

Briefing Note

Census 2021

Topic summary release ⁽⁰⁰⁵⁾

14 December 2022

census 2021

Labour market and travel to work

The ONS has published the latest data from Census 2021 for the labour market and travel to work. This detailed data set paints a picture of our economy and society that includes:

- Employment status
- Hours worked
- Employment history
- Travel to work
- Industry and occupation

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

Each census is a unique snapshot in time and this census was conducted in March 2021. At the time, England and Wales was in the middle of a period of lockdown due to the ongoing impact of the coronavirus pandemic. During this period, our working patterns were impacted due to the national lockdown whilst a significant proportion of the workforce were on furlough. Many people were also working from home for the first time as organisations responded to the latest government guidance.

The first release of the data reflects the period in which the census was undertaken, including an increase in working from home from 10.3% in 2011 to 31.2% in 2021 across England and Wales. **In South Gloucestershire, this figure was 35.5% (53,349 people), which was an increase from 9.0% in 2011 and 6.5% in 2001.** However, this was a period when the government advice was for people to stay at home and only attend work if there was no alternative. Many people were still on furlough and, whilst there was guidance on how to complete the questions, it is not clear whether people may have also answered based on a period before the pandemic.

Since the time the census data was collated, the workforce is still adjusting to new ways of working, hybrid working, and many people will also have changed jobs or left the workforce in this time.

This means that we need to balance the rich data that the census provides with understanding the continuously changing nature of our work patterns. Therefore, caution should be used when using

this data set for planning and policy purposes. The Insight and Engagement team can help and advise on this as we build our extended data capabilities alongside the Census 2021 data sets.

Headline data

Economic activity

Everyone aged 16 years and over was asked questions on their economic activity status. In South Gloucestershire, this included just over 237,000 residents out of our total population of 290,400, which is 82%.

There are three main types of economic activity status:

- **Economically active: in employment** (includes self-employed). This includes people who were put on furlough at the time of the census.
- **Economically active: unemployed** (those who were looking for work and could start within two weeks, or waiting to start a job that had been offered and accepted)
- **Economically inactive:** those who did not have a job between 15 March and 21 March 2021, had not looked for work between 22 February and 21 March 2021 or could not start work within two weeks.

Table 1: Percentage of usual residents aged 16 years and over by economic status in South Gloucestershire

	2021	
	number	%
Total: All usual residents aged 16 years and over	237,366	100.0
Economically active	153,466	64.6
Employed (including students)	147,612	62.2
Unemployed (including students)	5,854	2.4
Economically inactive	83,900	35.3
Economically inactive: Retired	53,153	22.4
Economically inactive: Student	11,240	4.7
Economically inactive: Looking after home or family	7,439	3.1
Economically inactive: Long-term sick or disabled	6,581	2.8
Economically inactive: Other	5,487	2.3

(Source, ONS)

Economically active

There was a total of 153,466 who were **economically active** in South Gloucestershire, representing 64.7% of 237,366 residents aged 16 years and over. This overall figure includes full-time students and those who were unemployed.

147,612 residents in South Gloucestershire (62.2% of those 16 years and over) were economically active and in employment (including full-time students). This compares to the national figure in England and Wales of 57.2% of all usual residents in employment aged 16 years and over.

The percentage of people who were economically active and in employment is likely to have been related to the age profile of usual resident population. We'll share more insight on this as more data is published.

It is also important to note that the 2021 analysis looks at the population aged 16 years and over, whereas previous profiles from Census 2011 (including our own ward profiles) showed the

