



Insight, Performance and Intelligence

Equalities Statistics Guide

What is available and where to get it?

Guidance note
August 2026



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1. Introduction

This briefing note outlines the main sources of equalities statistics for Bristol.

Equalities statistics are used to identify where work needs to be done to tackle disadvantaged and under-represented groups in the community and to ensure everyone gets equal access to our services. This information helps us to take action to reduce differences in the uptake, representation and outcomes experienced by different service users and our employees and improve our services for the benefit of Bristol's communities.

Bristol often reflects the national picture, so where data on an equalities group isn't available specifically for Bristol, national level percentages can be used as an alternative.

Alongside this guidance, a new interactive [Equalities Dashboard](#) and a set of Equalities Profiles present detailed results from Census 2021. Each equalities group is available for a selection of age groups and compares data on:

- ethnicity
- religion
- health and disability
- economic activity
- language
- occupation and industry
- housing type, tenure and size
- household composition

The dashboard also presents equalities profiles by ward.

2. Equality statistics

Age and sex

Table 1: ONS Mid-2025 Population Estimates by Age and Sex in Bristol

Source: ONS Mid-2025 Population Estimates (provisional)

Age	Males	Females	Persons	% by age	% E&W
0-15	40,369	38,592	78,961	15.9%	17.9%
16-24	42,404	43,378	85,782	17.3%	10.7%
25-49	99,261	97,015	196,276	39.6%	33.1%
50-64	35,491	35,694	71,185	14.4%	19.1%
65 and over	29,134	33,922	63,056	12.7%	19.3%
All ages	246,659	248,601	495,260	100.0%	100.0%
% by sex	49.8%	50.2%	100.0%		



The Office for National Statistics (ONS) published provisional Mid-2025 population estimates of the usually resident population for local authorities broken down by age and sex on 29 July 2025. Also published were revised population estimates for mid-2022, mid-2023 and mid-2024 - these revised estimates replace estimates previously published.

Mid-year Population Estimates are produced for all local authorities and updated annually. Persons included are all those people who usually live in an area, regardless of nationality. Arriving international migrants are included in the usually resident population if they remain in the UK for at least a year and emigrants are excluded if they remain outside the UK for at least a year. Students and school boarders are included at their term time address.

For wards and other small area geographies, ONS have published mid-2024 Small Area Population Estimates. Mid-2025 small area estimates will be published in October/November 2026.

When making comparisons against the population, it is important to compare with the most relevant age group, if possible, and be clear on the specific definition that you are using. The following age groups are the ones most often used for comparison purposes:

- Total population (all ages)
- Children (aged 0-15 years; also aged 0-17 years for some purposes)
- Young people (aged 16-24)
- Adults (aged 16 and over)
- Working age population (aged 16-64 years)
- Older people (aged 65 and over or aged 55 and over)
- Workforce / Economically Active Population (aged 16-64 or 16 and over)

Ethnic group

Census 2021 is the primary source of statistics on the population by ethnic group.

Table 2: Population by Ethnic Group Summary

Source: ONS Census 2021

Ethnic group	Bristol	Bristol %	E&W %
White British	338,452	71.6	74.4
White Ethnic Minority	44,690	9.5	7.3
Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic Group	89,325	18.9	18.3
Total population	472,467	100.0	100.0

In the 2021 Census the ethnic group question and categories changed slightly and this is likely to have affected how people answered the question. 'Roma' was added as a new ethnic group tick box and the Black African group was asked to write in with more detail of their background.

Ethnic groups can be split and aggregated in a number of different ways depending on the available data and the level of comparison required. Table 3 shows the full 19 ethnic group breakdown and Table 4 shows other possible less detailed groupings.

Table 3: Population by Ethnic Group

Source: ONS Census 2021

Ethnic group	Bristol	Bristol %	E&W %
Asian or Asian British	31,269	6.6	9.3
Bangladeshi	2,616	0.6	1.1
Chinese	5,466	1.2	0.7
Indian	8,302	1.8	3.1
Pakistani	9,064	1.9	2.7
Other Asian	5,821	1.2	1.6
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	27,890	5.9	4.0
African	18,149	3.8	2.5
Caribbean	6,803	1.4	1.0
Other Black	2,938	0.6	0.5
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	21,116	4.5	2.9
White and Asian	5,556	1.2	0.8
White and Black African	2,621	0.6	0.4
White and Black Caribbean	7,714	1.6	0.9
Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	5,225	1.1	0.8
White	383,142	81.1	81.7
British	338,452	71.6	74.4
Irish	4,288	0.9	0.9
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	273	0.1	0.1
Roma	966	0.2	0.2
Other White	39,163	8.3	6.2
Other ethnic group	9,050	1.9	2.1
Arab	2,540	0.5	0.6
Any other ethnic group	6,510	1.4	1.6
Total population	472,467	100.0	100.0

Based on the how people responded to the ethnic group question, it is possible to list all 287+ ethnic groups people provided. Using this more detailed classification, the census shows that the largest ethnic minority group in Bristol is the Somali population with an estimated population of 9,200 people.

