

Briefing note

Census 2021

Topic summary release (007)

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census 2021

Sexual orientation and gender identity

ONS have published the Census 21 data on sexual orientation and gender identity. These are new questions for Census 2021 (though sexual orientation data had previously been collected through the Annual Population Survey). Including these questions in the census questionnaire enables:

- A much more detailed understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity in England and Wales
- Meets the needs for better quality information on the LGB+ population (“gay or lesbian, “bisexual” or “other sexual orientation”) and the transgender population.
- Provide better quality information for monitoring purposes and support anti-discrimination duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- Aid allocation for resources and policy development.

Headline data

Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation is defined by the ONS as covering, “sexual identity, attraction, and behaviour”. For an individual respondent, these may not be the same as someone in an opposite-sex relationship may also experience same-sex attraction, and vice versa. These statistics should be interpreted purely as showing how people responded to the question, rather than being about whom they are attracted to or their actual relationships.

The question asked, “Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?” and was only asked of people aged 16 years and over. The answer options were:

- Straight or heterosexual
- Gay or lesbian
- Bisexual
- Other sexual orientation (which respondents were asked to write in their sexual orientation)

Within South Gloucestershire 215,157 people (90.6% of the population aged 16 years and over) identified as straight or heterosexual compared to 89.4% for England and Wales overall.

The overall number of people in South Gloucestershire who identified with an LGB+ orientation was 6,703 (2.8% of the population aged 16 years and over). This compares to 3.2% for England and Wales:

- 3,064 people (1.3%) in South Gloucestershire described themselves as gay or lesbian
- 2,944 (1.2%) described themselves as bisexual
- 695 selected “Other sexual orientation”

15,510 people (6.5%) did not answer the question.

Figure 1: Sexual orientation, South Gloucestershire, South West, England & Wales 2021

	South Gloucestershire		South West		England and Wales	
	Number of usual residents aged 16 and over	Percent	Number of usual residents aged 16 and over	Percent	Number of usual residents aged 16 and over	Percent
Total: All usual residents aged 16 years and over	237,370	100.0	4,735,842	100.0	48,566,376	100.0
Straight or Heterosexual	215,157	90.6	4,238,858	89.5	43,403,110	89.4
Gay or Lesbian	3,064	1.3	67,500	1.4	747,805	1.5
Bisexual	2,944	1.2	67,894	1.4	623,504	1.3
Pansexual	260	0.1	5,965	0.1	48,025	0.1
Asexual	170	0.1	3,339	0.1	28,172	0.1
Queer	45	0.0	1,439	0.0	14,511	0.0
All other sexual orientations	220	0.1	5,250	0.1	74,600	0.2
Not answered	15,510	6.5	345,597	7.3	3,626,649	7.5

Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021

Of those who selected “Other sexual orientation”, the most common write-in responses included:

- Pansexual (260, 0.1% in South Gloucestershire)
- Asexual (170, 0.1% in South Gloucestershire)
- Queer (45, less than 0.1% for South Gloucestershire)

15,510 people (6.5%) did not provide an answer (7.5% for England and Wales, 7.3% for the South West).

Looking more widely across the regions, the highest proportion of people who identified with a LGB+ orientation was London (4.3%) – see figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Sexual orientation, 2021, England, Wales and regions of England

Area Name	Straight or Heterosexual (percent)	Gay or Lesbian (percent)	Bisexual (percent)	Pansexual (percent)	Asexual (percent)	Queer (percent)	All other sexual orientations (percent)
England	89.37	1.54	1.29	0.10	0.06	0.03	0.16
Wales	89.42	1.49	1.24	0.10	0.06	0.02	0.09
North East	91.03	1.56	1.19	0.09	0.06	0.02	0.10
North West	90.12	1.69	1.22	0.09	0.05	0.02	0.13
Yorkshire and The Humber	89.75	1.43	1.31	0.10	0.06	0.03	0.14
East Midlands	89.77	1.28	1.25	0.09	0.06	0.02	0.13
West Midlands	89.91	1.21	1.06	0.08	0.05	0.02	0.14
East of England	90.18	1.21	1.14	0.09	0.06	0.02	0.13
London	86.19	2.23	1.52	0.10	0.05	0.06	0.31
South East	89.84	1.48	1.29	0.11	0.06	0.03	0.13
South West	89.51	1.43	1.43	0.13	0.07	0.03	0.11

Credit/Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021

Gender identity

Gender identity refers to a person’s sense of their own gender, whether male, female or another category such as non-binary. This may or may not be the same as their sex registered at birth.

The census question on gender identity was a voluntary question asked of those aged 16 years and over. The question asked, “Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?”.

Within South Gloucestershire, 224,526 people (94.6% of the population aged 16 years and over) answered “Yes” to say that their gender identity was the same as their sex registered at birth. This compares to 94.0% for the South West and 93.5% for England and Wales.

917 people aged 16 years and over in South Gloucestershire (0.4%) answered “No”, indicating their gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth.

- 326 (0.1%) answered “No” but did not provide a write-in response
- 178 (0.1%) answered as a trans man
- 177 (0.1%) answered as a trans woman
- 145 (0.1%) identified as non-binary
- 91 (less than 0.1%) wrote in a different gender identity

11,923 (5.0%) did not answer the question.

Figure 3: Gender identity, South Gloucestershire, South West, England and Wales 2021

	South Gloucestershire		South West		England and Wales	
	Number of usual residents aged 16 and over	Percent	Number of usual residents aged 16 and over	Percent	Number of usual residents aged 16 and over	Percent
Total: All usual residents aged 16 years and over	237,366	100.0	4,735,837	100.0	48,566,373	100.0
Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth	224,526	94.6	4,451,316	94.0	45,389,635	93.5
Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given	326	0.1	6,865	0.1	117,775	0.2
Trans woman	177	0.1	3,752	0.1	47,572	0.1
Trans man	178	0.1	3,700	0.1	48,435	0.1
Non-binary	145	0.1	3,499	0.1	30,257	0.1
All other gender identities	91	0.0	2,112	0.0	18,074	0.0
Not answered	11,923	5.0	264,593	5.6	2,914,625	6.0

Credit/Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021

Additional information

Census dictionary

ONS have published a 'Census 2021' dictionary with detailed information about variables, definitions and classifications. This can be viewed on their [website](#).

Census maps

ONS have published an [interactive mapping tool](https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/maps) (https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/maps) where you can view all the latest census data to Output Area level (where applicable).

About the Census

Every ten years a census is carried out in England and Wales to produce an accurate estimate of the population. The 2021 Census for England and Wales took place on 21 March 2021 and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has now published the first release of data.

A significant volume of more detailed data is scheduled for release over the winter and throughout 2023.

Data Source: Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence.

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Revisions

Corrections and amendments have been made on reviewing and checking of data as more data is released. Depending on the data tables used there are some variations in rounding which have been corrected or amended in the following revisions. This latest version includes all amends and supersedes previous versions. For any reporting or forward planning, please contact the Insight and Engagement team to provide latest updates and tables as variations can occur between different sources and the geographies used for calculation.

1. Corrected “pansexual” figures. The ONS released a notice to say some responses to the sexual orientation question that should have been coded to "All other sexual orientations" in the detailed classification were incorrectly coded to "Pansexual". This error affected estimates using the nine-category detailed classification in the sexual orientation (detailed) dataset, and the figures presented in figure 1 of this report. These have since been amended to reflect the corrected figures.