

Briefing Note

Census 2021

Topic summary release ⁽⁰⁰⁴⁾

30 November 2022

census 2021

Ethnic group, national identity, language, and religion

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published the next phase of Census 2021 outputs for England and Wales which provide data on specific topic areas.

This latest release shows the ethnic groups of usual residents and household ethnic composition in England and Wales down to Output Area level where possible.

This gives the latest information about:

- Which ethnic groups people identified with
- The main language people use
- How well people, who do not have English as a main language, could speak English
- How people describe their national identity
- Which religious groups people identified with

Understanding ethnic group

ONS defines ethnic group as the “group that the person completing the census feels they belong to”. This can be based on their culture, family background, identity, or physical appearance.

The census has included a question on ethnic group since 1991 and is asked in two stages. Respondents firstly identify themselves through one of the five high-level ethnic groups:

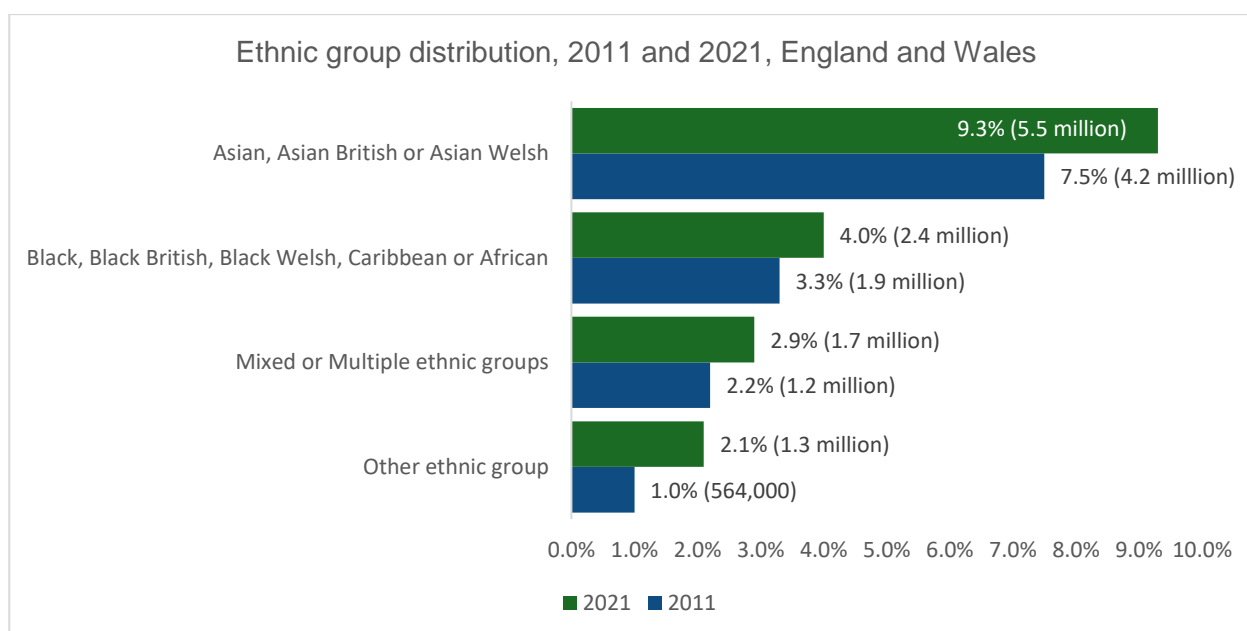
- Asian, Asian British, Asian Welsh
- Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African
- Mixed or Multiple
- White
- Other ethnic group

People then identify through one of 19 available response options that include categories with ‘write-in’ response options. You can read more about the question structure on the ONS website in the section – [Measuring the data](#).

1. Headline data – the national picture

- In 2021, 81.7% (48.7 million) usual residents in England and Wales identified their ethnic group with the high-level “White” category. This is a decrease from 86.0% (48.2 million) in the 2011 Census.
- The next most common ethnic group was “Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh” accounting for 9.3% of the overall population. This ethnic group also saw the largest percentage point increase from 2011, up from 7.5%.
- The three largest increases since 2011 were seen in:
 - “White: Other White”, up from 4.4% in 2011 to 6.2% in 2021.
 - “Other ethnic group: Any ethnic group”, up from 0.6% in 2011 to 1.6% 2021.
 - “Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African”, an increase from 1.8% | 2011 to 2.5% in 2021.
- In England and Wales, 10.1% of households consisted of members identifying with two or more different ethnic groups, an increase from 8.7% in 2011.