Population estimates for all 287+ ethnic groups are available on the [Bristol Census Dashboard](#). Small area data is available on the [Bristol Census Data Profiles dashboard](#).

Table 4: Bristol Population by Other Ethnic Group Definitions

Source: ONS Census 2021

Broad ethnic groups	
White	81.1%
Mixed	4.5%
Asian	6.6%
Black	5.9%
Other	1.9%

White British / White Ethnic Minority / Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic	
White British (WB)	71.6%
White Ethnic Minority (WEM)	9.5%
Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic group (BAME)	18.9%

White British / Ethnic Minority	
White British	71.6%
Ethnic Minority	28.4%

Analysis of statistics and survey results which are broken down by ethnic group

These are useful examples of sources that provide data on how experiences and perceptions differ for people in different equality groups (rather than data on population numbers in those groups):

- Bristol Quality of Life Survey results are broken down by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic group (BAME), by White Minority Ethnic group (WME) and broad ethnic groups.
- Bristol Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) - some indicators are broken down by ethnic group

Religion

Table 5: Bristol Population by Religion

Source: ONS Census 2021

Religion	Bristol	Bristol %	E&W %
No religion	242,864	51.4	37.2
Christian	152,126	32.2	46.2
Buddhist	2,710	0.6	0.5
Hindu	3,545	0.8	1.7
Jewish	1,228	0.3	0.5
Muslim	31,776	6.7	6.5
Sikh	2,247	0.5	0.9
Other religion	3,546	0.8	0.6
Not answered	32,423	6.9	6.0
Total population	472,465	100.0	100.0



Census 2021 is the main source of statistics on the population by religion.

The census introduced a voluntary question on religion in 2001. In the census data, religion refers to a person's religious affiliation. This is the religion with which they connect or identify, rather than their beliefs or active religious practice. The question asked was 'What is your religion?' As it was a voluntary question and so includes a category for people who chose not to answer the question.

Based on the how people responded to the religion question, it is possible to list more than 45 religions in Bristol. Population estimates for all 45+ religions are available on the [Bristol Census Dashboard](#). Small area data is available on the [Bristol Census Data Profiles dashboard](#).

Analysis of statistics and survey results which are broken down by religion

Bristol Quality of Life Survey results are broken down by Christian, Muslim (2024/25), 'Other religion' (excluding 'Muslim' in 2024/25) and 'No religion or faith'.

Disability

Bristol City Council is committed to the Social Model of Disability which recognises the right to self-identify as a Disabled person and that people are Disabled by barriers in society such as lack of physical access and lack of accessible communication, not by their impairment (including mental, physical, sensory, health conditions, learning difficulties among others). The Equality Act 2010 defines Disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on a person's ability to do daily activities.

There are two ways to consider Disability in terms of the data available. One is whether someone considers themselves to be a Disabled person, and the other is whether someone has physical or mental health conditions or illnesses that negatively impact their daily life such that they would be considered Disabled under the definition of the Equality Act 2010.

The first option, based on a persons' self-identified disability, is used in most consultations, surveys and equalities forms via the BCC equalities monitoring question: "Do you consider yourself to be a Disabled person?", and this option is also closer to the Social Model of Disability.

When benchmarking disability results against the Bristol population, it is important that the same definition is used as in the question asked. Consequently, we are proposing a data source that reflects the first (self-identified) option, as the figures for the two options are quite different.

Table 6: Disabled population estimate by age (3-year average 2022/23-2024/25)

Source: BCC Quality of Life Survey

Disabled (self-identified)	Bristol %
Adults (16 years and over)	11.5%
Working age population (16-64 years)	9.6%
Older people (65 years and over)	20.4%



The Annual Bristol Quality of Life (QoL) Survey includes the question “Do you consider yourself to be a Disabled person?”. This allows us to estimate the percentage of disabled people in the population, based on a random sample of around 4,000 Bristol residents each year.

In 2024/25, 11.7% of respondents identified as Disabled, in 2023/24 this figure was 11.0% and in 2022/23 it was 11.8%, giving an *estimate* of **11.5% of Bristol residents (over 16) being Disabled**.

