Dementia

Summary points

- The rate of dementia in Bristol is 0.62%, significantly lower than the England average (0.81%). This may be expected given Bristol's younger population.
- In people aged 65 and over, 5.6% in Bristol are recorded as having dementia, which is higher than the England average (4.5%).
- In Bristol, the rate of people aged 65 over, estimated to be living with dementia who have received a formal diagnosis is 76.0 per 100, significantly higher than the England average of 66.3 per 100.
- The mortality rate from dementia and Alzheimer's disease in Bristol was 122.4 per 100,000 persons, significantly higher than the England average of 112.9 per 100,000.

Dementia data for Bristol

In 2019 it was estimated that 7.2% of people aged 65 and over in England had dementia which is forecast to increase to 8.3% by 2040[1]. This broadly equates to about 4,375 people (65+) living with dementia in Bristol in 2019, increasing to 5,960 in 2040[2].

In 2025/26, 3,633 people in Bristol (all ages) had a diagnosis of dementia recorded by their GP[3]. This is 0.62% of all Bristol GP patients and has increased significantly since 2012/13 by nearly 50% (Fig 1). The Bristol rate is still significantly lower than the England average (0.81%), which may be expected given Bristol's younger population. However, 5.6% of people aged 65 and over in Bristol are recorded as having dementia, higher than the England average of 4.5% (NHS primary care dementia data for June 2026[4]).

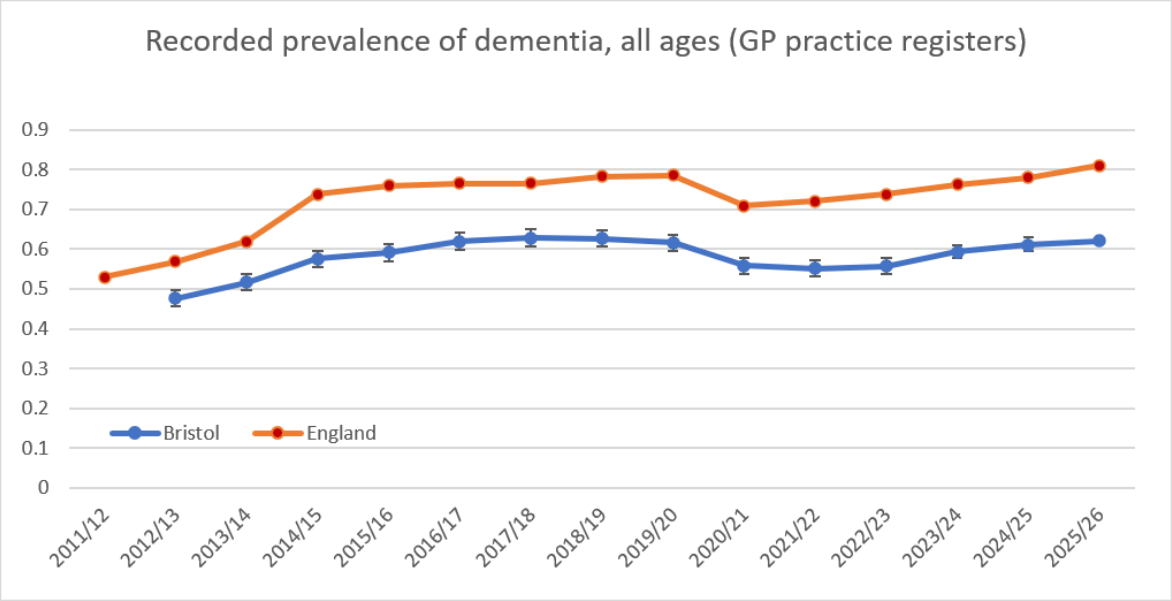


Figure 1: Recorded prevalence of dementia; QOF via NHS Digital, October 2026

[1] Source: Projections of older people with dementia and costs of dementia care in the United Kingdom, 2019–2040; report by Care Policy and Evaluation Centre, (November 2019); https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/
[2] Latest population projections 2022-based published here: Subnational population projections for England - Office for National Statistics
[3] QOF 2025/26 via NHS Digital: Quality and Outcomes Framework, 2025-26 - NHS England Digital
[4] Primary care dementia data - June-2026

Diagnosis

In Bristol, the rate of people aged 65 over, estimated to be living with dementia who have received a formal diagnosis, was 76 per 100 as at 31st March 2026, significantly higher than the England average of 66.3 per 100 (Figure 2). There is a national aspiration to identify two-thirds of people with dementia and provide appropriate support[5]. Bristol has consistently met the target over the last eight years but did experience a decrease in diagnosis in 2020/21 which is possibly due to Covid-19 and limited GP access. Since then, numbers have gradually increased and the diagnosis rate for 2025/26 is the highest recorded in the last ten years. Compared to the other English core cities, Bristol has the third highest estimated dementia diagnosis rate, which ranges from 77.9 per 100 in Nottingham to 65.4 per 100 in Birmingham.

