

Article

Gypsy or Irish Traveller populations, England and Wales: Census 2021

Exploring the outcomes for Gypsy or Irish Traveller populations compared with the usual resident population of England and Wales using Census 2021 data.



Contact:
Hannah Thomas, Charlotte
Standeven, Sarah Wattie
census.customerservices@ons.
gov.uk
+44 1329 444972

Release date:
13 October 2023

Next release:
To be announced

Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Definition](#)
3. [Location](#)
4. [Age and sex](#)
5. [Housing](#)
6. [General health and unpaid care](#)
7. [Labour market](#)
8. [Education](#)
9. [Country or continent of birth](#)
10. [Cultural identity](#)
11. [Household characteristics](#)
12. [Gypsy or Irish Traveller population, England and Wales: Census 2021 data](#)
13. [Glossary](#)
14. [Data sources and quality](#)
15. [Related links](#)
16. [Cite this article](#)

1 . Main points

- 71,440 people identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller through a tick-box or write-in response in Census 2021 (0.12% of the usual resident population of England and Wales).
- Semi-detached properties were the most common accommodation type for those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller who lived in households (28.3%), followed by caravan or other mobile or temporary structure (21.6%) (compared with 34.0% and 0.3%, respectively, for the England and Wales population).
- Poorer health was reported across all age groups and in both sexes among people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller, compared with the England and Wales population.
- Elementary occupations and skilled trades were the most common job types held by employed people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller, at 24.6% and 18.2%, respectively.
- 56.8% of those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller had no qualifications, compared with 18.2% of the England and Wales population.

2 . Definition

Gypsy or Irish Traveller populations include people who identified with a Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic group in Census 2021.

This includes people who selected the "Gypsy or Irish Traveller" tick-box under the "White" high-level ethnic group category. It also includes people who reported a Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic group through a write-in response under any of the five high-level ethnic group categories.

Most people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller did so via the tick-box under the "White" high-level category (94.9%).

More information on how people identified their ethnic group is in [Section 13: Glossary](#).

3 . Location

Countries

In the 2021 Census, 0.12% (71,440) of the usual resident population of England and Wales identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller. Of these, 94.9% (67,815) lived in England and 5.1% (3,630) lived in Wales.

Regions

Figure 1: Nearly a quarter of people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller lived in the South East

Percentage of Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups and England and Wales population who lived in each region of England and Wales, Census 2021

The bar chart in Figure 1 shows those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were mostly concentrated in the South East and East of England (24.2% and 13.1%, respectively). This distribution differed from the England and Wales population where 15.6% of usual residents lived in the South East and 10.6% in the East of England.

Local authorities

Figure 2: How people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were spread across England and Wales

Percentage of Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups who lived in each lower tier local authority in England and Wales, Census 2021

The map in Figure 2 shows how people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were spread across England and Wales.

Top five lower tier local authorities for Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups:

- Doncaster (1.5% of Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups lived here; this was 0.3% of the Doncaster population)
- Maidstone (1.4%; 0.6% of the Maidstone population)
- Leeds (1.4%; 0.1% of the Leeds population)
- Bradford (1.3%; 0.2% of the Bradford population)
- Swale (1.3%; 0.6% of the Swale population)

4 . Age and sex

Figure 3: People who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller had a younger age profile compared with the England and Wales population

Percentage of Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups and England and Wales population at each year of age, split by sex, England and Wales, Census 2021

The population pyramid in Figure 3 shows that those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller had a younger age profile compared with the England and Wales population, for both males and females. In the 2021 Census, 45.7% were aged 25 years or under, compared with 30.4% of the England and Wales population.

5 . 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.

Out of the 71,440 people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller on the 2021 Census, 69,175 lived in households. This section focuses on them.

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.

Accommodation type

Figure 4: Semi-detached houses were the most common accommodation type for people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Percentage of Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups and England and Wales population in each accommodation type, England and Wales, Census 2021

The bar chart in Figure 4 shows semi-detached properties were the most common accommodation type for people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller (28.3%) and the England and Wales population (34.0%).

However, the biggest difference in accommodation type was in caravan or other mobile or temporary structures. Over a fifth (21.6%) of those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller lived in this property type compared with just 0.3% of the England and Wales population.

