

# Census 2021 Population Profile

## Older people

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# CENSUS 2021 POPULATION PROFILE

## OLDER PEOPLE IN BRISTOL

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# OLDER PEOPLE HEADLINES

## NUMBERS

- In 2021, Bristol had 60,760 people aged 65 and over, 13% of the total population (E&W 19%); of these, 27,890 people were 75 and over (6% total population; E&W 9%)

## ETHNICITY

- Older people are less ethnically diverse than the population as a whole – in Bristol 6.5% of people 65+ are Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic compared to 20.7% under 65 years

## RELIGION

- Between 2011 and 2021 the percentage of the older population who reported 'no religion' more than doubled from 11.4% to 24.6%

## HEALTH AND DISABILITY

- 15% of older people in Bristol described their health as 'bad' or 'very bad' compared to 3.5% of people aged under 65 and a further 30% described their health as 'fair' compared to just 9% of people under 65
- 38% of people 65+ are disabled according to the Equality Act Definition. The proportion of people whose day-to-day activities are limited a lot is especially affected by age - 5% of the under 65s, 19% of over 65s, 26% of over 75s and 39% of the over 85s

## CARERS

- 6,660 older people provide unpaid care – this is 1 in 10 people aged 65 and over

## LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

- 20,600 (35%) people aged 65 and over in Bristol live alone, rising to more than half (57%) of over 85 year olds
- 41% of women and 28% of men aged 65 and over live alone

## HOUSING

- Home ownership is significantly higher for people aged 65+ than for people under 65 - 78% of over 65s live in a household that is owned, compared to 51% of people under 65
- Older people live in larger houses - 82% live in households with more bedrooms than required compared to half (51%) of people under 65

## CARS

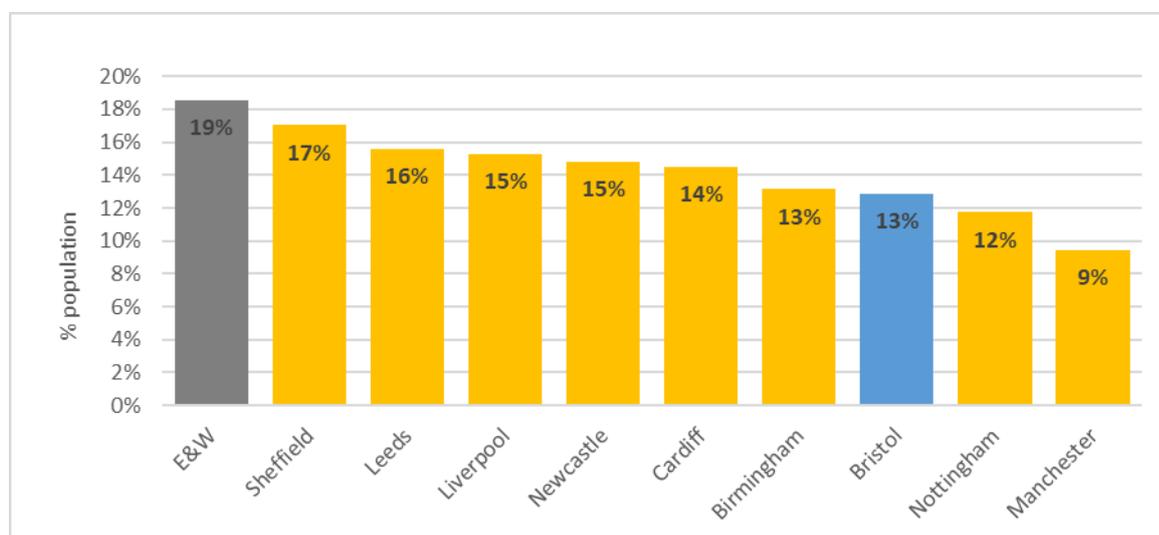
- The proportion of older people without a car is considerably higher than for younger people - 27% of people aged 65 and over do not have access to a car, increasing to 37% for people aged 75 and over, compared to just 19% of people aged under 65

## 1.0 OVERVIEW

Census 2021 results show the population of England and Wales has continued to age since 2011. The number of people aged 65 years and over increased from 9.2 million in 2011 to over 11 million in 2021 and the proportion of people aged 65 years and over rose from 16.4% to 18.6%.

The proportion of the population aged 65 years and over in Bristol and other Core Cities is lower than the national average (figure 1). This reflects the younger age profile of cities, which is partly due to the large number of students during term time who are counted as part of the usually resident population.

*Figure 1: People aged 65 years and over in Core Cities in England and Wales Source: ONS Census 2021*



## 2.0 OLDER PEOPLE IN BRISTOL

In 2021, there was 60,760 people living in Bristol aged 65 and over, accounting for 13% of the total population. In England and Wales people aged 65 and over make up 19% of the total population.

The proportions of older people are lower in Bristol than nationally across all older age ranges:

- 60,760 people aged 65 and over – 13% total population (19% England and Wales)
- 27,890 people aged 75 and over - 6% total population (9% England and Wales)
- 8,409 people aged 85 and over – 1.8% total population (2.4% England and Wales)

Figure 2 shows the population profile of Bristol by five year age band and sex compared to England and Wales, whilst figure 3 shows age bands just for those people aged 65 years and over.