Figure 1: Ethnic group distribution of residents across England and Wales (excluding “White”)ⁱ



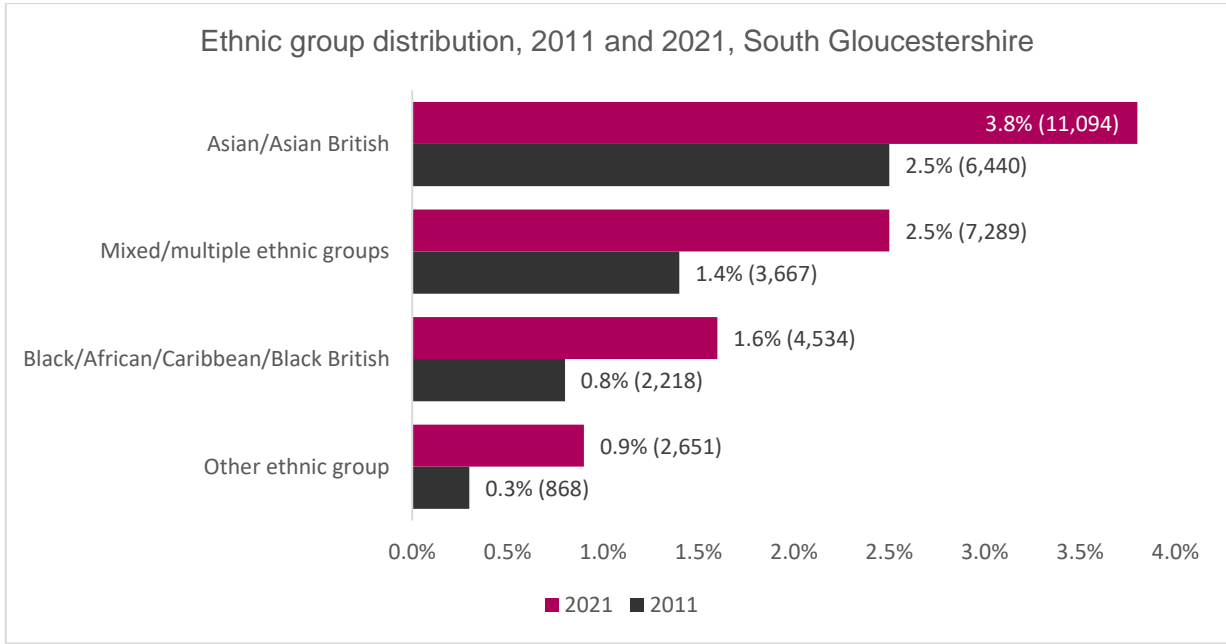
(Source, ONS)

2. South Gloucestershire and regional data

Ethnic Group

- In South Gloucestershire, 91.2% of residents identified with the high-level “White” category in 2021, down from 95% in 2011.
- Like in England and Wales, the second most common ethnic group was “Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh”, which accounted for 3.8% of the total resident population. This group also saw the largest percentage point increase, up from 2.5% in 2011.
 - “Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups” increased from 1.4% in 2011 to 2.5% in 2021.
 - “Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African” increased from 0.8% to 1.6%.
 - “Other ethnic group” increased from 0.3% to 0.9%.