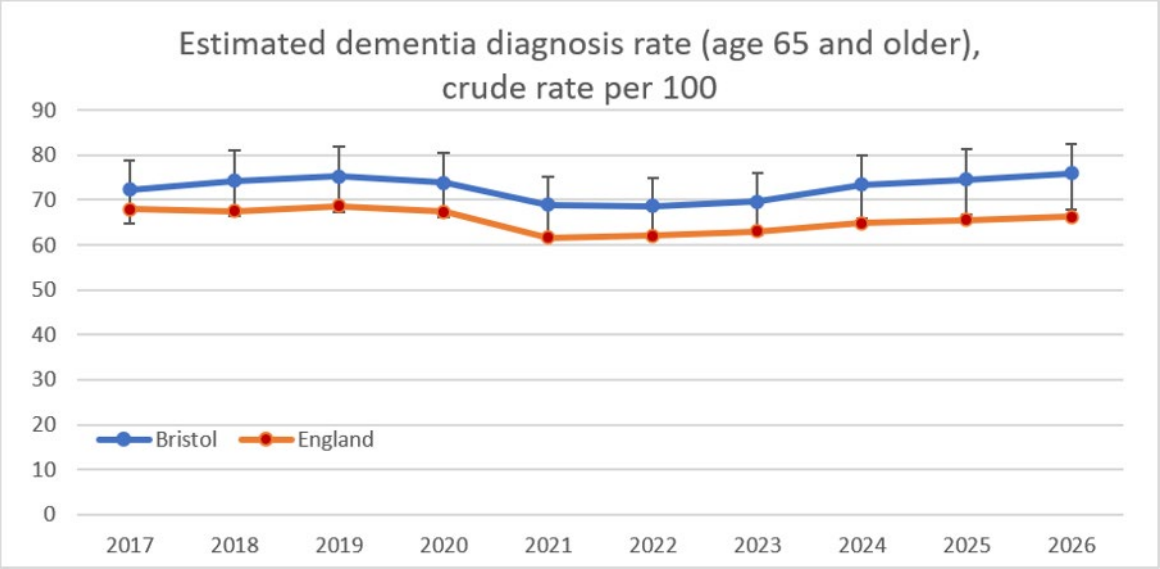


Figure 2: Estimated dementia diagnosis rate age 65+. Source: Public Health Outcomes Framework: Dementia Profile, October 2026

Risk Factors

The biggest risk associated with the development of dementia is age. A person's risk of developing dementia rises from 1 in 14 aged 65 and over, to 1 in 6 people aged 80 and over[6].

The risk of dementia can be reduced by leading a healthy lifestyle. Choices that are good for the heart and circulation, such as not smoking, eating well, and being active lower the risk of dementia[7].

Population

Projections estimate that the number of people aged 65 and over in Bristol will increase by 12% by 2032, and by 17.1% by 2040[8]. The number of people with dementia aged 65 and over is projected to rise by 28.4% in the next 10 years[9]. This higher rise is largely due to the projected increase in people aged 85 and over, who have much higher prevalence rates for dementia.

[5] NHS England » New plans to improve dementia diagnosis rates

[6] Source: Dementia UK: Update 2nd Edition: King's College London and the London School of Economics for the Alzheimer's Society (2014)

[7] www.alzheimersresearchuk.org/about-dementia/helpful-information/reducing-the-risk/

[8] ONS 2022-based Sub-national Population Projections - these are trend-based projections, which means assumptions for future levels of births, deaths and migration are based on observed levels. Projections become increasingly uncertain the further they are carried forward due to the inherent uncertainty of demographic behaviour.

[9] Prevalence rates from "Projections of older people with dementia and costs of dementia care in the United Kingdom, 2019–2040; report by Care Policy and Evaluation Centre, London School of Economics and Political Science for the Alzheimer's Society (November 2019)

Gender

In 2020 we estimated there were over 1,900 men 65+ with dementia in Bristol and over 2,300 women 65+[10]. More women than men develop dementia as women live longer on average.