Figure 2: Population pyramid for Bristol

Source: ONS Census 2021

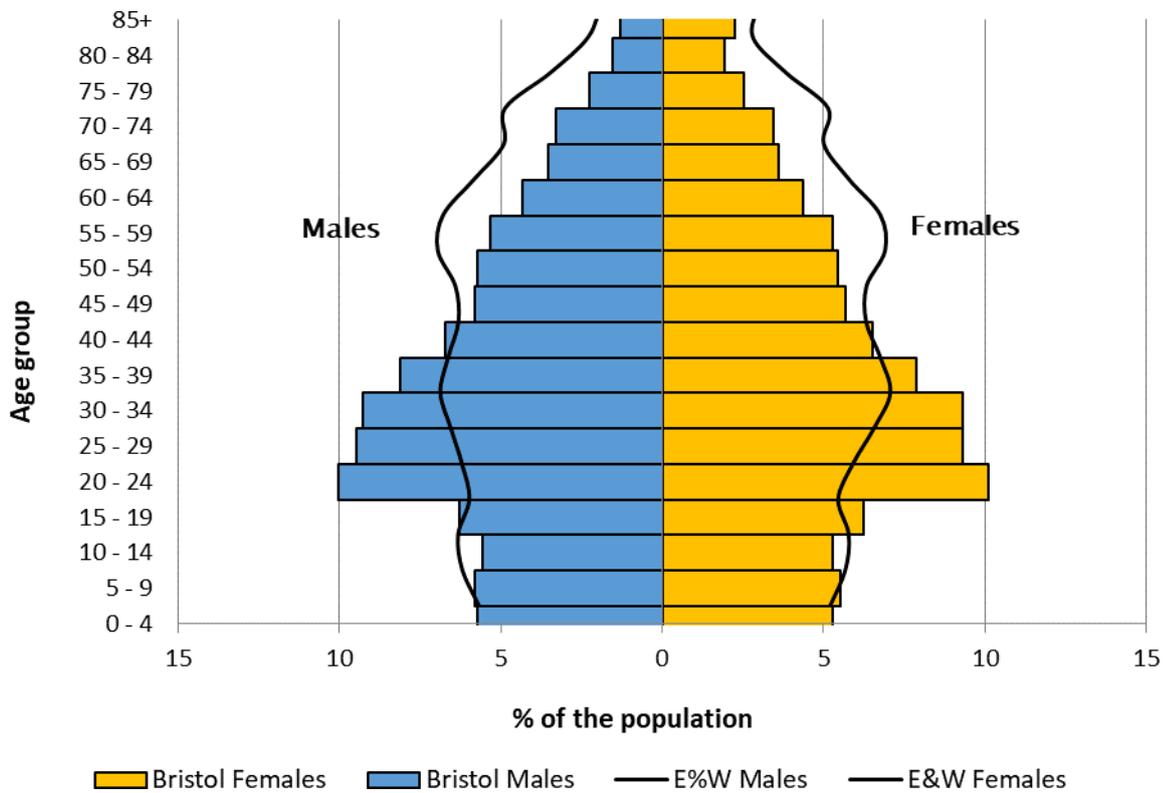


Figure 3: Population aged over 65 years by five year age band in Bristol

Source: ONS Census 2021

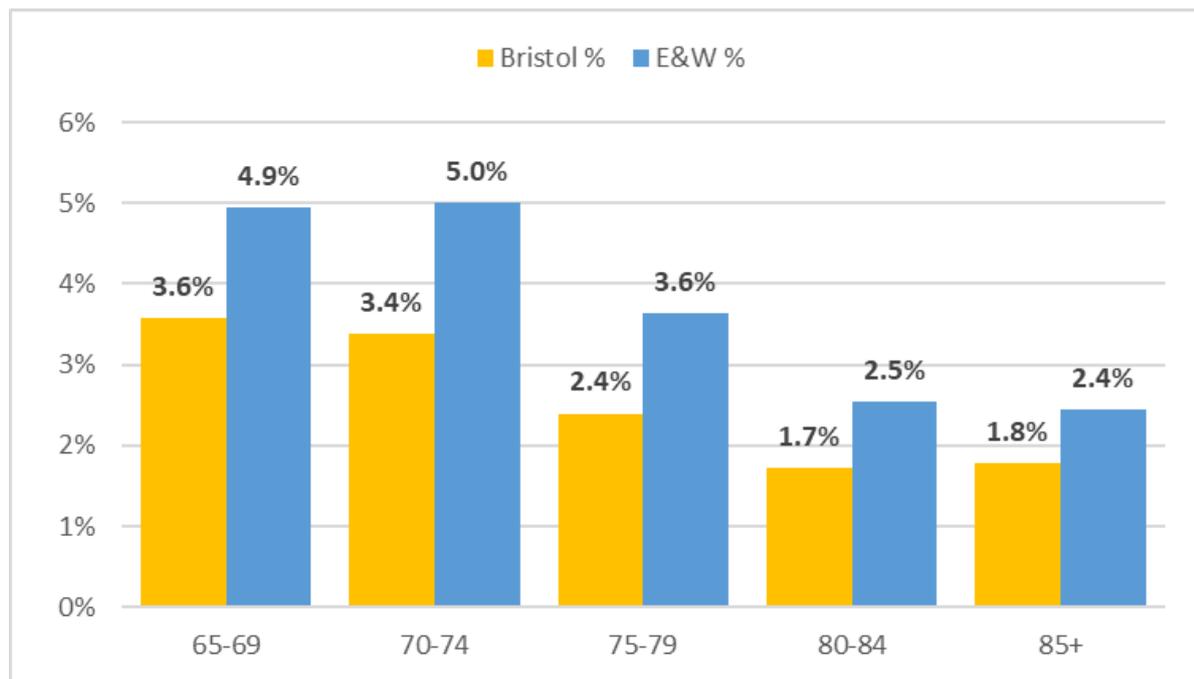


Figure 4 shows the proportion of the population aged 65 years and over by ward in Bristol. In three wards more than a fifth of the total population is aged 65+ including Westbury-on- Trym and Henleaze (23.5%), Stockwood (22.1%) and Hengrove and Whitchurch Park (20.3%). Central ward has the lowest proportion of older people making up just 3.5% of the total ward population.

*Figure 4: Percentage of the population aged 65 years and over by ward in Bristol*  
 Source: ONS Census 2021

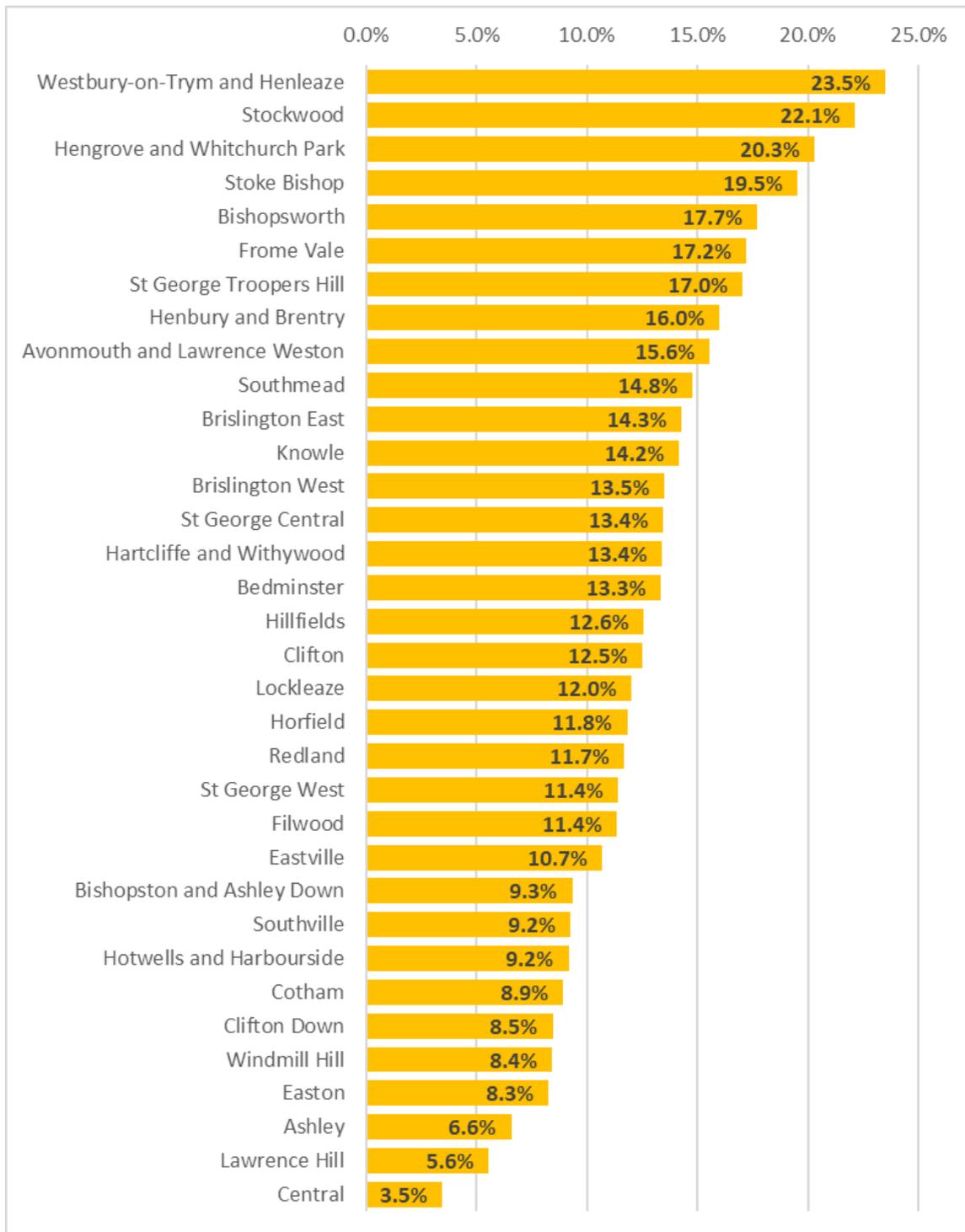
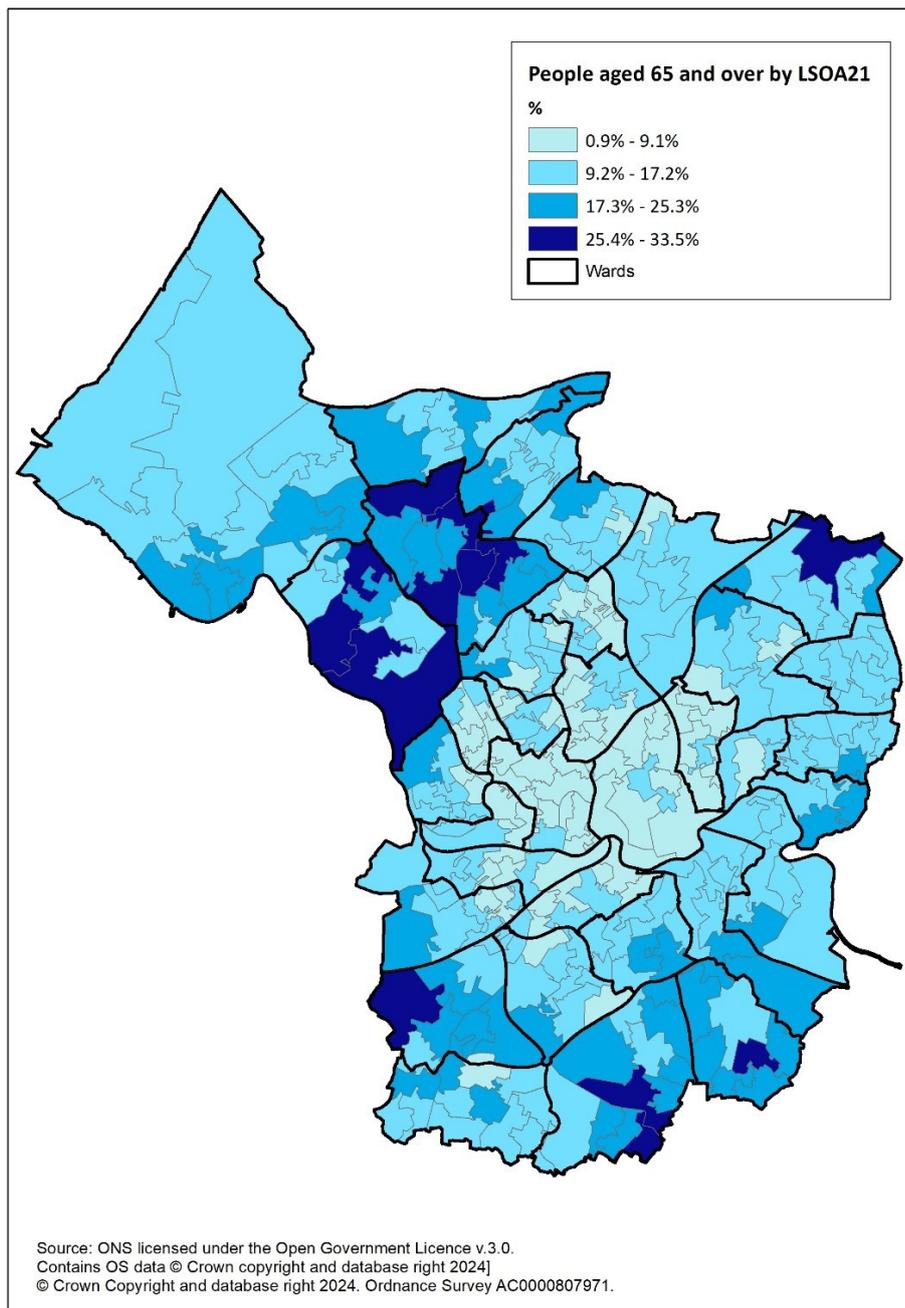


