roma compared with the population of England and Wales**

Percentage of those who identified as Roma in each age group by reported disability status, England and Wales, Census 2021

The bar chart in Figure 11 shows a smaller percentage of people aged 20 to 54 years who identified as Roma had a disability compared with the population of England and Wales in the same age bracket. The largest difference was for those aged 20 to 24 years, where 94.0% of those who identified as Roma had no disability or limiting condition compared with 80.6% of the population of England and Wales.

A higher proportion of those who identified as Roma aged 50 years and over indicated that they were disabled and limited a lot compared with the England and Wales population in this age group. The largest difference was in the 65 to 69 years age group where 16.7% of those who identified as Roma said they were disabled and limited a lot compared with 11.6% of the England and Wales population.

## Unpaid care

Providing unpaid care includes looking after or giving any help or support to anyone because they have a long-term physical or mental health condition or illness, or problems related to old age. Anything done as part of paid employment is excluded. For unpaid care we looked at individuals who were aged 5 years and over.

The proportion of people providing unpaid care was lower for people who identified as Roma compared with the England and Wales population (4.1% and 8.9%, respectively). For those who identified as Roma, each age by sex group reported providing lower levels of unpaid care than the England and Wales population, but the biggest differences were for those aged 45 to 64 years.

For those providing 19 or fewer hours of unpaid care, the biggest difference was for women aged 55 to 59 years: 2.7% of those who identified as Roma provided this amount of care compared with 11.6% of the population of England and Wales.

## 10 . National identity and country of birth

Table 2: Italy, Romania and England were the most common countries of birth among those who identified as Roma

The 10 most common countries of birth among those who identified as Roma, England and Wales, Census 2021

Country of birth	Roma percentage
Europe: Other Europe: Italy	26.1
Europe: Other Europe: Romania	23.6
Europe: UK: England	13.9
Europe: Other Europe: Slovakia	6.6
The Americas and the Caribbean: South America: Brazil	6.2
Europe: Other Europe: Moldova	3.1
Europe: Other Europe: Spain (including Canary Islands)	2.9
Europe: Other Europe: Czechia	2.3
Europe: Other Europe: Portugal (including Madeira and the Azores)	2.1
Europe: Other Europe: Poland	2.0

Source: Census 2021 from the Office for National Statistics

### Notes

1. Percentages have been calculated using rounded data, as such totals may not add to 100%.
2. For confidentiality reasons counts have been rounded to the nearest 5 and counts below 10 are suppressed.

Table 2 shows that for those who identified as Roma in England and Wales, the most common countries of birth aligned with the most common main languages reported in [Section 5: Main language](#).

The most common countries of birth were Italy (26.1%), Romania (23.6%) and England (13.9%). Similarly, Italian (24.3%), Romanian (23.5%) and British (13.8%) were the most common national identities for people who identified as Roma.

## 11 . Roma population data

### [Roma populations by age and sex in England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

Dataset | Released 30 October 2023

Roma populations by age and sex across different geographical areas.

### [Roma populations by country of birth in England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

Dataset | Released 30 October 2023

Roma populations by country of birth, with age, sex and main language breakdowns across different geographical areas.

### [Roma populations by education in England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

Dataset | Released 30 October 2023

Roma populations by highest level qualification, with age, sex, main language and English language proficiency breakdowns across different geographical areas.

### [Roma populations by health, disability and unpaid care in England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

Dataset | Released 30 October 2023

Roma populations by health, disability and unpaid care status, with age, sex, main language and English language proficiency breakdowns across different geographical areas.

### [Roma populations by housing in England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

Dataset | Released 30 October 2023

Roma populations by bedroom occupancy rating, tenure and households of multiple occupancy, with age, sex and main language breakdowns across different geographical areas.

### [Roma populations by main language in England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

Dataset | Released 30 October 2023

Roma populations by main language and English language proficiency, with age and sex breakdowns across different geographical areas.

### [Roma populations by national identity in England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

Dataset | Released 30 October 2023

Roma populations by national identity, with age, sex and main language breakdowns across different geographical areas.

### [Roma populations by labour market breakdowns in England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

Dataset | Released 30 October 2023

Roma populations by economic status and occupation, with age, sex, main language and English language proficiency breakdowns across different geographical areas.

## 12 . Glossary

### Ethnic group

"Ethnic group" refers to the ethnic group that the person completing the census feels they belong to. This could be based on their culture, family background, identity or physical appearance.

Respondents could choose 1 out of 19 tick-box response categories, including write-in response options.