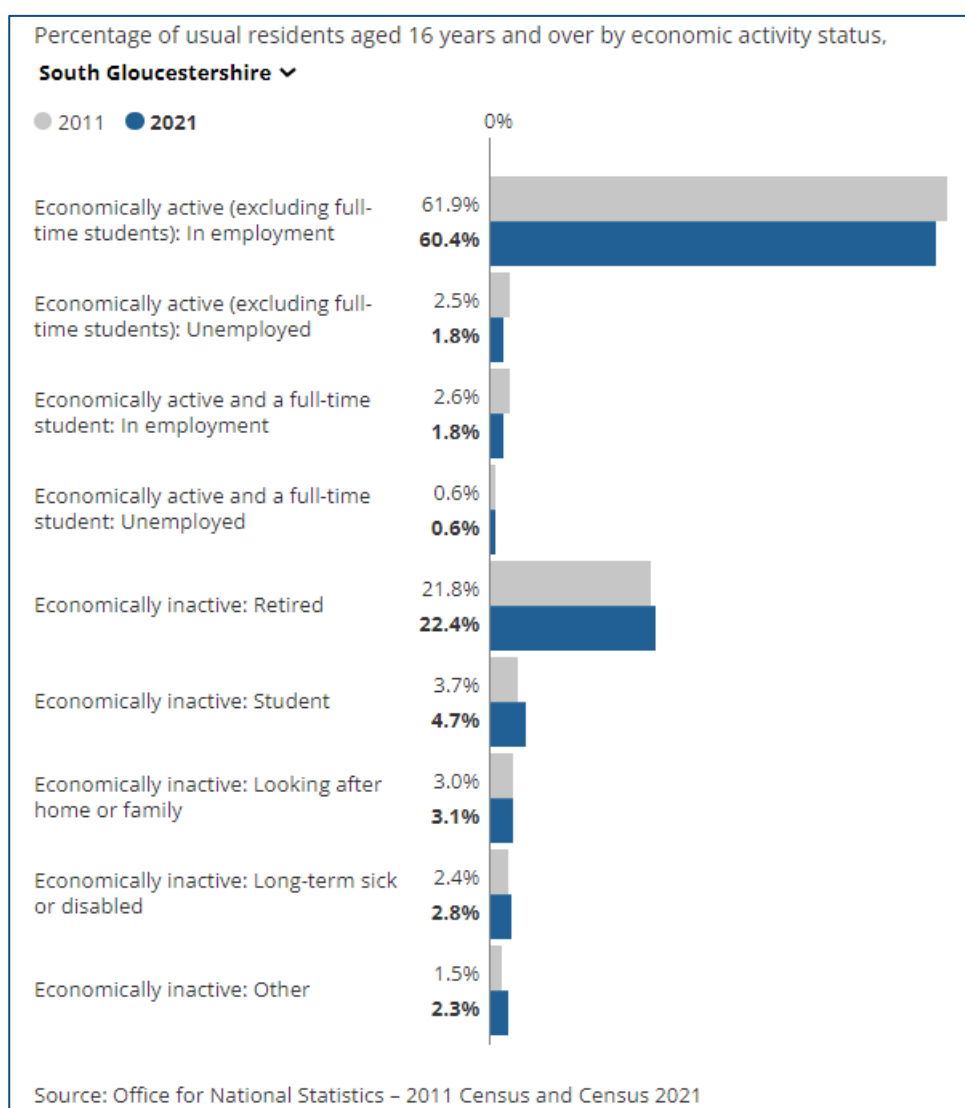
economically active population as a percentage of those aged 16 to 74. **This will result in differences in percentages when looking at the headline data to comparisons from 2011.**

There is also the COVID-19 affect to consider where in some areas the estimated number of people who were economically inactive might be higher than anticipated. This is because some people who were on furlough may have identified themselves as economically inactive, instead of temporarily away from work.

Economically inactive

For those who were **economically inactive**, the most-selected reasons were studying and being retired. 83,900 usual residents (35.3%) stated they were economically inactive in South Gloucestershire. People who were retired made up the greatest percentage of the economically inactive population in 2021 across South Gloucestershire, with 53,153 retired residents (22.4%) - an increase from 14.2% in 2011¹.

Chart 1: ONS chart showing economic activity status from Census 2011 and Census 2021



¹ Note: Comparisons with 2011 are drawn from ONS published data in 2022. When referencing previous data, 2011 statistics were published showing the 16-74 age group only which will result in differences in the representation of the data.

Industry

The national picture shows the industries that employed the largest number of people in England and Wales were wholesale, retail and motor trade (15% of usual residents), human health and social work activities (14.7%) followed by education (9.8%), construction (8.7%) and manufacturing (7.3%).

This is a pattern that is repeated in South Gloucestershire, though there was a slight drop in manufacturing from 9.8% in 2011 to 7.2% in 2021 and wholesale and retail trade that fell from 16.3% to 14.9%.

Human health and social work activities saw an increase from 12.3% to 13.9% - an increase of 1.6 percentage points. This was similar to the national figures for England and Wales, where this category saw the greatest increase from 3.3 million in 2011 to 4.1 million in 2021 – a 2.2 percentage point increase.

Table 2: South Gloucestershire - usual residents by industry, Census 2021

Industry	Total number	Percentage
A: Agriculture, Forestry and fishing	782	0.5%
B: Mining and quarrying	191	0.1%
C: Manufacturing	10,680	7.2%
D: Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	996	0.7%
E: Water supply; Sewerage, Waste management and Remediation activities	1,179	0.8%
F: Construction	14,447	9.8%
G: Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	22,013	14.9%
H: Transport and storage	7,297	4.9%
I: Accommodation and food service activities	5,463	3.7%
J: Information and communication	7,264	4.9%
K: Financial and insurance activities	7,394	5.0%
L: Real estate activities	2,093	1.4%
M: Professional, scientific and technical activities	9,239	6.3%
N: Administrative and support service activities	7,287	4.9%
O: Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	11,824	8.0%
P: Education	13,387	9.1%
Q: Human health and social work activities	20,512	13.9%
R, S, T, U Other	5,567	3.8%

(Source, ONS)

Occupation

In Census 2021, respondents aged 16 years and over were asked for their full job titles and the main activity of their employer which provides a detailed analysis of occupation using the Standard Occupational Classification 2020.