Figure 5 maps the proportion of the population aged 65 years and over by small area<sup>1</sup> across the city. Areas where more than 30% of the total population in the area are aged 65 and over include 'Elmlea' in Westbury-on-Trym and Henleaze ward (33.5%), 'Old Sneed Park' in Stoke Bishop ward (30.3%) and 'The Coots' in Stockwood ward (30%). The lowest proportion of older people is in 'Queens Square' where just 0.9% of the population are aged 65 or over.

*Figure 5: % population aged 65 years and over by Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA21)*  
 Source: ONS Census 2021



<sup>1</sup> Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are a statistical geography created by the Office for National Statistics for presenting small area data in England and Wales. LSOAs include between 400 and 1,200 households and have a usually resident population between 1,000 and 3,000 persons.

### 3.0 OLDER PEOPLE DIFFERENCES IN DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS, HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION & HOUSING

#### 3.1 ETHNIC GROUP

Ethnicity on the census is self-reported; people selected which group they feel best describes their ethnic identity. All 19 ethnic groups are tick-box selections within five main categories, which are part of people’s answers.

More than 9 in 10 older people identified as White in 2021, but the older population has become more ethnically diverse since 2011. The percentage of the population aged 65 years and over identifying as White decreased from 94.8% in 2011 to 93.5% in 2021.

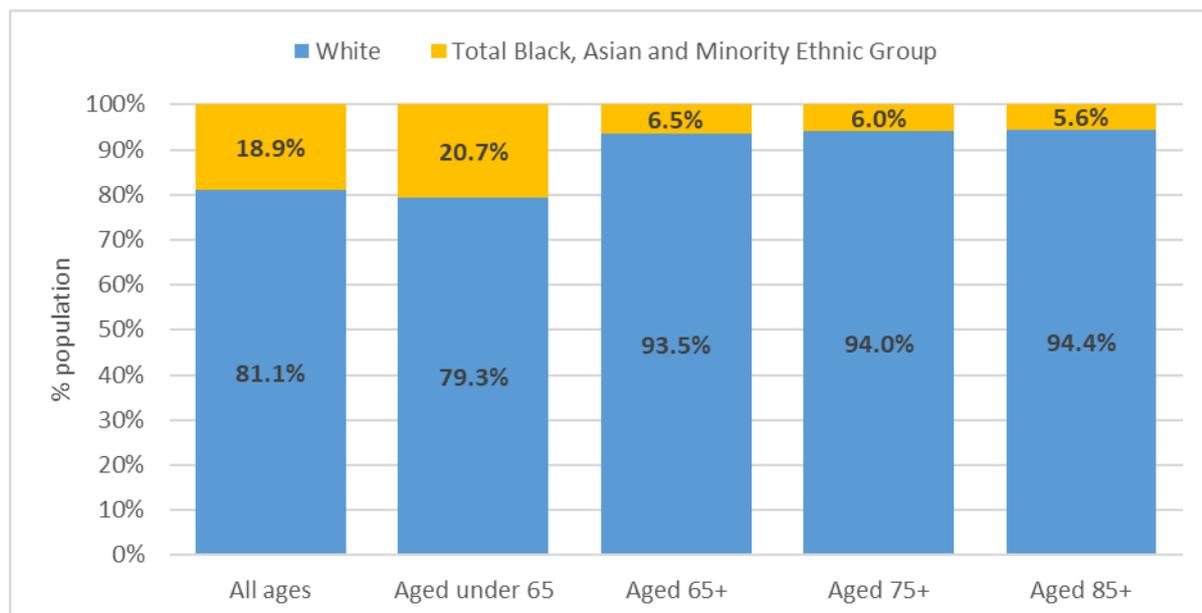
Older people in Bristol are less ethnically diverse than the population as a whole – 6.5% of the population aged 65 and over belong to a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic group compared to 20.7% of the population aged under 65 years (figure 6).

Ethnic diversity reduces with age - the proportion of people identifying with a Black, Asian or Ethnic Minority group in Bristol is:

- 20.7% of people aged under 65 years
- 6.5% of people aged 65 and over
- 6.0% of people aged 75 and over
- 5.6% of people aged 85 and over