Housing tenure

In comparison with the England and Wales population, people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were:

- four times less likely to own their accommodation with a mortgage, loan or shared ownership (9.5% compared with 35.6%)
- over twice as likely to live in social rented accommodation (42.3% compared with 16.6%)

Occupancy rating for bedrooms

The occupancy rating for bedrooms provides a measure of whether accommodation is overcrowded or under-occupied. Accommodation is classed as overcrowded when the household has fewer bedrooms than required according to the [Bedroom Standard](#).

People who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were over three times more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation than the England and Wales population (26.5% compared with 8.4%).

In regional data, people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation across all regions. The highest percentage of overcrowding for this group was in London (32.6%), followed by the North West (29.8%). In comparison, the percentages for the overall population in overcrowded accommodation for these regions were 19.6% and 7.1%, respectively.

Overcrowding by accommodation type

Figure 5: Overcrowding most likely in caravans or other mobile or temporary structures for those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Percentage of Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups and England and Wales population in each accommodation type who lived in overcrowded accommodation, England and Wales, Census 2021

The bar chart in Figure 5 shows that people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation than the England and Wales population across all accommodation types.

The highest percentage of overcrowding for the Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups was for those living in a caravan or other mobile or temporary structure (31.9%), compared with 9.1% for the England and Wales population.

This was followed by detached properties where overcrowding was 26.5% for those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller compared with 3.0% for the England and Wales population.

6 . General health and unpaid care

Good or very good health

Most people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller reported being in good or very good health (72.3%). However, this percentage was lower than for the England and Wales population (82.0%).

Health is related to age, with younger people more likely to report better health. Those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller had a younger age profile than the England and Wales population (as described in [Section 4: Age and sex](#)). Therefore, poorer health of this group cannot be explained by age.

Bad or very bad health

Those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were more than twice as likely to report bad or very bad health (12.5%) compared with the England and Wales population (5.2%).

Figure 6: Worse health reported across all age groups and in both sexes for people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Percentage of Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups and England and Wales population in each age group who reported bad or very bad health, split by sex, England and Wales, Census 2021

The bar charts in Figure 6 show that typically, health worsened with age and females reported poorer health. They also show those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller reported worse health across all age groups and in both sexes than the England and Wales population.

The biggest difference was among those aged 60 to 64 years: 38.7% of females who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller reported bad or very bad health in this age group compared with 9.9% of all females aged 60 to 64 years.

Similarly, 36.6% of males who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller reported bad or very bad health in this age group compared with 9.5% of all males aged 60 to 64 years.

Health by accommodation type

People who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were more likely to report bad or very bad health than the England and Wales population across all accommodation types.

People who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller who lived in flats, maisonettes or apartments were most likely to report bad or very bad health (15.0%). This compares with 7.1% for the England and Wales population who lived in this accommodation type.

The England and Wales population who lived in caravans or other mobile or temporary structures were most likely to report bad or very bad health (10.6%). This compares with 11.7% for people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller living in this accommodation type.

Health at country and regional level

In England, 12.4% of those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller reported bad or very bad health compared with 5.2% of the England population.

In Wales, 15.0% of individuals who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller reported bad or very bad health, compared with 6.9% of the Wales population.

In England, the regions where people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were most likely to report bad or very bad health were the South West (14.6%) and London (14.2%). The pattern was different for the England and Wales population, where people in the North East and North West were most likely to report bad or very bad health (7.0% and 6.2%, respectively).

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.

People who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were almost twice as likely to provide 50 or more hours of unpaid care per week than the England and Wales population (5.2% and 2.7%, respectively).

Figure 7: Females who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller aged 40 to 44 years most likely to provide 50 or more hours of unpaid care per week

Percentage of Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups and England and Wales population in each age group who provided 50 or more hours of unpaid care per week, split by sex, England and Wales, Census 2021

Notes:

1. Data in older age groups is unavailable for Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups due to confidentiality constraints

The bar charts in Figure 7 show people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were more likely than the England and Wales population to provide 50 or more hours of unpaid care per week across all age groups and for both sexes.

Considering females who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller aged 40 to 44 years, 12.3% of them provided 50 or more hours of unpaid care per week. This compares with 5.8% of males in this ethnic group aged 40 to 44 years and 4.0% of females in the England and Wales population in this age group.