There were two stages to the ethnic group question. The respondent identifies first through one of the following high-level options before selecting a tick-box:

- "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh"
- "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African"
- "Mixed or Multiple"
- "White"
- "Other ethnic group"

Some of the tick-boxes required further identification through a write-in response.

To see the ethnic group question on the household, individual and Welsh questionnaires, visit our [Census 2021 paper questionnaires page](#).

## Accommodation type

The type of building or structure used or available by an individual or household.

This could be:

- the whole house or bungalow
- a flat, maisonette or apartment
- a temporary or mobile structure, such as a caravan

## More information about accommodation types

Whole house or bungalow: This property type is not divided into flats or other living accommodation. There are three types of whole houses or bungalows:

- detached: none of the living accommodation is attached to another property but can be attached to a garage
- semi-detached: the living accommodation is joined to another house or bungalow by a common wall that they share
- terraced: a mid-terraced house is located between two other houses and shares two common walls; an end-of-terrace house is part of a terraced development but only shares one common wall

Flats (apartments) and maisonettes: an apartment is another word for a flat; a maisonette is a two-storey flat.

## Housing tenure

Tenure is whether a household rents or owns the accommodation that it occupies. Households that rent their accommodation were asked what type of landlord owns or manages it. Owner-occupied accommodation can be:

- owned outright, which is where the household owns all of the accommodation
- with a mortgage or loan
- part-owned on a shared ownership scheme

Rented accommodation can be:

- private rented, for example, rented through a private landlord or letting agent
- social rented through a local council or housing association

## Occupancy rating bedrooms

Whether a household's accommodation is overcrowded, ideally occupied or under-occupied. This is calculated by comparing the number of bedrooms the household requires with the number of available bedrooms.

The number of bedrooms the household requires is calculated according to the Bedroom Standard, where the following should have their own bedroom:

- adult couple
- any remaining adult (aged 21 years or over)
- two males (aged 10 to 20 years)
- one male (aged 10 to 20 years) and one male (aged 9 years or under), if there are an odd number of males aged 10 to 20 years
- one male aged 10 to 20 years if there are no males aged 0 to 9 years to pair with him.
- repeat steps three to five for females
- two children (aged 9 years or under), regardless of sex
- any remaining child (aged 9 years or under)

An occupancy rating of:

-1 (minus 1) or less implies that a household's accommodation has fewer bedrooms than required (overcrowded)

+1 (plus 1) or more implies that a household's accommodation has more bedrooms than required (under-occupied)

0 suggests that a household's accommodation has an ideal number of bedrooms

## General health

A person's assessment of the general state of their health from "Very good" to "Very bad". This assessment is not based on a person's health over any specified period of time.

For more information, see our [General health, England and Wales: Census 2021 bulletin](#).

## Disability

In Census 2021, people who assessed their day-to-day activities as limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses were considered disabled. This definition of a disabled person meets the Government Statistical Service harmonised standard for measuring disability and is in line with the [Equality Act \(2010\)](#). This requires that a person has a physical or mental impairment, and that the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities. Therefore, those reporting conditions that limited their day-to-day activities a little or a lot were classified as disabled. People who had no long-term physical or mental health conditions, or who had conditions that did not limit their day-to-day activities were classified as non-disabled.

For more information, see our [Disability, England and Wales: Census 2021 bulletin](#)

## Unpaid care

A person is a provider of unpaid care if they look after or give help or support to anyone because of long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age. This does not include any activities as part of paid employment. No distinction is made about whether any care that a person provides is within their own household or outside the household.

For further information see our [Unpaid care, England and Wales: Census 2021 bulletin](#).

## Employment status

People are economically active if, between 15 March and 21 March 2021, they were:

- in employment (an employee or self-employed)
- unemployed, but looking for work and could start within two weeks
- unemployed, but waiting to start a job that had been offered and accepted

It is a measure of whether or not a person was an active participant in the labour market during this period.

For more information, see our [Economic activity status, England and Wales: Census 2021 bulletin](#).

Economically inactive are people who did not have a job between 15 March to 21 March 2021 and had not looked for work between 22 February to 21 March 2021, or could not start work within two weeks.

People are inactive if they were recorded as being one of the following:

- retired (whether receiving a pension or not)
- studying
- looking after home or family
- long-term sick or disabled
- another reason

For information on how a respondent's reason for inactivity was recorded, please read our [Comparing Census 2021 and Labour Force Survey estimates of the labour market, England and Wales: 13 March 2023 article](#).