Figure 6: Older people by ethnic group in Bristol

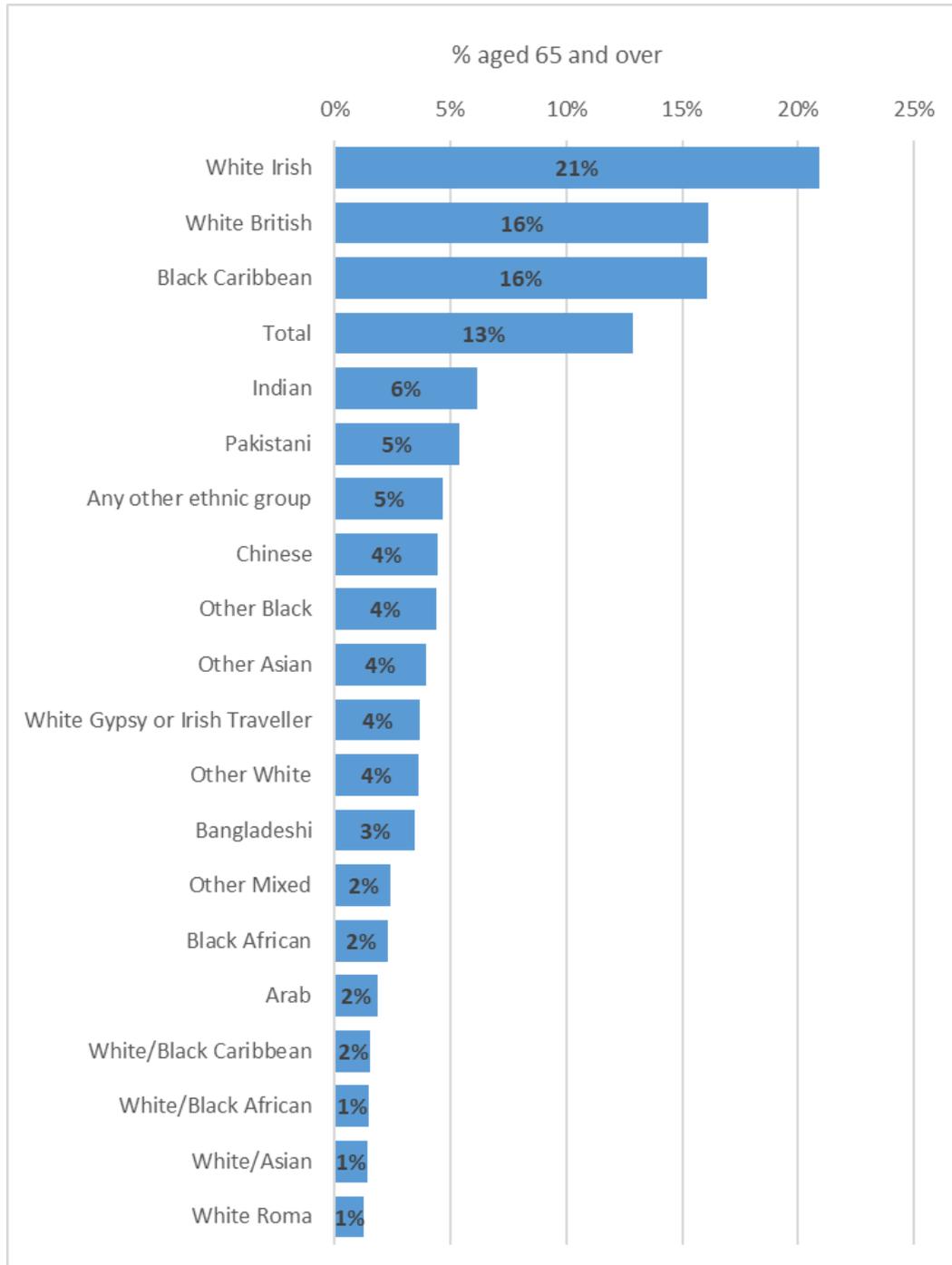
Source: ONS Census 2021



In 2021, 93.5% of the population aged 65 years and over living in Bristol identified in the White ethnic group, 2.6% identified in the Asian/Asian British ethnic group, and 2.7% in the

Black/Black British ethnic group. The remaining 1.2% of people aged 65 years and over identified in the Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups and Other ethnic groups.

Figure 7: Proportion of population in each ethnic group who are aged 65 and over in Bristol  
Source: ONS Census 2021



More than a fifth (21%) of people who identified as 'White Irish' are aged 65 years and over. This is 8 percentage points higher than the Bristol average where at 13% of all people are aged

65 and over. The 'White British' and 'Black Caribbean' ethnic groups also have older population profiles than the city average, where 16% of people in these groups are aged 65 and over (figure 7).

### 3.2 RELIGION

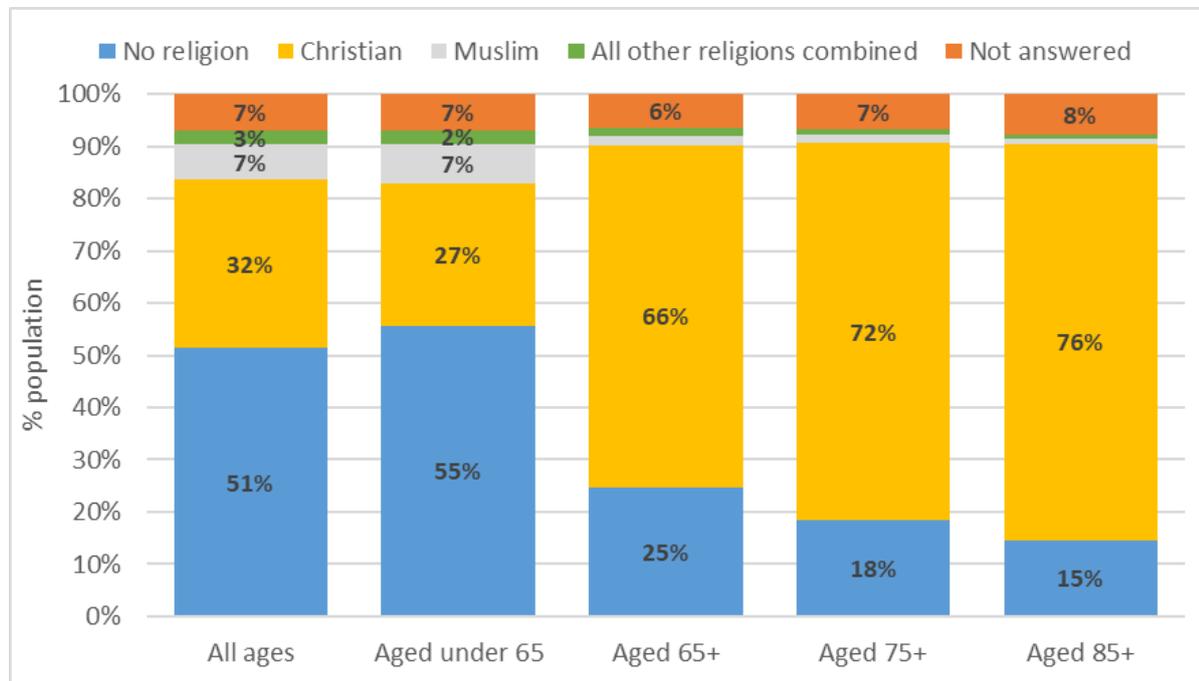
In the Census, religion refers to a person's religious affiliation. This is the religion with which they connect or identify, rather than their beliefs or active religious practice. The religion question is voluntary and in 2021 93% of the overall population in Bristol chose to answer the question (E&W 94%).

Census results are generally reported based on the six largest religions – Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh – plus 'Other religions' for those people who selected 'Other' and wrote in a response to the question. People may also have selected 'No religion' or, as the question was voluntary, may have chosen not to answer this question.

Figure 8 shows the religion profiles of the population by age in Bristol. Older people generally have lower levels reporting 'no religion'.

Figure 8: Older people by largest religions in Bristol

Source: ONS Census 2021



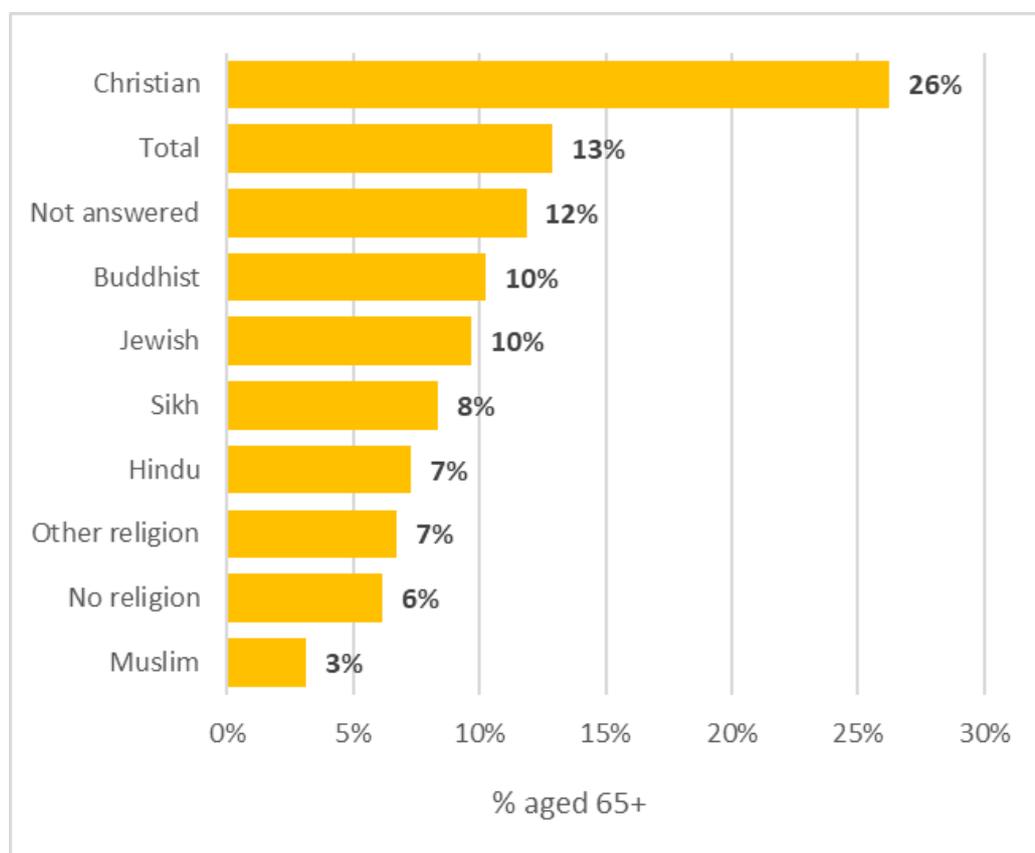
The majority of people aged 65 years or over in Bristol in 2021 identified as Christian (66%) with this proportion increasing with age - 72% people aged 75 and over and 76% people aged 85 and over.