However, it should be noted that there may be reasons why Disabled residents are more or less able to participate in a citizen survey than non-Disabled residents. Based on other responses the QoL figure is likely an *over-estimate* but is the best comparator we have of self-identified disability in Bristol.

Note - When using any health and disability data, it can be useful to look at the statistics for the working age population or the specific age group that you are interested in rather than all ages, as this will exclude many of the limitations due to old age.

Table 7: Population whose day-to-day activities are limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses

Source: ONS Census 2021

Long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses	Population	Long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses		
		Bristol	Bristol %	E&W %
Children (0-15 years)	82,757	5,077	6.1	6.3
Working age (16-64 years)	328,950	52,698	16.0	15.5
Older people (65 years +)	60,760	23,386	38.5	35.5
Total population all ages	472,467	81,161	17.2	17.5
Adults aged 16 and over	389,710	76,084	19.5	20.1

The Census 2021 uses the full definition which includes all people with a health issue or disability that impacts their day-to-day activities to some extent, either a little or a lot. Census 2021 asked the following two-part question:

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

If yes: Do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?

17.2% of people in Bristol assessed that their day-to-day activities are limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses and so could be considered Disabled. This approach is closer to the “Medical Model of Disability” and should only be used as a benchmark when the comparator data has been collected based on the same wording as the Census 2021 question.

The 2021 Census question on health issues and disability is different to the question asked in earlier Census in order for the results to align more closely with the Equality Act (2010). The potential influence of question changes should be considered when drawing comparisons between Census 2021 and earlier years, particularly for older age groups. Potential impacts may include:



- the visible prompt “include problems related to old age” was removed in the 2021 questionnaire, which may have reduced the percentage of older people who considered that they had a condition or illness
- reference to mental health conditions or illnesses was included in 2021, which may have contributed to the increase in disability seen in younger age groups
- Census 2021 was undertaken during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which may have influenced how people perceived their conditions or illnesses

Note: ONS have also published Age Standardised Percentages (ASPs) for all local authorities. Age-standardised percentages account for differences in age structures in the population and are more appropriate than crude percentages when drawing comparisons between sexes, over time and across geographical areas. For further information on age standardisation, see the [ONS Blog](#).

The Bristol Age Standardised Proportion of Disabled People under the Equality Act is 19.4%, compared to the Age Standardised Proportion of 17.8% for England and Wales as a whole.

More analysis of disability in Bristol is available on the [Bristol Census Dashboard](#). Small area data is available on the [Bristol Census Data Profiles dashboard](#).

Analysis of statistics and survey results which are broken down by disability

These are useful examples of sources that provide data on how experiences and perceptions differ for people in different equality groups (rather than data on population numbers in those groups):

- Bristol Quality of Life Survey results are broken down for the disabled population
- Bristol Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) - some indicators are broken down by disability

Sexual orientation

Table 8: Sexual orientation population aged 16 and over (revised)

Source: ONS Census 2021

Sexual orientation	Bristol	Bristol %	E&W %
Straight or Heterosexual	333,008	85.5	89.4
LGB+	23,649	6.07	3.16
Gay or Lesbian	8,568	2.20	1.54
Bisexual	12,020	3.08	1.28
Pansexual	1,075	0.28	0.10
Asexual	435	0.11	0.06
Queer	496	0.13	0.03
All other sexual orientations	1,055	0.27	0.15
Not answered	33,051	8.5	7.5
Total population aged 16 years and over	389,708	100.0	100.0



The question on sexual orientation was new for Census 2021. The question was voluntary and only asked of those aged 16 years and over. People were asked “Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?” The different sexual orientations that people could choose from included: straight or heterosexual; gay or lesbian; bisexual; or other sexual orientation. If they selected “Other sexual orientation”, they were asked to write in the sexual orientation with which they identified.

More analysis of sexual orientation in Bristol is available on the [Bristol Census Dashboard](#). Small area data is available on the [Bristol Census Data Profiles dashboard](#).

Gender Identity

Gender identity refers to a person’s sense of their own gender, whether male, female or another category such as non-binary. This may or may not be the same as their sex registered at birth.

The question on gender identity was new for Census 2021. It was added to provide the first official data on the size of the transgender population in England and Wales. The question was voluntary and was only asked of people aged 16 years and over. People were asked “Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?” and had the option of selecting either “Yes” or selecting “No” and writing in their gender identity.

Table 9: Gender identity population aged 16 and over

Source: ONS Census 2021

Gender identity	Bristol	Bristol %	E&W %
Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth	360,274	92.4	93.5
Trans	3,220	0.83	0.54
Not answered	26,214	6.7	6.0
Total population aged 16 years and over	389,708	100.0	100.0

Reliability of Census 2021 estimates

The voluntary gender identity question on Census 2021 was the first of its kind. It has provided a unique opportunity to learn more about gender identity in England and Wales and the best approach to collecting high quality data on this topic.