These are then grouped into nine high-level occupational categories that are defined as follows:

- **managers, directors and senior officials** (minor groups including production managers and directors; managers and directors in retail and wholesale; chief executives and senior officials)

- **professional occupations** (minor groups including teaching and other educational professionals; information technology professionals; nursing and midwifery professionals)
- **associate professional and technical occupations** (minor groups including sales, marketing and related associate professionals; artistic, literary and media occupations; welfare and housing associate professionals)
- **administrative and secretarial occupations** (minor groups including secretarial and related occupations; administrative occupations in finance)
- **skilled trades occupations** (minor groups including construction and building trades; food preparation and hospitality trades; agricultural and related trades)
- **caring, leisure and other service occupations** (minor groups including caring personal services; teaching and childcare support occupations; hairdressers and related services)
- **sales and customer service occupations** (minor groups including sales assistants and retail cashiers; customer service occupations)
- **process, plant and machine operatives** (minor groups including road transport drivers; process operatives)
- **elementary occupations** (minor groups including elementary cleaning occupations; elementary storage occupations)

Professional occupations (that include teaching, nursing and IT) are the largest occupational group nationally, employing 20.2% of residents. This is a figure that is reflected locally in South Gloucestershire with 21.2% employed in professional occupations – an increase from 17.3% in 2011.

Table 3: Occupation, usual residents aged 16 years and over in employment, South Gloucestershire

Occupation (current)	2021	2011
1. Managers, directors, and senior officials	12.1%	10.4%
2. Professional occupations	21.2%	17.3%
3. Associate professional and technical occupations	13.2%	12.3%
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations	11.8%	14.0%
5. Skilled trades occupations	10.9%	12.3%
6. Caring, leisure, and other service occupations	8.4%	8.5%
7. Sales and customer service occupations	7.2%	9.2%
8. Process, plant, and machine operatives	6.0%	6.3%
9. Elementary occupations	9.2%	9.7%

Source (ONS)

As part of our ongoing analysis work, we will share and publish more data on occupational classifications and changes in our work patterns in South Gloucestershire in early 2023.

Travel to work and working from home

Working from home

Census 2021 took place during a period of national lockdown, associated guidance and furlough measures that will affect the travel to work topic. As such, this data set should be used carefully for planning and policy purposes.

The national picture showed that 8.7 million (31.2%) of usual residents aged 16 years and over in employment in England and Wales worked mainly at or from home in the week before Census Day 2021. The figure for South Gloucestershire was slightly higher at 35.5% with 52,349 working mainly at or from home. As context, in 2011 this figure was 6,479 (3.4%).

Travel

In England and Wales, out of all usual residents aged 16 years and over in employment, 45.1% travelled to work by using a car or van and 3.9% travelled as a passenger.

In South Gloucestershire, 48.6% drove a car or van and 3.3% travelled as a passenger.

Table 4: Method used to travel to work, usual residents aged 16 years and over in employment 2021, South Gloucestershire, South West, England and Wales

Method of travel to workplace	South Gloucestershire	South West	England and Wales
Work mainly at or from home	35.5%	30.4%	31.2%
Underground, metro, light rail, tram	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%
Train	0.3%	0.5%	1.9%
Bus, minibus or coach	3.0%	2.8%	4.2%
Taxi	0.2%	0.3%	0.7%
Motorcycle, scooter or moped	0.7%	0.6%	0.5%
Driving a car or van	48.6%	49.0%	45.1%
Passenger in a car or van	3.3%	3.8%	3.9%
Bicycle	2.1%	2.4%	2.0%
On foot	5.7%	9.2%	7.6%
Other method of travel to work	0.7%	1.0%	1.0%

Source (ONS)

