

Briefing Note

Census 2021

Topic summary release ⁽⁰⁰⁹⁾

25 January 2024

Please note, this is an updated version of the briefing note released in February 2022. A list of revisions made is available at the end of the document.

census 2021

Health, Disability and Unpaid Care

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) has published data about health, disability and unpaid care in England and Wales.

Health, disability, and unpaid care are closely related to the age of a population. Health generally declines with age, and levels of disability are often greater among older people. Therefore, with a population that has an older demographic, you would expect a higher level of unpaid care provision. This note provides an overview of the key headline statistics related to South Gloucestershire and how these compare to regional and national trends.

Census 2021 was undertaken during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This may have influenced how people perceived their health status and activity limitations, and therefore may have affected how people chose to respond.

For additional information related to data collection and definitions, please refer to the [ONS website](#).

Age Standardised Percentages

As there are higher numbers of people in older age groups that report they are in poor health, it can be difficult to draw comparisons with different geographies where age structures may be different. ONS uses Age standardised percentages (ASP) to account for this as it makes it easier to compare the data across age groups, over time and between different geographic areas. This is because it accounts for differences in the population size and age structure.¹ You can read more about the methodology applied on the [ONS website](#). As these percentages are only provided by ONS, the report also

¹ When rates are age-standardised, one population is mathematically adjusted to have the same age structure as the other. When the two groups are given the same age distribution structure, a more representative picture of the characteristic in question is given (Statistics Canada, 2023).

includes some non-age-standardised raw figures to show the total number of residents identifying in a particular category. These are marked where appropriate.

ONS have produced an interactive map where you can view all published data at a local level. You can access this via their website (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/maps>).

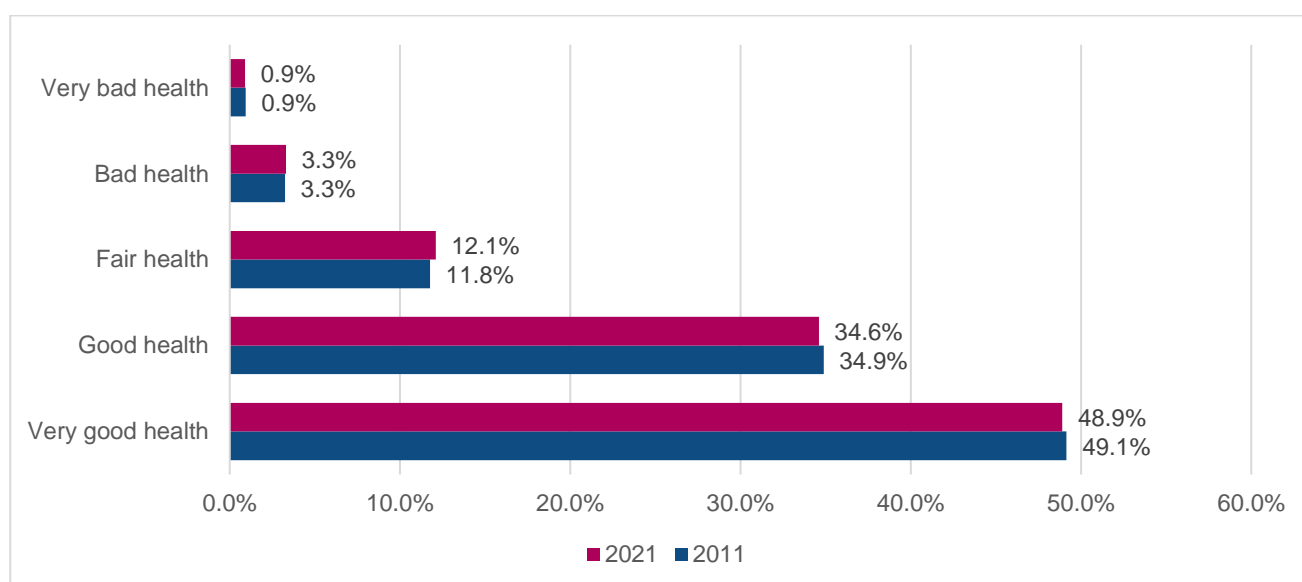
1. Health data

In 2021, 48.9% of South Gloucestershire residents described their health as "very good", decreasing from 49.1% in 2011. Those describing their health as "good" fell from 34.9% to 34.6%.

The proportion of South Gloucestershire residents describing their health as "very bad" was 0.9% (similar to 2011), while those describing their health as "bad" was 3.3% (also similar to 2011). These are age-standardised percentages.