The Census 2021 estimates are considered broadly in line with other data on gender identity however there are patterns in the gender identity estimates from Census 2021 that suggest some respondents may not have interpreted the gender identity question as intended, most notably those with lower levels of English language proficiency. Some people may have unintentionally given an answer that they had a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth (ie Trans); this has increased uncertainty in the gender identity estimates, compared with other Census 2021 estimates.



Given other sources of uncertainty, not least the impact of question non-response, ONS cannot say with certainty whether the census estimates are more likely to be an overestimate or an underestimate of the total number of trans people aged over 16 years in England and Wales.

Given these uncertainties, the gender identity estimates from Census 2021 are no longer accredited 'Official statistics' and are instead classified as 'Official statistics in development'. This better reflects their innovative nature and the evolving understanding of gender identity.

Gender identity estimates from Census 2021 should not be used as precise estimates to support service delivery but can be used to provide insights.

The Census 2021 estimate of the trans population of England and Wales aged 16 years and over (0.54%) gives an indication of the size of the population; this is broadly consistent with other sources, but caution is needed for estimates of gender identity subcategories.

ONS analysis concludes that Census 2021 gender identity estimates broken down by age, sexual orientation, housing, health, disability, and unpaid care can be used to provide insights on the relationship between gender identity and these variables. However, as a result of patterns seen in the data, ONS are less confident in the reliability of breakdowns by Trans identity sub-categories (ie transwoman, transman, non-binary and other identities) as well as by other variables, partly because of how these variables correlate with English language proficiency.

For further information see

- [Gender identity: age and sex, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)
- [Census 2021 gender identity estimates for England and Wales, additional guidance on uncertainty and appropriate use](#)

More analysis of gender identity in Bristol is available on the [Bristol Census Dashboard](#). Small area data is available on the [Bristol Census Data Profiles dashboard](#).

Legal partnership status

Census 2021 is the official source of statistics on legal partnership status. Same-sex marriage was legalised in 2014 and opposite-sex civil partnerships were legalised in 2019. The questions on marriage and civil partnerships were updated for 2021 to reflect this.

More analysis of legal partnership status in Bristol is available on the [Bristol Census Dashboard](#). Small area data is available on the [Bristol Census Data Profiles dashboard](#).

Table 10: Legal Partnership Status population aged 16 and over

Source: ONS Census 2021

Marital and civil partnership status	Bristol	Bristol %	E&W %
Never married and never registered a civil partnership	205,669	52.8	37.9
Married or in a registered civil partnership	131,892	33.8	44.6
Married	130,838	33.6	44.4
Married: Opposite sex	129,665	33.3	44.2
Married: Same sex	1,173	0.3	0.3
In a registered civil partnership	1,054	0.3	0.2
In a registered civil partnership: Opposite sex	442	0.1	0.1
In a registered civil partnership: Same sex	612	0.2	0.1
Separated, but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership	7,155	1.8	2.2
Separated, but still married	7,091	1.8	2.2
Separated, but still in a registered civil partnership	64	0.0	0.0
Divorced or civil partnership dissolved	28,649	7.4	9.1
Divorced	28,526	7.3	9.1
Formerly in a civil partnership now legally dissolved	123	0.0	0.0
Widowed or surviving civil partnership partner	16,343	4.2	6.1
Widowed	16,304	4.2	6.1
Surviving partner from civil partnership	39	0.0	0.0
Total population aged 16 and over	389,708	100.0	100.0

3. Resources

Equalities dashboard

A new interactive [Equalities Dashboard](#) presents detailed results from Census 2021 by equalities group. Each equalities group is available for a selection of age groups and each profile compares data on:

- ethnicity
- religion
- health and disability
- economic activity
- language
- occupation and industry
- housing type, tenure and size
- household composition

The dashboard also presents equalities profiles by ward.



Population profiles by equalities group

[Population profiles by equalities group](#)

A series of reports which present the differences between population groups in Bristol.

4. Data Sources

Census 2021

www.bristol.gov.uk/census

The Census is the main source of detailed equalities statistics for the UK including age, sex, ethnic group, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability and marital status, together with data on country of birth, main language, proficiency in English and migrants. The census however is only carried out every 10 years and so towards the end of the decade the statistics become quite dated, yet we are still reliant on them for most equalities statistics. As part of the ONS Transformation Programme, ONS are hoping to move to more administrative based statistics supplemented by surveys which can be updated on a more regular basis than the census.