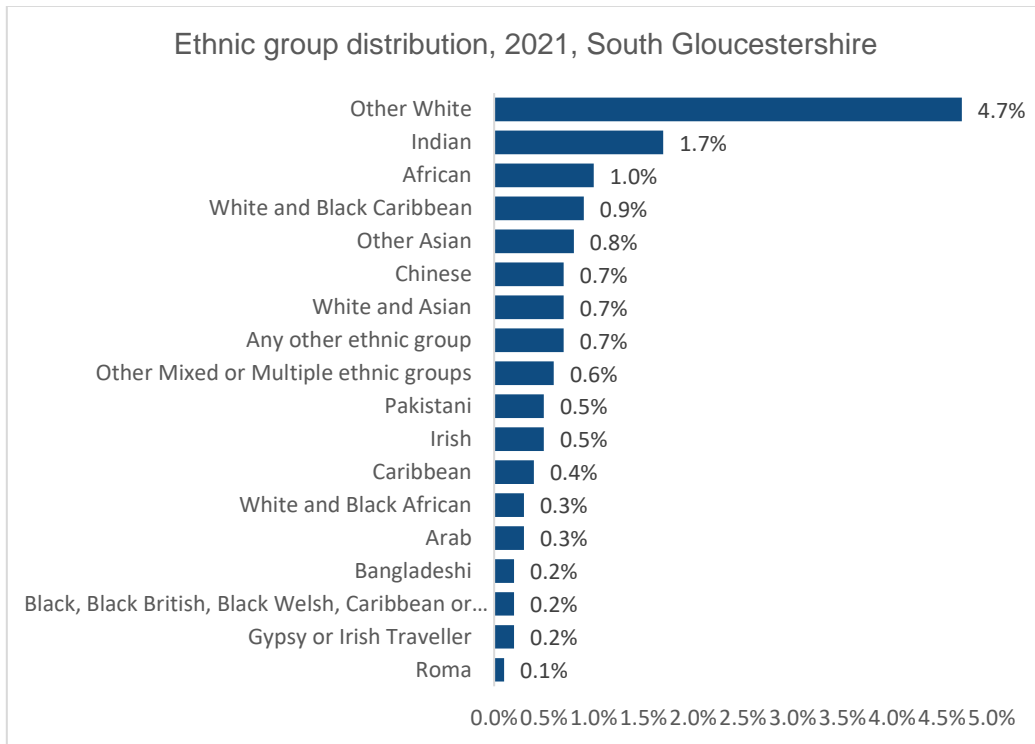
Figure 2: Ethnic group distribution of residents of South Gloucestershire (excluding “White”) – a comparison of 2011 and 2021 Census results



(Source, ONS)

- Leaving aside the most common group of “White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British”, “Other White” was the most common ethnic group in South Gloucestershire, accounting for 4.7% of residents.
- The second most common was Indian, accounting for 1.7% of residents.
- The third most common was African, which accounted for 1.0% of residents.

Figure 3: Ethnic group distribution (detailed) of residents of South Gloucestershire (Excluding “White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British”) (2021 Census)



(Source, ONS)

- Among the West of England local authorities, Bristol had the greatest proportion of residents identifying amongst the high-level ethnic groups, excluding “White”, with 18.9%. This figure for South Gloucestershire is 8.8% followed by Bath and North East Somerset with 7.8% and North Somerset with a figure of 4.3%.

Figure 4: Ethnic group distribution of residents of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (Excluding “White”) (2021 Census)



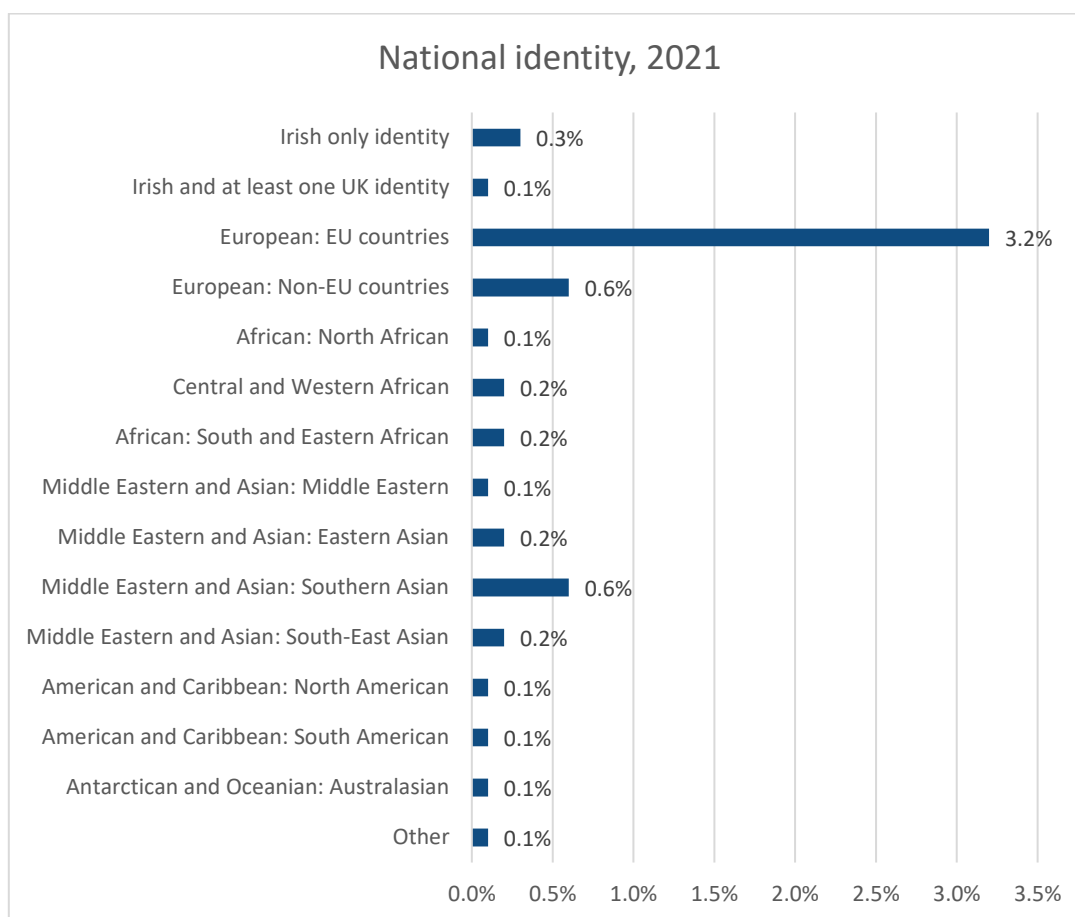
(Source, ONS)