Since 2011, the religious profile of the older population has become more diverse. The

percentage of the older population who identified as Christian decreased by 12.2 percentage points between 2011 and 2021, while the percentage identifying as other religious groups increased by 1.3 percentage points. The largest change was in the percentage of the older population who reported no religion, increasing from 11.4% in 2011 to 24.6% in 2021.

More than a quarter (26%) of those who identified as Christian are aged 65 years and over. This is 13 percentage points higher than the Bristol average where 13% of all people are aged 65 and over. All other religions have a much lower proportions of older people (figure 9).

*Figure 9: Proportion of population in each religion who are aged 65 and over in Bristol Source: ONS Census 2021*



### 3.3 HEALTH

#### GENERAL HEALTH

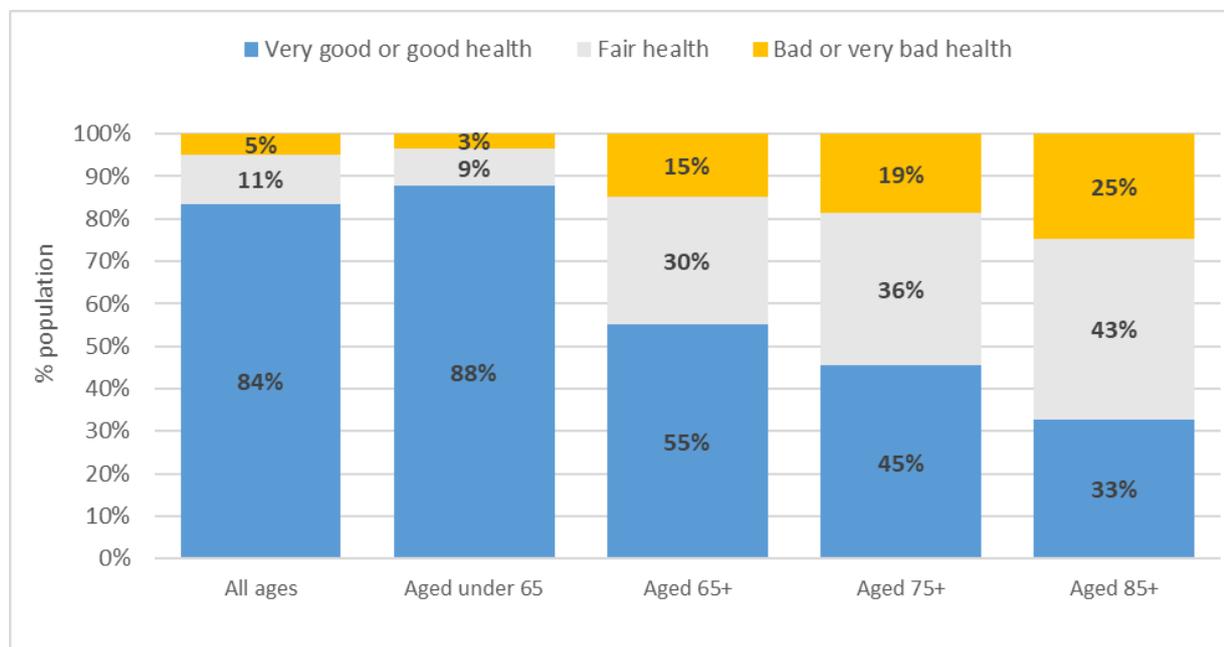
General health deteriorates with age (figure 10). In 2021, 15% of older people in Bristol described their health as ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’ compared to 3.5% of people aged under 65 years. For those aged 75 and over 19% described their health as ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’, whilst a quarter of people aged 85 and over had ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’ health.

A large proportion of older people describe their health as ‘fair’. People aged 65 and over

30%, aged 75 and over 36% and 85 and over 43% compared to just 9% of people aged under 65 years.

Figure 10: Older people and general health in Bristol

Source: ONS Census 2021



## HEALTH ISSUES AND DISABILITY

Disability is self-reported on the census and broadly follows the same trends as overall health. People are considered disabled if they reported being limited ‘a little’ or ‘a lot’ in their day-to-day activities by a long-term physical or mental health condition or illness. This aligns with the Equality Act (2010) definition.

For more information on disability definitions see the [guide to equalities statistics on population web page](#).

The likelihood of having a disability increases with age (figure 11).

In Bristol, 38% of people aged 65 and over are disabled according to the Equality Act Definition. This includes anyone with a health condition or illness that affects their daily lives. Half of these are affected a lot and half a little. A further 9% of over 65s are not disabled but do have a long-term physical or mental health condition but their day-to-day activities are not limited.

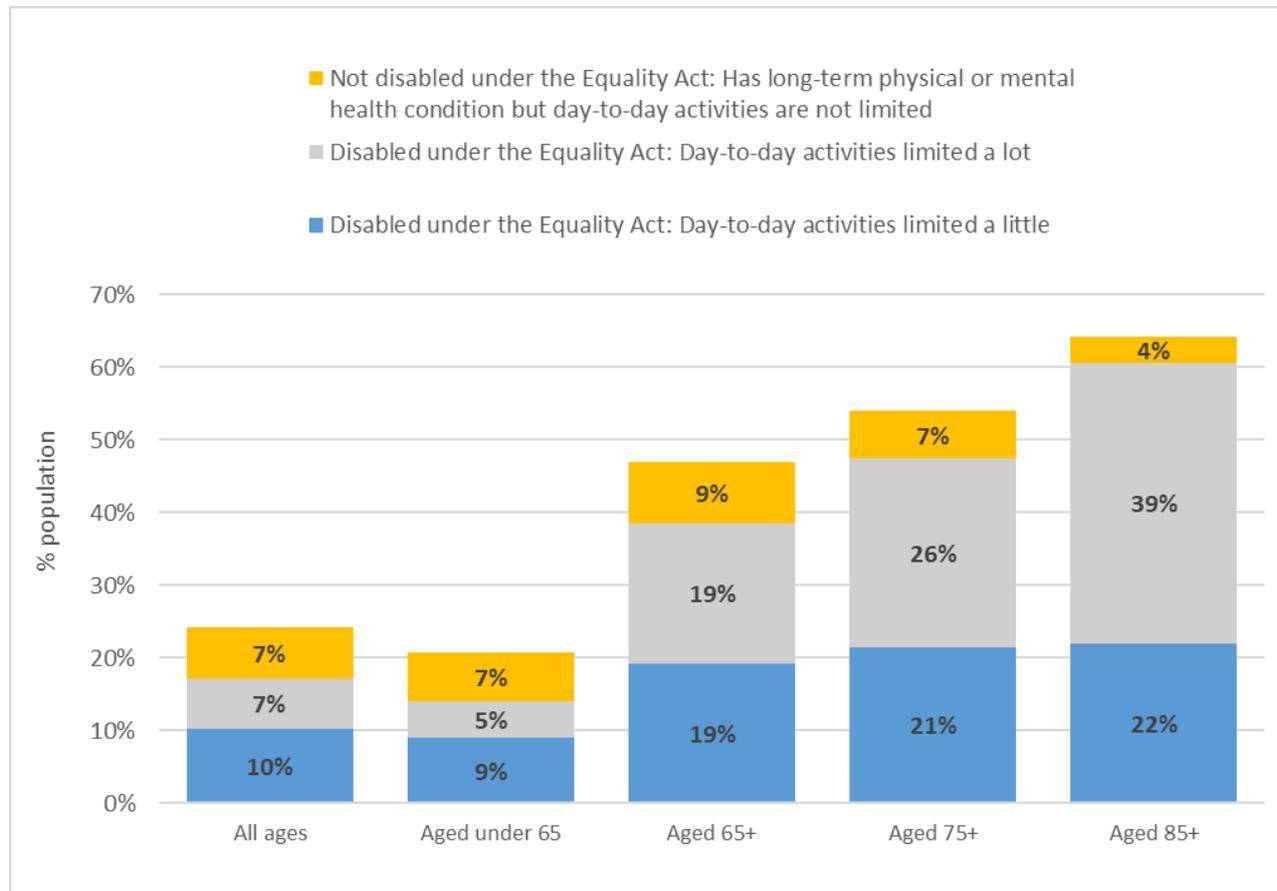
Younger people aged under 65 have much lower rates of disability with just 14% Disabled as defined by the Equalities Act and a further 7% not disabled but with a health condition.