Ethnicity

The number of people from Black and minority ethnic communities with dementia is expected to increase significantly faster than the national average[11]. This increase is mostly due to immigration patterns that have resulted in an ageing population from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Although there is some evidence to suggest that more people from these communities have dementia compared to white British people[12]. Vascular dementia (caused by problems with the supply of blood to the brain) is thought to be more common among Asian and Black Caribbean people because they are more prone to important risk factors for vascular dementia such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension and diabetes.

Living with dementia – care plans

Once a patient has been diagnosed with dementia, a care plan should be put in place as soon as possible and reviewed on a regular basis via face-to-face, to ensure that all patient and carer(s) needs are being met. Data from the Quality Outcome Framework (QOF) for 2025/26 shows that 87.1% of care plans in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) Integrated Care Board (ICB) area were reviewed in the last 12 months. This is higher than the England average of 84.3% (Figure 3). Reviews decreased significantly during 2020/21 to a low of 41.5% but have increased year-on-year since and are now higher than pre-pandemic levels.

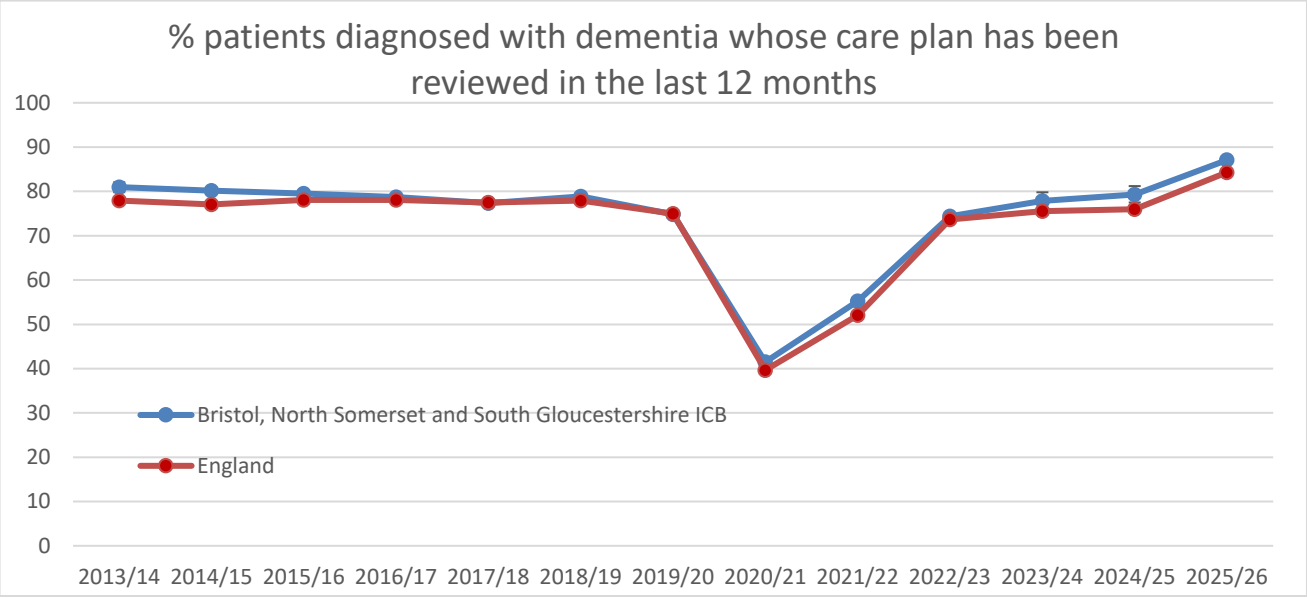


Figure 3: The percentage of patients diagnosed with dementia whose care plan has been reviewed in a face-to-face review in the preceding 12 months. Source: QOF 2025/26

[10] Prevalence rates from "Dementia UK: Update Second Edition report (2014)" applied to 2019-based ONS population estimates

[11] All-Party Parliamentary Group on Dementia (2013). Dementia does not discriminate. The experience of Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

[12] Adelman, S. (2010) 'Prevalence and recognition of dementia in primary care: a comparison of older African-Caribbean and white British residents of Haringey', PhD thesis, University College London.