7 . Labour market

This section looks at the employment, economic inactivity 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

Among people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller, 41.0% were employed (including self-employed). This was lower than the percentage employed among the England and Wales population (70.9%).

Self-employment was more common among the Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups (15.1%) compared with the England and Wales population (11.3%).

Figure 8: The employment gap between sexes was larger for people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Percentage of Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups and England and Wales population employed in each age group, split by sex, England and Wales, Census 2021

The charts in Figure 8 show the employment gap between the sexes was bigger for people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller across all age groups. The biggest gap was for those aged 30 to 34 years where 34.8% of females were employed compared with 58.0% of males.

Economic inactivity

Economic inactivity describes people aged 16 to 64 years who were not in employment and not actively seeking work or available to start a job at the time of Census 2021.

Females who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were more likely to be economically inactive than employed across all age groups. This was the opposite of the pattern found in most age groups for males in the Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups. It is also opposite to the situation in most age groups for both sexes in the England and Wales population.

Figure 9: Looking after home or family and long-term sick or disabled were common reasons for economic inactivity among females who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Percentage of females in the Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups and England and Wales population who were economically inactive because of looking after home or family, or being long-term sick or disabled in each age group, England and Wales, Census 2021

Notes:

1. The population base is all females in each age group (not just those economically inactive).

The bar charts in Figure 9 show that the percentage of females who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller looking after home or family peaked at age 25 to 29 years (38.8%) then decreased with age. In comparison, the percentage that were long-term sick or disabled increased with age, peaking at 35.0% for those aged 60 to 64 years.

The trends for females in the England and Wales population were the same but the percentages were smaller and the peak for looking after home or family occurred later (at 35 to 39 years).

Occupation

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

Figure 10: Elementary occupations and skilled trades most common for those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Percentage of employed people in Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups and England and Wales population in each occupation type, England and Wales, Census 2021

The bar chart in Figure 10 shows that 24.6% of employed people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller held elementary occupations (such as cleaners, postal workers and bar staff) and 18.2% held skilled trades occupations (such as carpenters, farmers and chefs). These percentages are higher than for the England and Wales population (10.5% and 10.1%, respectively).

Across the English regions, skilled trades were the most common occupation among people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller living in the South East and the South West. People in this ethnic group living in these regions were around twice as likely to hold this type of occupation (21.2% and 20.1%, respectively) than the England and Wales population in these regions (9.9% and 11.9%, respectively).

8 . Education

For this section we looked at highest level of qualification for people aged 16 years and over.

Figure 11: People who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were three times more likely to have no qualifications

Highest level qualification percentages for Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups and England and Wales population, England and Wales, Census 2021

The bar chart in Figure 11 shows that over half (56.8%) of people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller had no qualifications. In comparison, 18.2% of the England and Wales population had no qualifications.

[Level 4 qualifications](#) were the next most common category for those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller (11.2%). However, this is a third of the percentage who reported this in the England and Wales population (33.8%), where it was the most common category.

Qualifications by sex and age

For all age groups and across both sexes, people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were always more likely to have no qualifications than the England and Wales population.

The difference was particularly noticeable for the 20 to 21 years age group:

- females in this age group who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were over eight times more likely to have no qualifications compared with females of this age in the England and Wales population (44.4% compared with 5.1%)
- males in this age group who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were over six times more likely to have no qualifications than males of this age in the England and Wales population (45.8% compared with 7.2%)

9 . Country or continent of birth

Table 1: Most people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were born in England
Percentage of Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups and England and Wales population born in each given country or continent, Census 2021

| Country or continent of birth | Gypsy or Irish Traveller | England and Wales |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Europe: United Kingdom: England | 77.1% | 77.3% |
| Europe: United Kingdom: Northern Ireland | 0.5% | 0.3% |
| Europe: United Kingdom: Scotland | 0.5% | 1.1% |
| Europe: United Kingdom: Wales | 4.3% | 4.5% |
| Europe: United Kingdom: Great Britain not otherwise specified | [c] | 0.0% |
| Europe: United Kingdom: United Kingdom not otherwise specified | [c] | 0.0% |
| Europe: Ireland | 2.3% | 0.5% |
| Europe: Other Europe | 14.7% | 6.4% |
| Africa | 0.1% | 2.7% |
| Middle East and Asia | 0.1% | 5.6% |
| The Americas and the Caribbean | 0.2% | 1.3% |
| Antarctica and Oceania (including Australasia) | 0.1% | 0.3% |

Source: Census 2021 from the Office for National Statistics

Notes

1. [c] = confidential, it is used when a figure has been suppressed for confidentiality reasons

Table 1 shows 77.1% of people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were born in England. This is very similar to the percentage of the England and Wales population who were born in England (77.3%). “Other Europe” had the second-highest percentage for people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller (14.7%, compared with 6.4% for the England and Wales population).