The proportion of people whose day-to-day activities are limited a lot is especially affected by age - increasing from 5% of the under 65s, 19% of the over 65s, 26% of the over 75s and 39% of

the over 85s.

Figure 11: Older people and long-term health issue or disability in Bristol

Source: ONS Census 2021



Note: Disabled under the Equalities Act includes people who have physical or mental health conditions or illnesses that negatively impact their daily life. The total Disabled population is split into people whose day-to-day activities were (i) limited a lot and (ii) limited a little.

## CARERS

Note: figures for unpaid care can be affected by perception of the question. Not everyone who provides unpaid care may consider themselves an unpaid carer.

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?". People were asked to exclude anything they did as part of their paid employment.

In 2021, 1 in 10 (11%) older people provided unpaid care compared to 7% of younger people (figure 12). For people aged 65 and over, 55% of unpaid carers are female and 45% male.

The highest proportions of carers are in the 50-64 year old age group for both men and women, accounting for a third of all unpaid carers in Bristol (figure 13).

Figure 12: Older people and provision of unpaid care in Bristol

Source: ONS Census 2021

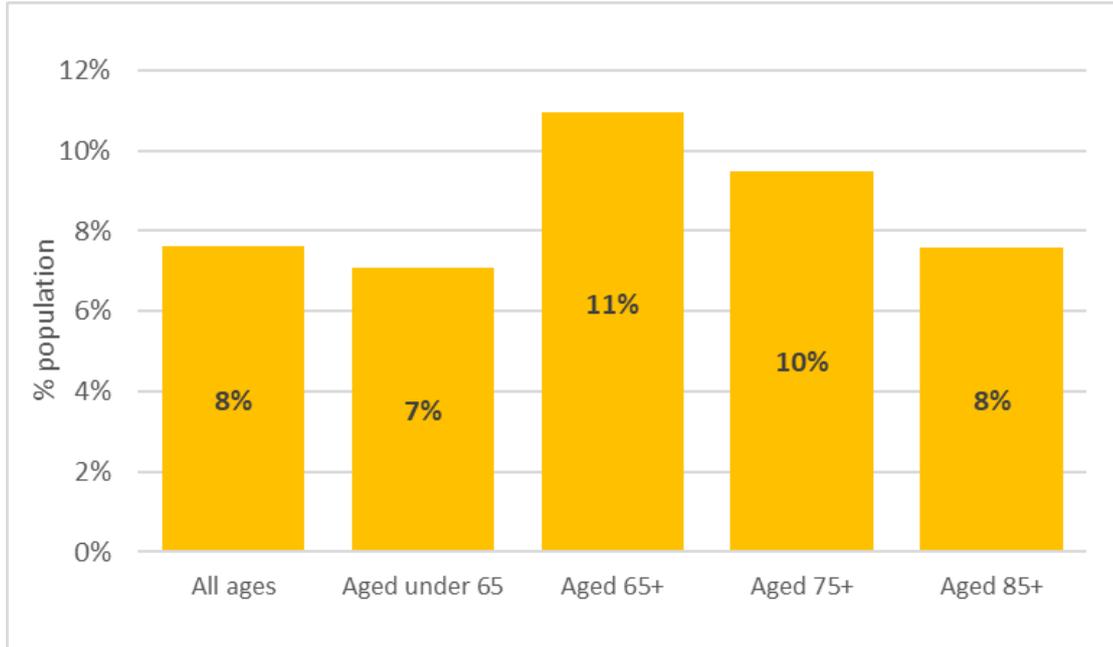
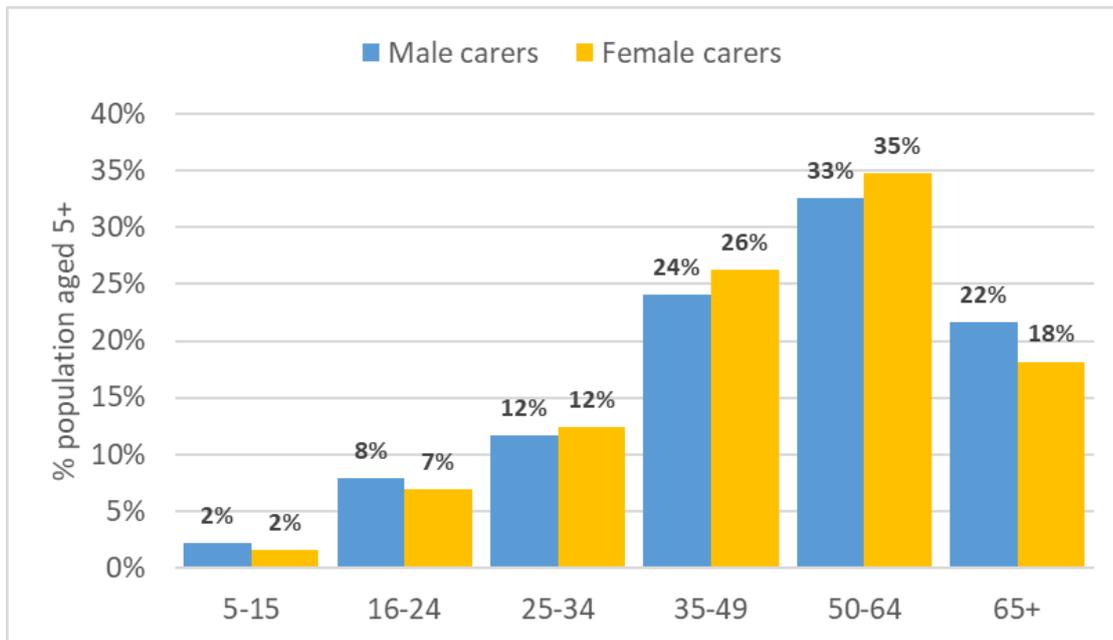


Figure 13: Age and sex profile of unpaid carers in Bristol

Source: ONS Census 2021



### 3.4 ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

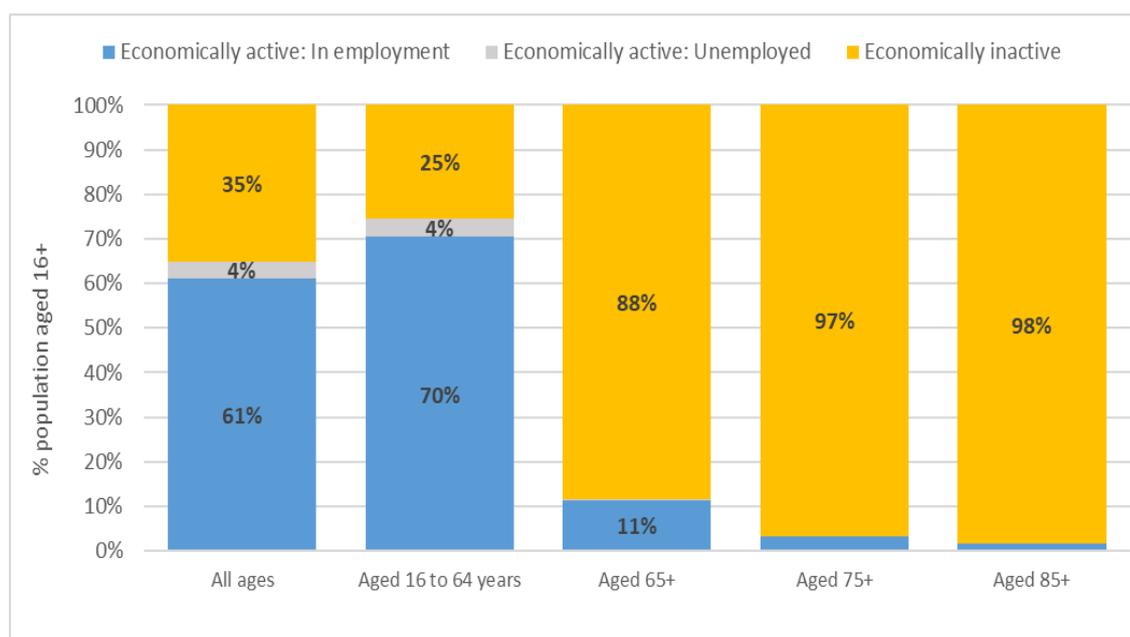
*Census 2021 was taken during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. People on furlough were asked to record themselves as employed but some people may have said they were out of work instead.*

Disability and long-term illness, caring for others, where someone lives, and their age can all affect whether more or fewer people are employed within a population group. This section looks at census data for whether older people were economically active (ie in employment or unemployed and looking for work) or economically inactive (ie not looking for work).