Memory assessment services

The following has been extracted from the 'Dementia surveillance factsheet[13]' for the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board (BNSSG ICB), March 2026:

The majority of formal diagnoses of dementia are provided by specialist clinicians at memory assessment services (memory clinics). To receive a referral to a memory clinic from primary care, an individual should be first assessed to eliminate any potential underlying causes that may be contributing to memory and welfare issues. Since March 2020, the COVID19 pandemic has affected the provision of the usual health services in England, limiting access to memory assessment services.

The bar chart in figure 4 shows the referrals to memory clinics as a percentage of all individuals receiving an assessment for dementia since 1 April 2025 for England, South West region and BNSSG ICB. The memory clinic referrals data is cumulative and resets in April each year.

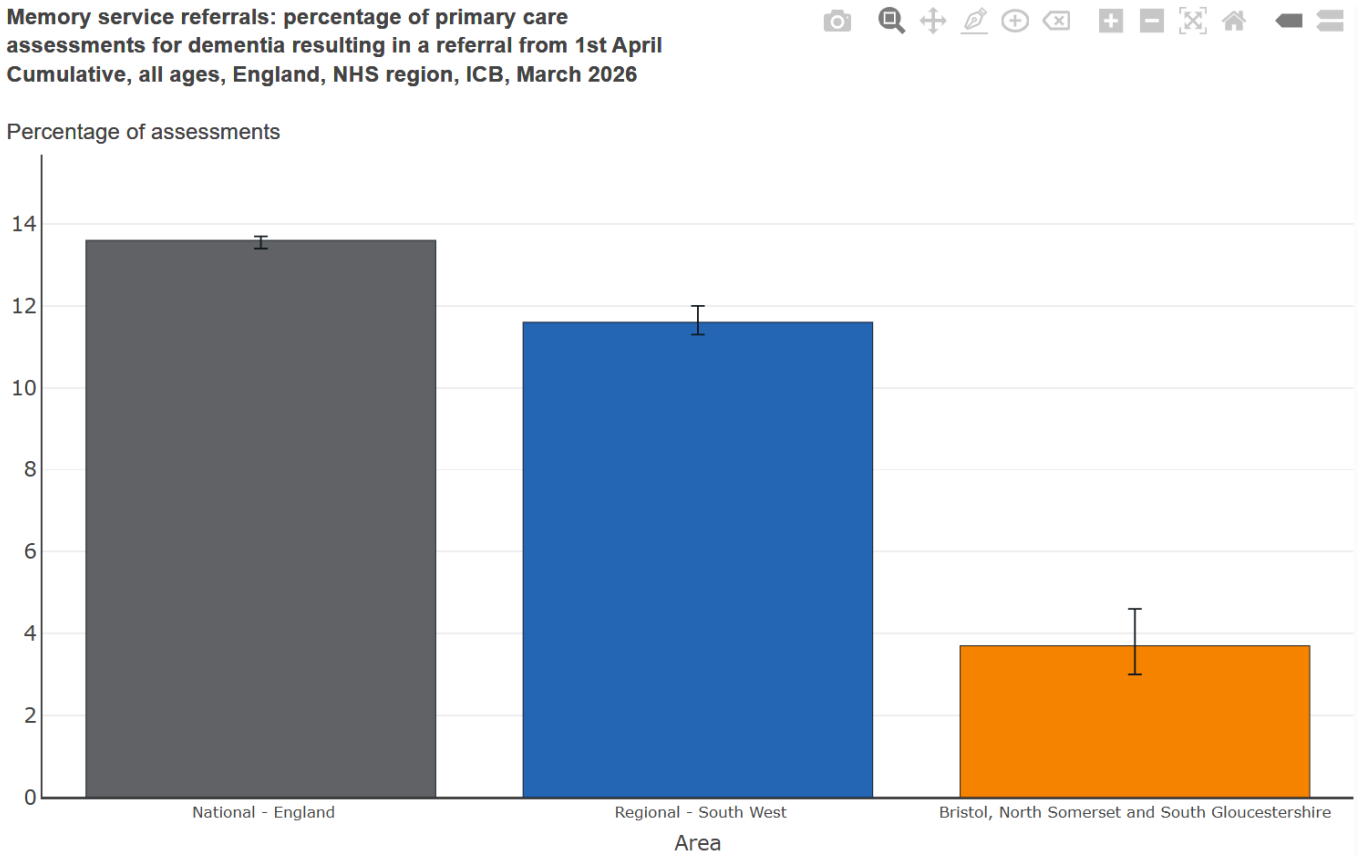


Figure 4: % of primary care assessments for dementia resulting in a referral 2025/26

Between April 2025 and March 2026 there were 74 referrals to specialist memory assessment services in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. This was 3.72% of the dementia assessments provided in the ICB. This percentage was significantly lower than the England value of 13.6% and below the South West regional value of 11.6%.