Because of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the UK labour market, the estimated number of people who were economically inactive might be higher than anticipated in some areas. It is possible that some people on furlough may have identified as economically inactive, instead of temporarily away from work.

## Occupation

Classifies what people aged 16 to 64 years do as their main job. Their job title or details of activities they do in their job and any supervisory or management responsibilities form this classification. This information is used to code responses to an occupation using our [Standard Occupational Classification \(SOC\) 2020](#).

It classifies people who were in employment between 15 March and 21 March 2021 by the SOC code that represents their current occupation.

In this publication, we use nine "high-level" categories for the types of work people do:

- "managers, directors or senior officials"
- "professional occupations"
- "associate professional and technical occupations"
- "administrative and secretarial occupations"
- "skilled trades occupations"
- "caring, leisure and other services"
- "sales and customer service"
- "process, plant and machine operation"
- "elementary occupations"

For more information, see our [Industry and occupation, England and Wales: Census 2021 bulletin](#).

## Highest level of qualification

The highest level of qualification is derived from the question asking people to indicate all qualifications held, or their nearest equivalent. This is used to calculate the highest level of qualification (so, the highest level of qualification that an individual reported irrespective of previous qualifications listed) using the following categories:

- no qualifications: no formal qualifications
- Level 1: one to four GCSE passes (grade A\* to C or grade 4 and above) and any other GCSEs at other grades, or equivalent qualifications
- Level 2: five or more GCSE passes (grade A\* to C or grade 4 and above) or equivalent qualifications
- apprenticeships
- Level 3: two or more A Levels or equivalent qualifications
- Level 4 or above: Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma, Bachelor's degree, or post-graduate qualifications
- other qualifications, of unknown level (for further information, see [Section 8: Measuring the data of our Education, England and Wales: Census 2021 bulletin](#))

## Country of birth

The country in which a person was born. For people not born in one of the four parts of the UK, there was an option to select "elsewhere". People who selected "elsewhere" were asked to write in the current name for their country of birth.

## Main language

A person's first or preferred language.

## Proficiency in English language

How well people whose main language is not English (English or Welsh in Wales) speak English.

## National identity

Someone's national identity is a self-determined assessment of their own identity, it could be the country or countries where they feel they belong or think of as home. It is not dependent on ethnic group or citizenship.

Respondents could select more than one national identity.

## Religion

The religion people connect or identify with (their religious affiliation), whether or not they practise or have belief in it.

This question was voluntary, and the variable includes people who answered the question, including "No religion", alongside those who chose not to answer this question.

This variable classifies responses into the eight tick-box response options. Write-in responses are classified by their "parent" religious affiliation, including "No religion", where applicable.

## Household reference person

A person who serves as a reference point, mainly based on economic activity and age, to characterise a whole household. The person is not necessarily the member of the household in whose name the accommodation is owned or rented.

## Household family composition

Households according to the relationships between members.

Single-family households are classified by the number of dependent children and family type (married, civil partnership or cohabiting couple family, or lone-parent family).

Other households are classified by the number of people, the number of dependent children and whether the household consists only of students or only of people aged 66 years and over.

# 13 . Data sources and quality

## Census data collection and response rate

The census provides estimates of the characteristics of all people and households in England and Wales on Census Day, 21 March 2021. It is carried out every 10 years and gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales.

The person response rate for Census 2021 was 97% of the usual resident population of England and Wales, and over 88% in all local authorities. Most returns (89%) were received online. The response rate exceeded our target of 94% in England and Wales and 80% in all local authorities.



## 14 . Related links

### [Small populations, England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 25 September 2023

Statistics about small population groups, defined by ethnic group, religion, national identity, main language, or country of birth, Census 2021 data.

### [Ethnic group differences in health, employment, education and housing shown in England and Wales' Census 2021](#)

Article | Released 15 March 2023

Life outcomes vary a lot between ethnic groups. Using the England and Wales Census 2021, we look at variations in health, disability, overcrowding and home ownership, as well as levels of education and employment.

### [Ethnic group, national identity, language and religion analysis plans](#)

Web page | Last updated 19 July 2023

Web page detailing the analysis we plan to publish on the topics of ethnic group, national identity, language and religion.

### [Ethnic group by age and sex, England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

Article | Released 23 January 2023

Information from Census 2021 on the sex and age characteristics of ethnic groups and how this has changed since 2011 in England and Wales.

## 15 . Cite this article

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