In numbers, 12,227 residents stated their health was either "very bad" or "bad". This is an increase from 11,011 residents in 2011.

Figure 1: Age-standardised proportion of usual residents by self-reported health in South Gloucestershire (%), (2011-2021).



Source: ONS – Census 2021, Census 2011

The proportion of people in South Gloucestershire reporting they have "very good health" is higher than the South West, as well as England and Wales.

Figure 2: Age-standardised self-reported health in South Gloucestershire, the South West and England and Wales, (2021).

General Health	South Gloucestershire (%)	South West (%)	England and Wales (%)
Very good health	48.9	48.7	47.5
Good health	34.6	34.1	34.1
Fair health	12.1	12.5	13.1
Bad health	3.3	3.7	4.2
Very bad health	0.9	1.1	1.2

Source: ONS – Census 2021, TS037ASP

Figure 3 shows that the proportion of people in South Gloucestershire reporting they have “very good health” (48.9%) is lower than the proportion of people in Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) (51.4%) and North Somerset (49.4%), but greater than people in the City of Bristol (46.7%).

However, the proportion of people in South Gloucestershire reporting they have either “bad health” or “very bad health” (4.2%) is lower than in the City of Bristol (6.3%) and North Somerset (4.9%), but greater than people in BANES (4.1%).

Figure 3: Age-standardised self-reported health in the local authorities making up the West of England, (2021).

General Health	Bath and North East Somerset (%)	Bristol, City of (%)	North Somerset (%)	South Gloucestershire (%)
Very good health	51.4	46.7	49.4	48.9
Good health	33.1	33.5	33.6	34.6
Fair health	11.3	13.6	12.3	12.1
Bad health	3.2	4.8	3.8	3.3
Very bad health	0.9	1.5	1.1	0.9

Source: ONS – Census 2021, TS037ASP

2. Disability

Census 2021 asked usual residents to report if they had a long-term physical or mental health condition or illness, lasting or expecting to last 12 months or more, and whether it limited their day-to-day activities “a little”, “a lot” or “not at all”. You can read more about the question development for 2021 on the [ONS website](#).

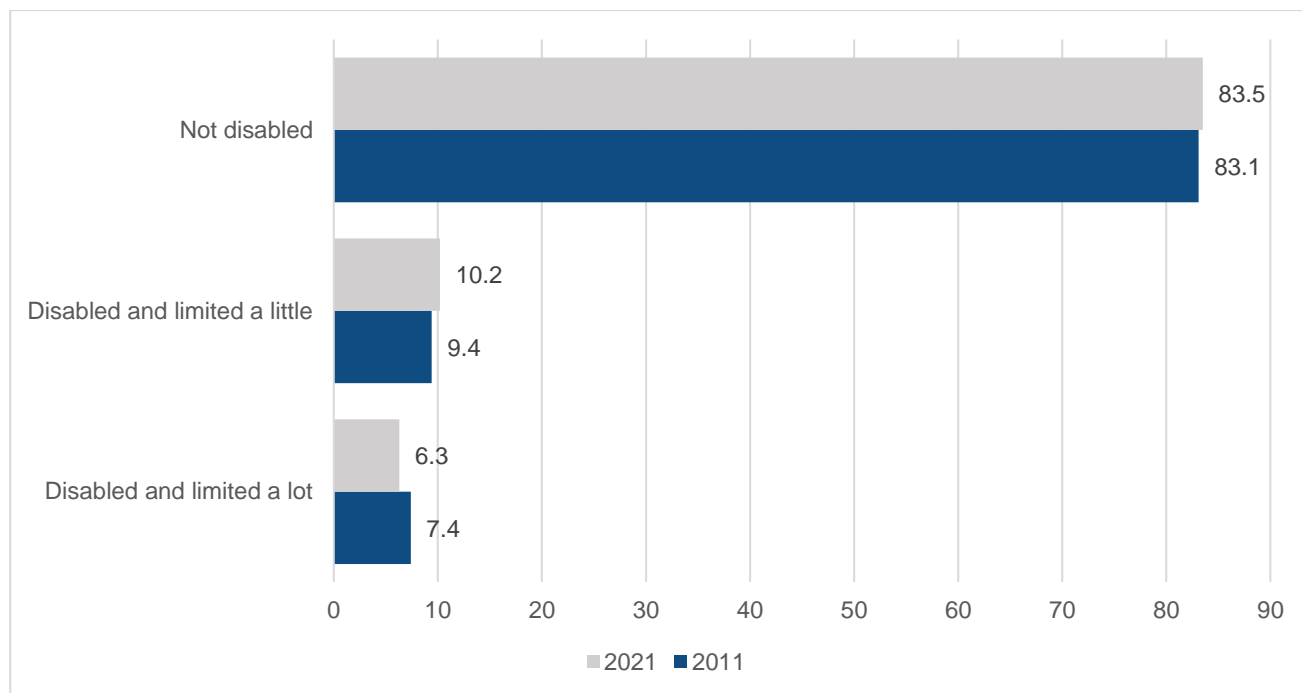
According to age-standardised figures, in 2021, 6.3% of South Gloucestershire residents were identified as being “disabled and limited a lot.” This is a decrease from 6.8% in 2011. In raw (non-age-standardised) figures, this equates to 18,212 residents. In 2011, the total number of residents identified as being disabled and limited a lot was 17,842. The proportion of South Gloucestershire residents who were not disabled increased from 84.4% to 83.5%.