Census data is important as it is possible to cross-tabulate topics by equalities group, so for example economic activity statistics are available broken down by age, sex, ethnicity, religion and disability. Similarly equalities groups can be cross tabulated by other topics.

Census data is available for very small geographies including Output Areas, Lower Layer Super Output Areas and wards as well as Bristol as a whole and the rest of the UK.

Census 2021 results for Bristol

Bristol Census 2021 results are presented via the following dashboards:

1. Headline Census 2021 results for Bristol overall are presented in the [Census 2021 Dashboard](#)
5. Detailed data for areas within Bristol are in the [Bristol Census Data Profiles dashboard](#)
The new Census Data Profiles dashboard includes:
 - Area Profiles: all census indicators for a selected geographic area
 - Topic Profiles: an individual indicator mapped across the city

All Census 2021 data for England and Wales can be accessed using the new ONS [Create a Custom Dataset tool](#) together with some additional datasets on [NOMIS](#).

ONS have also produced a range of tools for accessing the Census 2021 data including:

 Census maps View Census 2021 data for Bristol on a map.	 Custom profiles Build a custom area profile for Bristol using Census 2021 data.	 Changes over time Read how Bristol has changed since the 2011 Census.	 Area profiles ↗ View Census 2021 data tables for Bristol on Nomis, an ONS service (external).
Census maps	Custom Profiles	Change over time	Area Profiles

Find more detail on what the [best tool to use to get the census data is](#).

Population

www.bristol.gov.uk/population

The **Population of Bristol report** brings together statistics on the current population of Bristol, recent trends, future projections and key characteristics of the people living in Bristol. The population report now includes new and revised population trends following the Census 2021.

BCC Quality of Life Survey

www.bristol.gov.uk/qualityoflife

The Quality of Life (QoL) survey provides an annual snapshot of the quality of life in Bristol. The survey gives local residents an opportunity to voice their opinions about issues close to their hearts and their views on local public services. It has been an annual survey since 2001 but is reducing in frequency to a biennial survey from 2025. The statistics are analysed down to ward level and also by equality group.

All data from the latest QoL survey is in the **Quality of Life data dashboard** on [Quality of life in Bristol](#)

This includes all QoL indicators, with trend data for each level reported where available. These are shown by:

- citywide trend
- all 34 Bristol wards
- over 30 equality and demographic groups
- the 10 deciles of deprivation within Bristol
- the NHS Integrated Care Service (ICS) Locality Partnerships



The dashboard highlights indicators, wards and equality and demographic groups that are better or worse than the Bristol average. In total, there are nearly 100,000 data points. This gives us a rich and detailed view of citizen perception in Bristol.

Quality of Life results are split by the following equality and demographic groups:		
Age	Disability	Parents
Sex	Sexual orientation	Tenure
Ethnic group	Gender identity	Qualifications
Religion	10% most deprived	Carers

The latest **Quality of Life Report** is also on [Quality of life in Bristol](#), including 49 headline measures of the lived experiences for people in Bristol including:

- how these have changed over the last few years
- how experiences differ in the most deprived areas
- initial analysis of 'actions to improve quality of life' that people want to see in Bristol

Quality of Life results are split by the following themes:		
Community and Living	Transport	Crime and Safety
Health and Wellbeing	Culture and Leisure	Council and Democracy
Housing	Education and Skills	
Sustainability & Environment	Economy	

BCC Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

www.bristol.gov.uk/jsna

The JSNA Health and Wellbeing profile is a wide-ranging source of data and information on the health and wellbeing needs (now and in the future) of the people of Bristol. It consists of over 80 different topic areas which are updated on a rolling basis as new data becomes available.

One of the objectives of the profile is to identify and tackle health inequalities across communities in Bristol. There is already a well-established approach of using geographic analysis to highlight inequalities at ward-level, and by Integrated Care System (ICS) localities. Now many sections include data disaggregated by sex, and some by age, ethnicity and deprivation. We are striving to further improve our sections with the inclusion of additional protected characteristics data wherever possible. We are also improving our analysis by asking: What does the data tell us? Are there any significant differences by characteristic – is the balance right? Are there sound reasons for the inequalities? Do we need to do something to address this?



5. Further information

This Equalities Statistics Guide is available on the [Bristol City Council population web page](#)

More information can be found here [How we measure equality and diversity](#)

Bristol Strategic Intelligence Guide www.bristol.gov.uk/statistics a guide to the latest Bristol City Council Strategic Intelligence (SI) publications and other useful information.

For further information please contact research@bristol.gov.uk