- In South Gloucestershire, 8.5% of households consisted of members identifying with two or more different ethnic groups, an increase from 5.4% in 2011.

National Identity

- Excluding UK identity, which accounted for 93.7% of residents, the most common national identity across South Gloucestershire was European: EU countries (3.2%).
- The second most common was Middle Eastern and Asian, accounting for 1.2% of total residents.
- The third was European: Non-EU countries, and Middle Eastern and Asian: Southern Asian, both accounting for 0.6% of residents.

Figure 5: National identity of residents of South Gloucestershire (Excluding “British”) (2021 Census)



(Source, ONS)

Language

- In 93.7% of households across South Gloucestershire, all adults have English as a main language, 4.1% higher than the figures for England and Wales.
- In 2.9% of households in South Gloucestershire, no people have English as a main language.
- In 2021, the main language of 5.4% of residents in South Gloucestershire is not English.
- Of that figure, 2.8% stated they are able to speak English very well. 0.1% stated they cannot speak English.

Figure 6: Proficiency in English of residents whose first language is not English (2021 Census)

Proficiency in English	South Gloucestershire
Can speak English very well	2.8%
Can speak English well	1.8%
Cannot speak English well	0.7%
Cannot speak English	0.1%

(Source, ONS)

Figure 7: Household language of residents across England and Wales and South Gloucestershire (2021 Census)

Household language (English and Welsh)	England and Wales	South Gloucestershire
All adults in household have English in England, or English or Welsh in Wales as a main language	89.6%	93.7
At least one but not all adults in household have English in England, or English or Welsh in Wales as a main language	4.2%	2.4%
No adults in household, but at least one person aged 3 to 15 years , has English in England or English or Welsh in Wales as a main language	1.3%	0.9%
No people in household have English in England, or English or Welsh in Wales as a main language	4.8%	2.9%

(Source, ONS)

Religion

- In 2021, 46.1% of residents across South Gloucestershire stated they had no religion, up from 30.7% in 2011 and higher than the England and Wales figure of 37.2%.
- 44.1% stated they were Christian, down from 59.6% in 2011.
- The City of Bristol had the smallest proportion of residents identifying as Christian across the West of England local authorities, with a figure of 32.2%.
- The most common religions other than Christianity among residents of South Gloucestershire were Muslim (1.6%) and Hinduism (1%). The proportion of residents identifying with these religions increased from 0.8% and 0.6% in 2011 respectively.

Figure 8: Religions of residents of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

	Bath and North East Somerset	City of Bristol	North Somerset	South Gloucestershire
No religion	47.9%	51.4%	45.3%	46.1%
Christian	42.2%	32.2%	46.6%	44.1%
Buddhist	0.5%	0.6%	0.3%	0.4%
Hindu	0.5%	0.8%	0.2%	1.0%
Jewish	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%
Muslim	1.0%	6.7%	0.6%	1.6%
Sikh	0.1%	0.5%	0.1%	0.3%
Other religion	0.6%	0.8%	0.5%	0.5%
Not answered	7.2%	6.9%	6.3%	6.0%

(Source, ONS)

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](#) where you can view all the latest census data to Output Area level.

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)

Revisions

Proportion of residents in South Gloucestershire with a national identity of 'European: EU countries' amended from 3.8% to 3.2%.

ⁱ Note that charts exclude "White" ethnic group to make it easier to see the differences for the four high-level ethnic groups that account for a smaller percentage of the overall population.

Ethnic groups are presented alphabetically.

"Asian Welsh" and "Black Welsh" ethnic groups were included on the census questionnaire in Wales only.

These were new categories for 2021.