The decrease in the proportion of residents who were identified as being disabled and limited a lot in South Gloucestershire was similar to the decrease across the South West (1.1 percentage points, from 8.1% to 7.0%). Across England, the proportion fell by 1.6 percentage points, from 9.1% to 7.5%.

10.2% of residents in South Gloucestershire identified themselves as being disabled and limited a little, an increase from 8.8% of residents in 2011. In actual numbers, this equates to 29,217 residents. This is up from 23,072 residents in 2011.

Caution should be taken when making comparisons between 2011 and 2021 because of changes in question wording and response options.

Figure 4: Age-standardised proportion of usual residents by long-term health condition or illness in South Gloucestershire (%), (2011-2021).



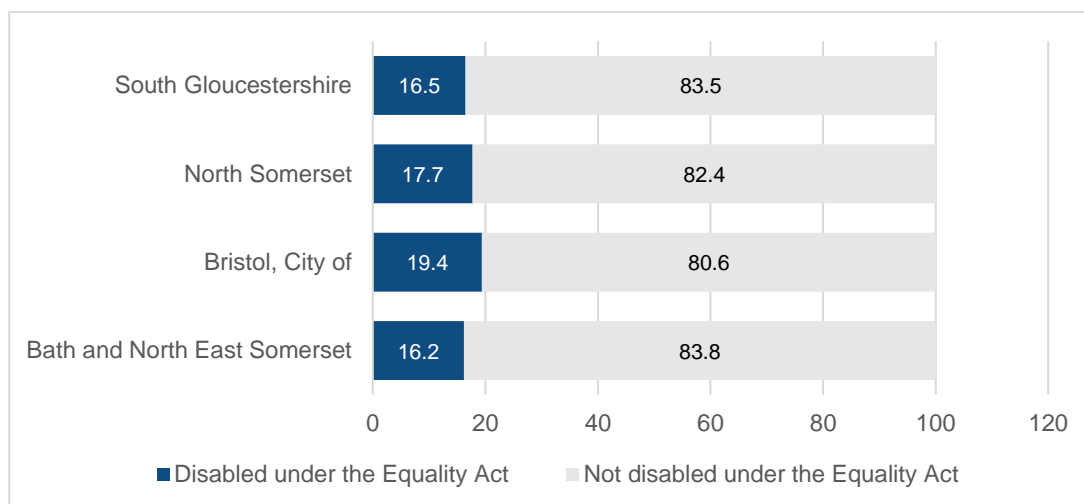
Source: ONS – Census 2021, Census 2011

The proportion of residents identifying as disabled under the Equality Act in the City of Bristol was the highest out of the authorities making up the West of England (19.4%).

This was followed by North Somerset, with 17.7% of residents identifying as disabled.

16.5% of residents in South Gloucestershire identified as being disabled, followed by 16.2% of residents of Bath and North East Somerset.

Figure 5: Age-standardised proportion of usual residents by long-term health condition or illness in the authorities of West of England (%), (2021).



Source: ONS – Census 2021, TS038ASP

Another dimension not included in age-standardised figures, is residents “who have **long term physical or mental health condition, but day-to-day activities are not limited.**” This was a new question asked in the 2021 Census. The number of people who identified in this category in South Gloucestershire was 22,016 in 2021, or 7.6%, of usual residents. This figure is 7.7% of residents in the South West, and 6.8% of residents living in England and Wales.