10 . Cultural identity

Language

The most common main language for people who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller aged 3 years and over was English (English or Welsh in Wales) at 86.3%. However, this was lower than for the England and Wales population (91.1%).

The second-highest main language for those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller was "Other European language (EU): Any other European languages" at 11.7%. This was five times higher than for the England and Wales population (2.2%).

National identity

The most common national identity for those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller was British-only (49.0%), followed by English-only (16.9%). These identities were also the most common among the England and Wales population (54.8% and 14.9%, respectively).

Looking at countries, in England the most common national identity for those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller was British-only (50.9%). However, in Wales the most common national identity was Welsh-only (56.8%).

Religion

Nearly two-thirds of those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller also identified as "Christian" (63.2%). This was higher than the percentage for the England and Wales population (46.2%).

Those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller also had a younger age profile compared with those who had a "Christian" religious affiliation. The average (median) age for those who identified as "Christian" was 51 years whereas the average (median) age for those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller was 28 years.

11 . Household characteristics

There were 24,990 households with a [Household Reference Person \(HRP\)](#) who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller. This is 0.1% of the HRP population.

Of the HRPs who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller, 43.2% had dependent children (compared with 28.4% of all HRPs).

Figure 12: Household Reference Persons (HRPs) who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were twice as likely to be in a lone-parent household

Percentage of HRPs in Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups and all HRPs in each household type, England and Wales, Census 2021

The bar chart in Figure 12 shows a household reference person who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller was most likely to live in a lone-parent household (24.6%), this is over twice the percentage for all household reference persons in England and Wales (11.1%).

A couple family household with all non-dependent children was the least common household type for the Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups (5.1%).

Age should be considered alongside these percentages. [Section 4: Age and sex](#) shows that those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller had a younger age profile than the England and Wales population.

12 . Gypsy or Irish Traveller population, England and Wales: Census 2021 data

[Gypsy or Irish Traveller populations data: household composition](#)

Dataset | Released 13 October 2023

Gypsy or Irish Traveller populations by household reference person, household reference person and dependent children, household reference person and household family composition, and household family composition across different geographical areas.

[Gypsy or Irish Traveller populations data: labour market](#)

Dataset | Released 13 October 2023

Gypsy or Irish Traveller populations by economic activity status and occupation with age, sex and accommodation type breakdowns across different geographical areas.

[Gypsy or Irish Traveller populations data: education](#)

Dataset | Released 13 October 2023

Gypsy or Irish Traveller populations by highest qualification with age, sex and accommodation type breakdowns across different geographical areas.

[Gypsy or Irish Traveller populations data: country or continent of birth](#)

Dataset | Released 13 October 2023

Gypsy or Irish Traveller populations by country or continent of birth across different geographical areas.

[Gypsy or Irish Traveller populations data: cultural identity](#)

Dataset | Released 13 October 2023

Gypsy or Irish Traveller populations by main language, English language proficiency, national identity and religion across different geographical areas.

For the full list of available datasets, please see our [accompanying dataset page](#).

13 . 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 the third, fourth and fifth bullets 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](#).

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](#).

Economic activity 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 and 21 March 2021 and had not looked for work between 22 February and 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 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.

This question was only asked for those aged 3 years and over.

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.

14 . 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.

15 . Related links

[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 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.

[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.

[Gypsies' and Travellers' lived experiences, culture and identities, England and Wales: 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 7 December 2022

Qualitative research exploring the lived experiences of Gypsy and Traveller communities, relating to culture and identities.

16 . Cite this article

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 13 October 2023, ONS website, article, [Gypsy or Irish Traveller populations, England and Wales: Census 2021](#)