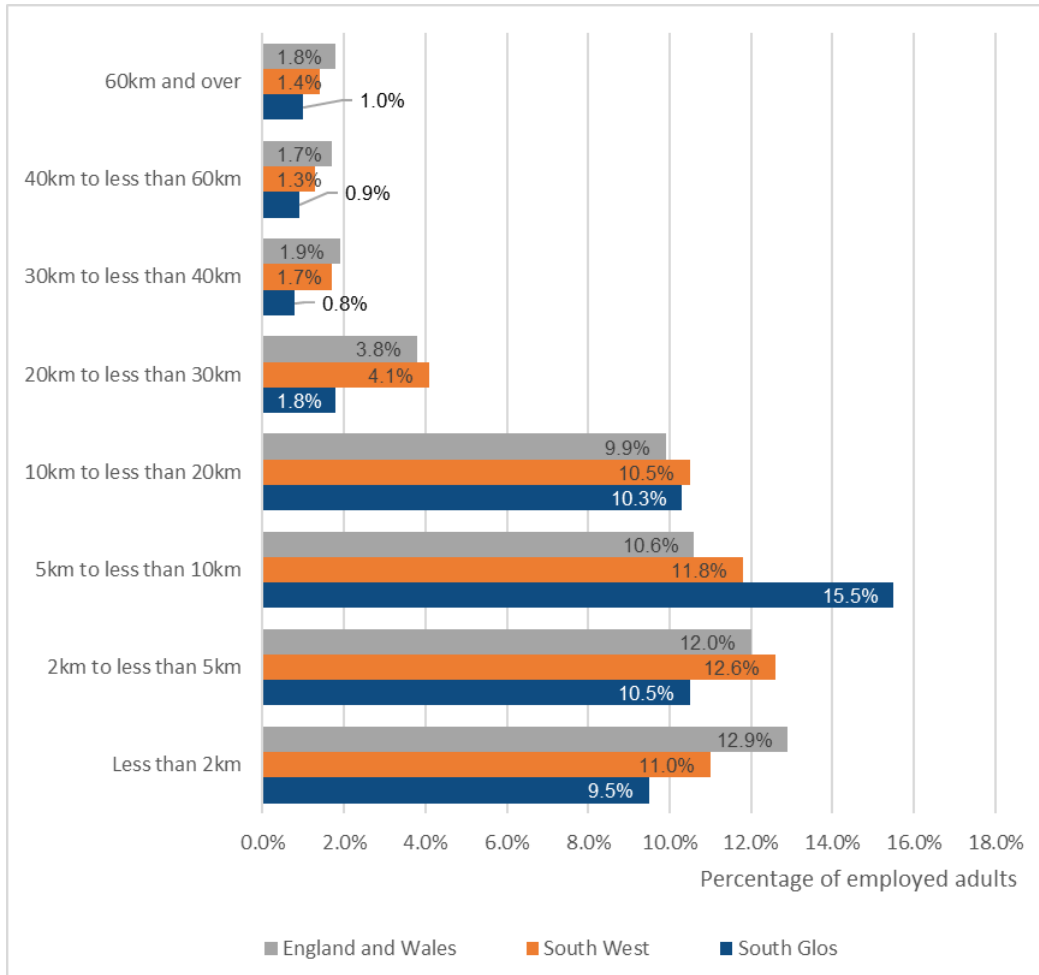
In 2021, 4,442 usual residents in South Gloucestershire (3.0%) used a bus, minibus or coach, compared to 3.5% in 2011. The restrictions that were in place due to lockdown also impacted public transport usage. South Gloucestershire had a lower bus usage compared to other areas in the South West, including Bristol (6.1%) and Bath and North East Somerset (3.4%).

Usual residents in South Gloucestershire were less likely to travel on foot than other areas in the South West, with 5.7% travelling on foot compared to 11.2% in Bristol, 11.0% in Bath and North East Somerset and 7.0% in North Somerset.

Distance travelled to work

Distance travelled provides more context to the method of travel with usual residents in South Gloucestershire travelling further to work than those in Bristol, for example, meaning it is less feasible to travel to work by foot.

Chart 2: Distance travelled to work, usual residents aged 16 years and over in employment, South Gloucestershire, South West, England and Wales



Source (ONS)

The majority of people in England and Wales who travelled to work travelled less than 10 kilometres (35.4%), a very similar figure to South Gloucestershire with 35.5%. There is a noticeable variation in South Glos with the largest category for people travelling between 5km and 10km. Further analysis will look at variations across our region and travel type as more data is published.

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).

Next release: Housing data 05 January 2023

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.

[For further information, please contact \[research@southglos.gov.uk\]\(mailto:research@southglos.gov.uk\).](mailto:research@southglos.gov.uk)

Revisions

1. Proportion of retired residents in 2011 amended from 21.8% to 14.2%.
2. Percentage of residents in South Gloucestershire who used a bus, minibus or coach to travel to work in 2011 amended from 4.9% to 3.5%.
3. Percentage of residents who work mainly from home in 2011 amended from 4.7% to 3.4%.