3. The provision of unpaid care

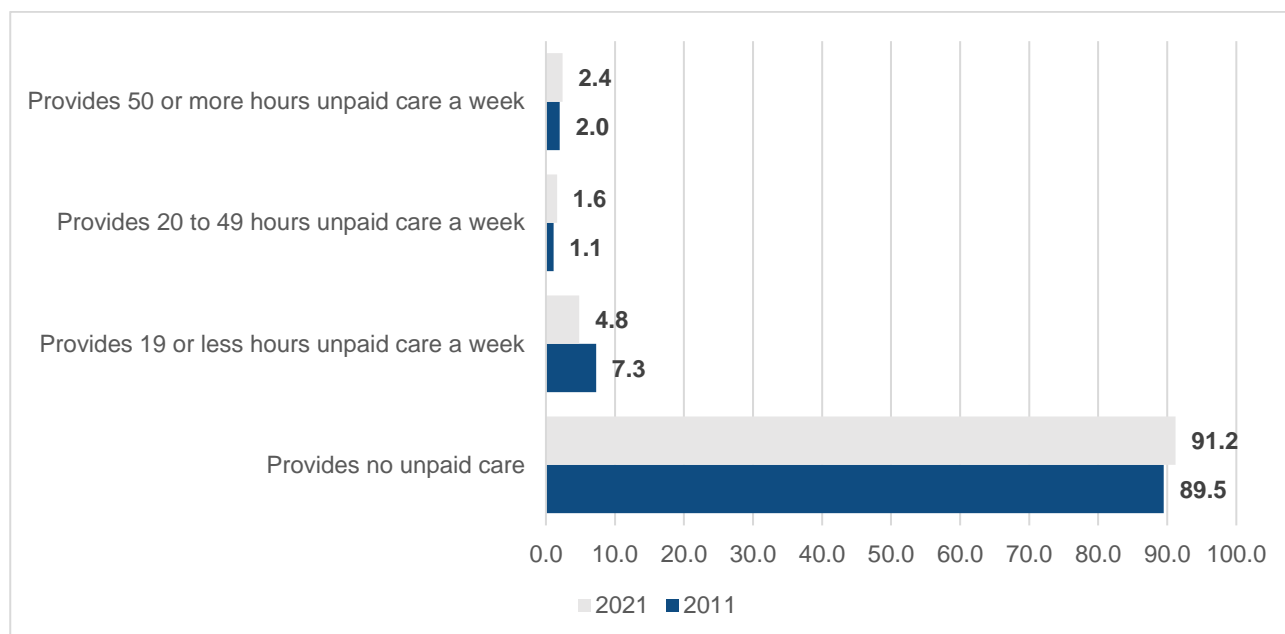
An unpaid carer may look after, give help or support to anyone who has long-term physical or mental ill-health conditions, illness or problems related to old age. This does not include any activities as part of paid employment. This help can be within or outside of the carer's household.

Using standardised percentages, South Gloucestershire saw the South West's joint third-largest percentage point fall in the proportion of people (aged five years and over) providing up to 19 hours of weekly unpaid care (from 7.9% in 2011 to 4.8% in 2021). Every local authority area across the South West saw a fall in the proportion of people (aged five years and over) providing up to 19 hours of weekly unpaid care, as the regional proportion fell from 7.5% to 4.7%.

According to non-age-standardised figures, 23,652 residents stated they provided unpaid care in South Gloucestershire on a weekly basis in 2021, compared to 27,639 in 2011.

- 13,007 provided 19 or less hours of unpaid care a week.
- 4,204 provided 20 – 49 hours of unpaid care a week.
- 6,441 provided 50 or more hours unpaid care a week.

Figure 7: Age-standardised proportion of usual residents providing unpaid care in South Gloucestershire (%), (2011-2021).



Source: ONS – Census 2021

In England and Wales the age-standardised proportion of usual residents aged 5 years and over who provided any amount of unpaid care in England and Wales decreased from 11.4% in 2011 to 9.0% in 2021. This decrease was attributed to the fall in the proportion of people who provided 19 hours or less of unpaid care – reflecting a similar local pattern.

ONS state there are a number of potential explanations for changes in the provision of unpaid care. These could include (but are not limited to) the following:

- coronavirus guidance on reducing travel and limiting visits to people from other households.
- unpaid carers who previously shared caring responsibilities may have taken on all aspects of unpaid care because of rules on household mixing during the coronavirus pandemic.
- there were a higher number of deaths than expected in the older population at the beginning of 2021 due to coronavirus (COVID-19) and other causes; this could have led to a reduction in the need for unpaid care.
- changes in the question wording between 2011 and 2021 may have had an impact on the number of people who self-reported as unpaid carers. Census 2021 asked, “Do you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age?” This differs from the 2011 question which asked “Do you look after, or give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others.”