Figure 14 shows the economic activity status of people by age group. Of all people of working age (16-64 years), 70% are in employment, 4% unemployed and looking for work and 25% economically inactive (ie not looking work).

*Figure 14: Older people and economic activity status in Bristol*

*Source: ONS Census 2021*

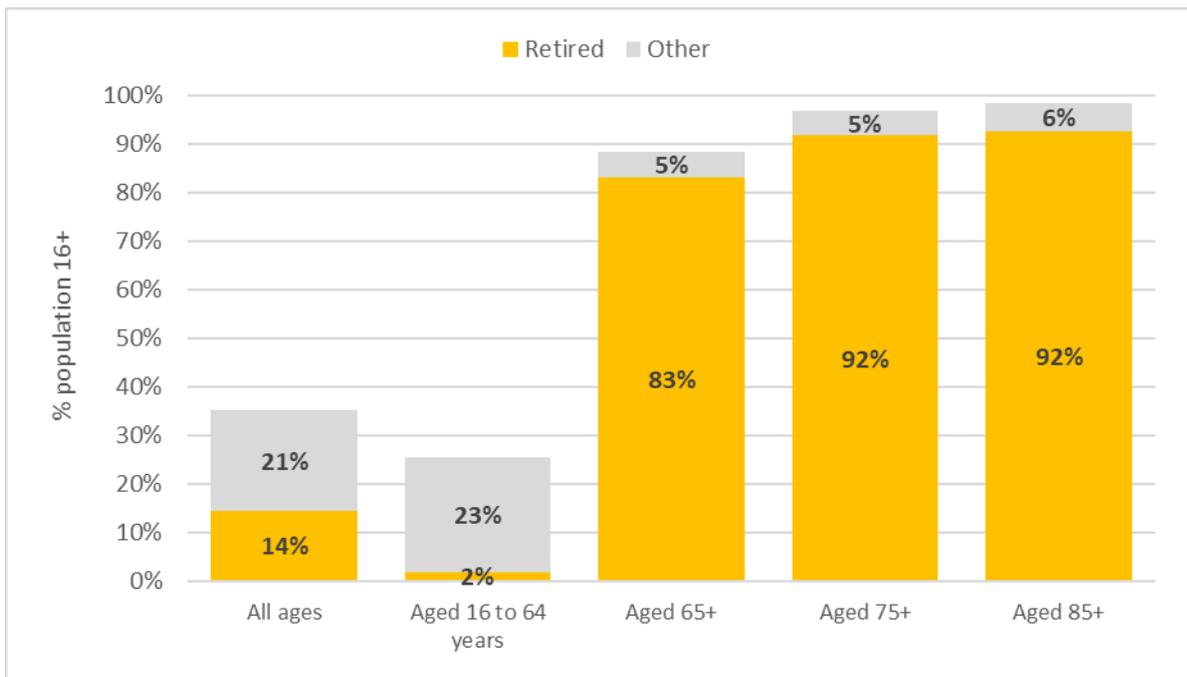


As would be expected, the picture for people aged 65 and over is very different. Just 11% of people aged 65 and over are in employment, with 88% economically inactive. Levels of economic activity decrease further with age.

Among the 53,700 people in Bristol aged 65 and over who were economically inactive, the majority were retired (figure 15) with long term sick or disabled the second most prevalent reason. This compares to the working age population where just 2% are retired but 23% are economically inactive due to other reasons including being a full-time student, looking after family or home, long term sick or disabled or other reasons.

Figure 15: Older people and economic inactivity in Bristol

Source: ONS Census 2021



### 3.5 QUALIFICATIONS

Qualification levels in the Census 2021 include 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 postgraduate qualifications

**Other:** Other qualifications, of unknown level

Among the 390,000 people aged 16 and over in Bristol in 2021, 42% had a degree or higher as their highest level of qualification. Older people are less well qualified than younger people living in the city, many of whom are studying at university.

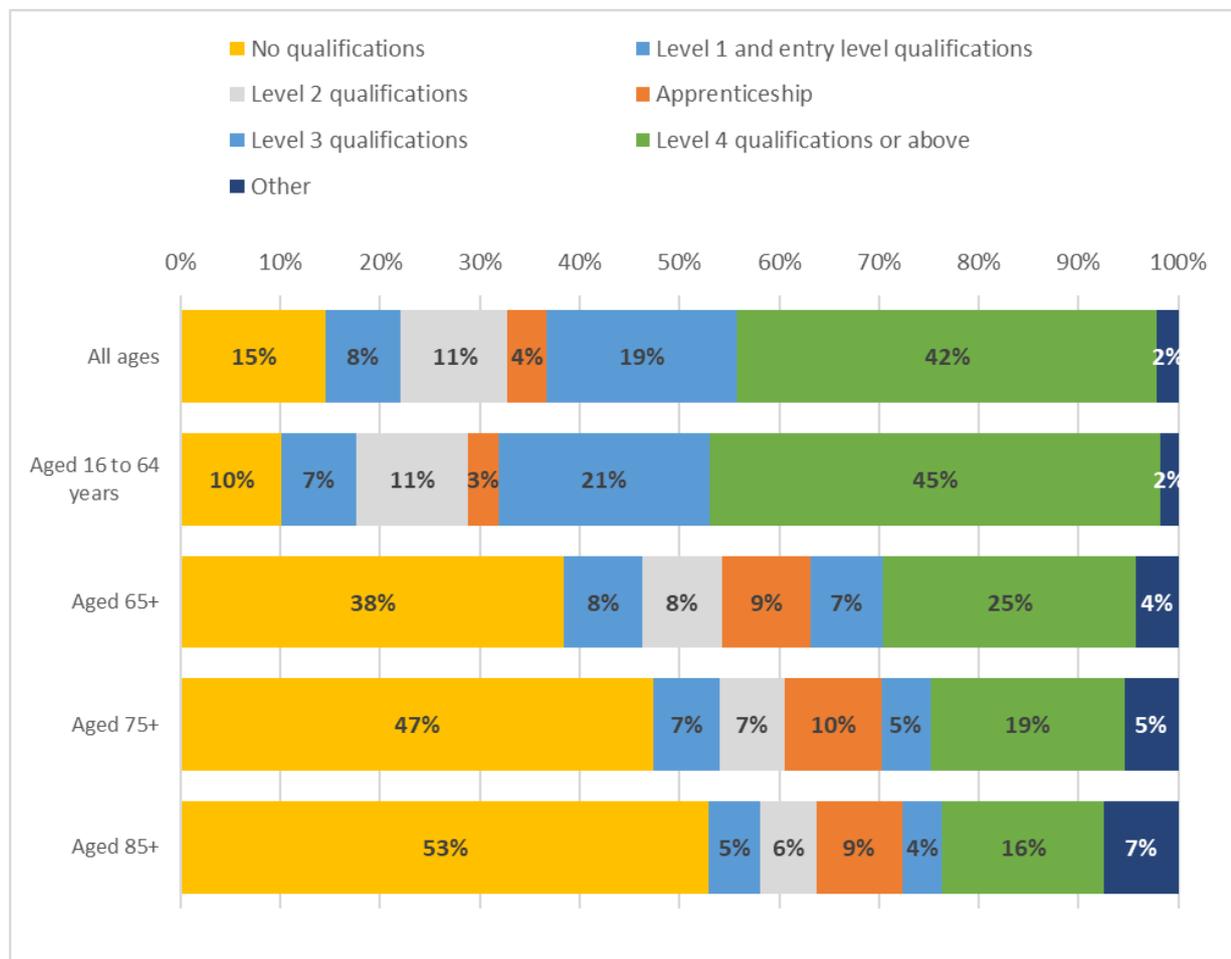
A quarter (25%) of people aged 65 and over have a degree or higher – 20 percentage points lower than the population aged 16 to 64 years. The proportion of the population with a degree decreases further with age – 19% of people aged 75 and over have a degree or higher and 16% of people aged 85 and over (figure 16).