[13] Dementia surveillance factsheet (phe.org.uk)

Mortality

Dementia and Alzheimer's disease is a leading cause of death in England. The mortality rate from dementia and Alzheimer's disease in Bristol for the three-year period 2023-2025 was 122.4 per 100,000 persons, significantly higher than the England average of 112.9 per 100,000 (Figure 5). The number of deaths recorded with the underlying cause as dementia and Alzheimer's disease has gradually increased over the last twenty years and doubled from 607 in 2001-2003 to 1,214 in 2020-22. Of the 1,212 deaths in 2023-2025, 36% (433) were male and 64% (779) were female.

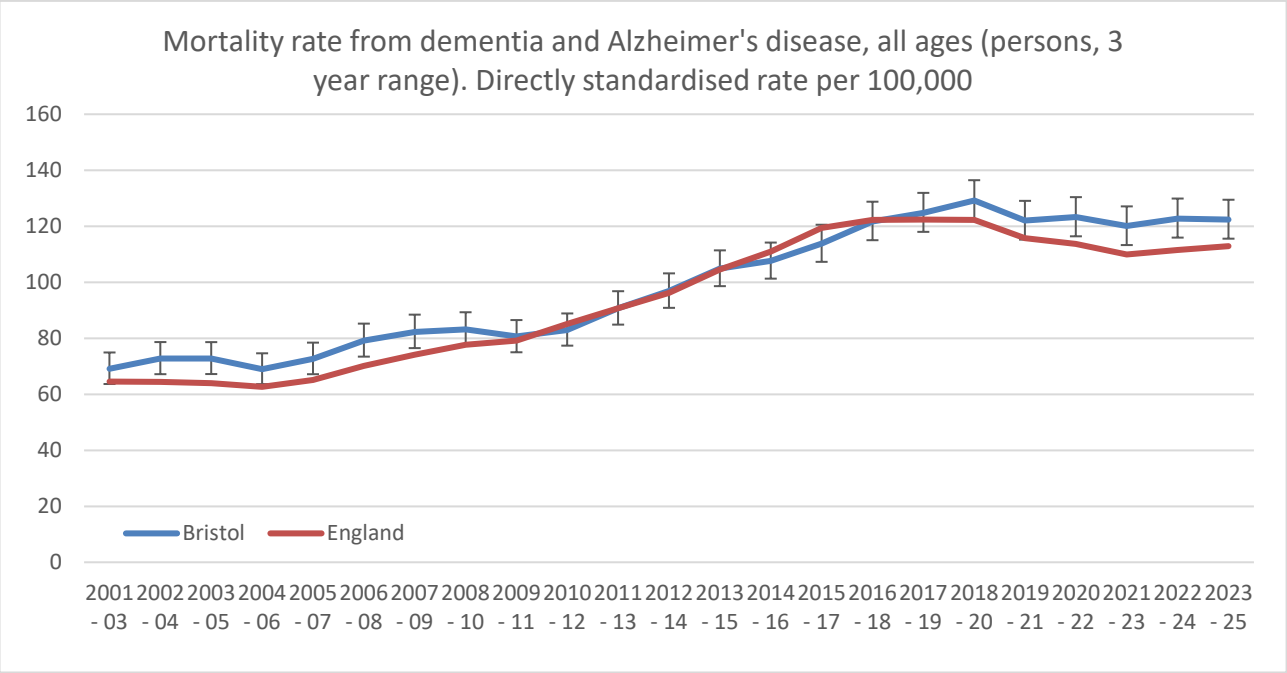


Figure 5: Mortality rate from dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Source: Public Health Outcomes Framework, October 2026.

The mortality rate where Dementia and Alzheimer's disease is mentioned as a contributing factor was 169.2 per 100,000 people in Bristol, significantly higher than the England average of 159.3. Similarly, the number of deaths has more than doubled over the last twenty years. This indicator captures mortality trends for all deaths where dementia or Alzheimer's disease was mentioned as a contributing cause, as this contributes to a proportion of deaths where dementia or Alzheimer's disease was not coded as the underlying cause of death.

Further data / links:

- PHE Dementia Profile: https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile-group/mental-health/profile/dementia
- Dementia Statistics Hub: www.dementiastatistics.org/

Date updated: October 2026 **Date of next update:** October 2027