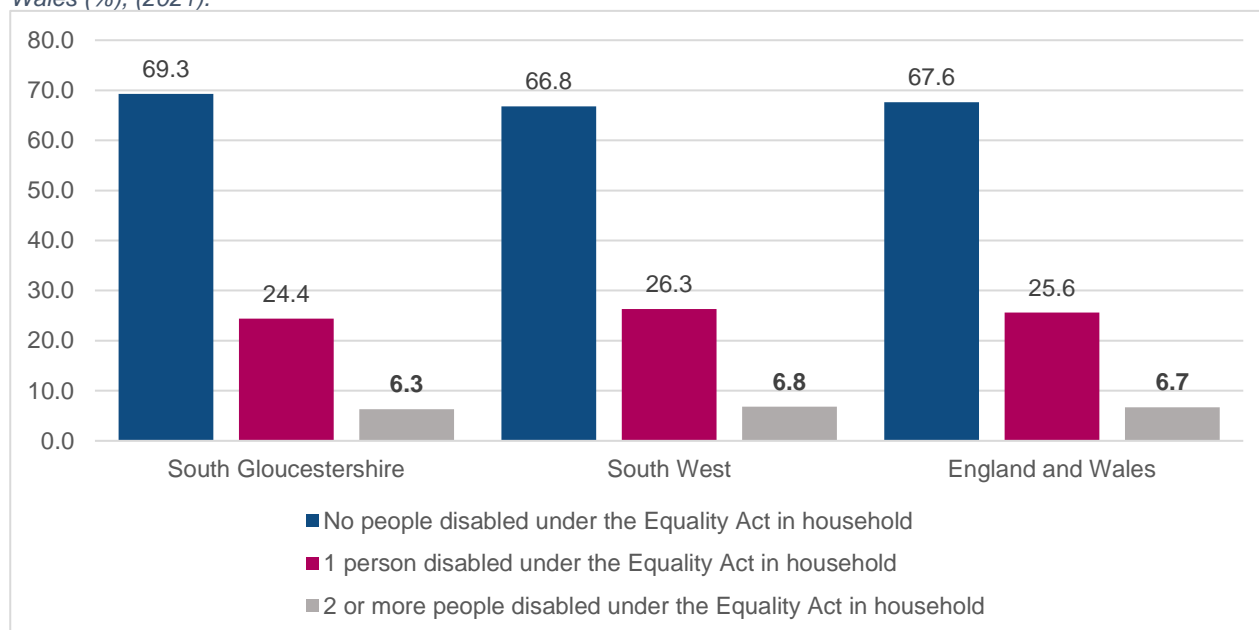
More analysis will be undertaken to explore this dataset further and will feature in a future topic workshop on Health and Disability in South Gloucestershire.

4. Number of disabled people in households

There are 36,307 households in South Gloucestershire with one or more people who under the Equality Act would be defined as disabled, equating to 30.7% of total households. This is an increase from 2011, when 31,741 households were registered as having one or more resident with a long-term health problem or disability (25.9% of the total). 24.4% of households in South Gloucestershire have one resident that is disabled under the Equality Act, lower than the figures for the South West (26.3%), and England and Wales (25.6%).

6.3% of households in households in South Gloucestershire have two or more residents that are disabled under the Equality Act.

Figure 9: The number of disabled people in households in South Gloucestershire, the South West and England and Wales (%), (2021).



Source: ONS – Census 2021

Additional information

Census maps

ONS has [published interactive census maps](#) where you can view more detailed information for different topics down to local authority and neighbourhood level.

Census dictionary

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

Our ageing population

ONS have also published an article describing what Census 2021 data tells us about ageing and why it matters: [Voices of our ageing population: Living Longer Lives](#)

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.

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

For further information, please contact research@southglos.gov.uk.

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. Proportion of South Gloucestershire residents in 2011 with "very good" health amended from 47.4% to 49.1%.
2. Proportion of South Gloucestershire residents in 2011 with "good" health amended from 35.5% to 34.9%.
3. Figure 1 updated to show revised figures.
4. Proportion of South Gloucestershire residents who were not disabled in 2011 amended from 83.1% to 84.4%.
5. The proportion of South Gloucestershire residents who identified as being "disabled and limited a lot" in 2011 amended from 6.3% to 6.8%.
6. The proportion of South Gloucestershire residents who identified themselves as being "disabled and limited a little" in 2011 amended from 9.4% to 8.8%.