Of the population with no qualifications, 38% of people aged 65 and over had no qualifications compared to just 10% of the population aged 16 to 64 years. The highest

proportion however was aged 85 and over where more than half (53%) have no qualifications.

Figure 16: Older people and highest qualification level in Bristol

Source: ONS Census 2021



### 3.6 HOUSING

#### HOUSEHOLDS AND COMMUNAL ESTABLISHMENTS

All people who are usually resident in an area live either in a private household or in a communal establishment<sup>2</sup>. In Bristol in 2021, 58,900 (97%) of people aged 65 and over lived in a private household and 1,850 (3%) lived in a communal establishment. The proportion of older people living in a communal establishment is slightly lower than in the population aged under 65 years (3.1%) (figure 17). This could be due to a number of factors, including the large student population living in purpose-built student accommodation in Bristol.

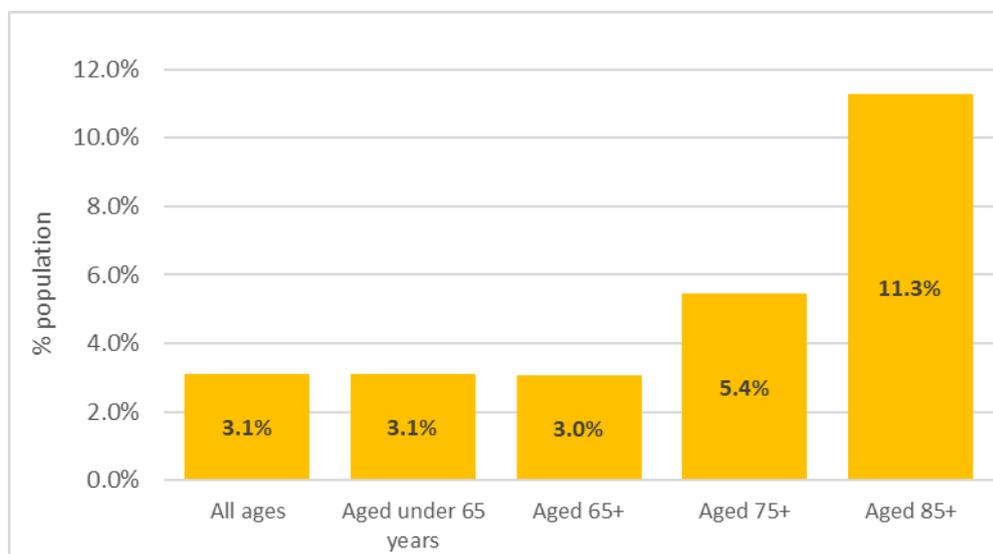
As people get older the proportion of people living in a communal establishment increases

<sup>2</sup> A communal establishment is an establishment with full-time or part-time supervision providing residential accommodation, such as student halls of residence, boarding schools, armed forces bases, hospitals, care homes, and prisons.

substantially. In 2021, 11.3% of people in Bristol aged 85 years and over lived in a communal establishment.

*Figure 17: Older people living in a communal establishment in Bristol*

Source: ONS Census 2021



An ONS article to be published later in the year will provide detailed information on older people living in different types of care homes and their characteristics. Read more here [Ageing analysis plans](#).

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## HOUSING TENURE

The census tells us if people live in a home that is owned outright, owned with a mortgage or loan, or if they live in a rented home. If rented, the census tells us if it is social rented housing (such as from a council or housing association), private rented, or if they are living rent free (for example, in a home owned by a family member or friend). Age is individual, so we are looking here at percentages of people, rather than the percentage of rented or owned properties.

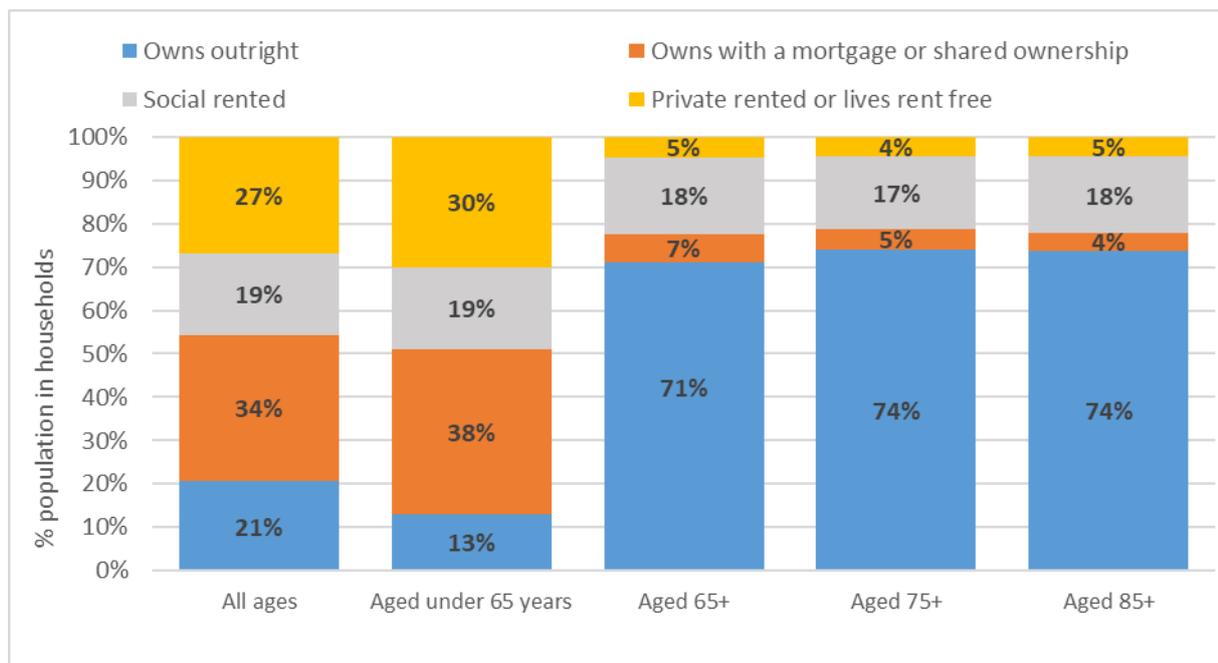
Tenure does not vary much between people aged 65 and over and those aged either 75 and over or 85 and over (figure 18).

Of the 457,800 people in Bristol who lived in households in 2021, 54% were in households that owned their accommodation (E&W 63%).

Age is a factor affecting levels of home ownership, so the older age groups would be expected to see higher levels of home ownership. However, other factors can contribute to differences between groups, including income, employment, inherited wealth, housing stock, and prices and where people live.

Figure 18: Older people and housing tenure in Bristol

Source: ONS Census 2021



Home ownership (either owned outright or with a mortgage) is significantly higher for people aged 65 and over than for people under 65 years. Of all people aged 65 and over, the majority (78%) live in a household that is owned, compared to just over half (51%) of people under 65 years.

The proportion of people social renting is similar across all age groups but levels of private renting vary considerably. Just 5% of people aged 65 and over privately rent compared to 30% of people aged under 65 years (figure 18).

## HOUSING TYPE

Overall in Bristol, 73% of the population live in houses or bungalows and 27% of the population live in flats (including purpose-built, conversions, maisonettes and apartments).

The variation between the older population and younger population is less marked than for other variables (figures 19a). A lower proportion of people aged 65 and over live in flats (19%) than people aged under 65 years (28%). However, this proportion increases with age, with 24% of people aged 85 and over living in flats rather than houses.

Figure 19b shows the type of flat - purpose-built, converted or shared house or conversion of a commercial or other building.

Figure 19a: Older people and accommodation type in Bristol

Source: ONS Census 2021

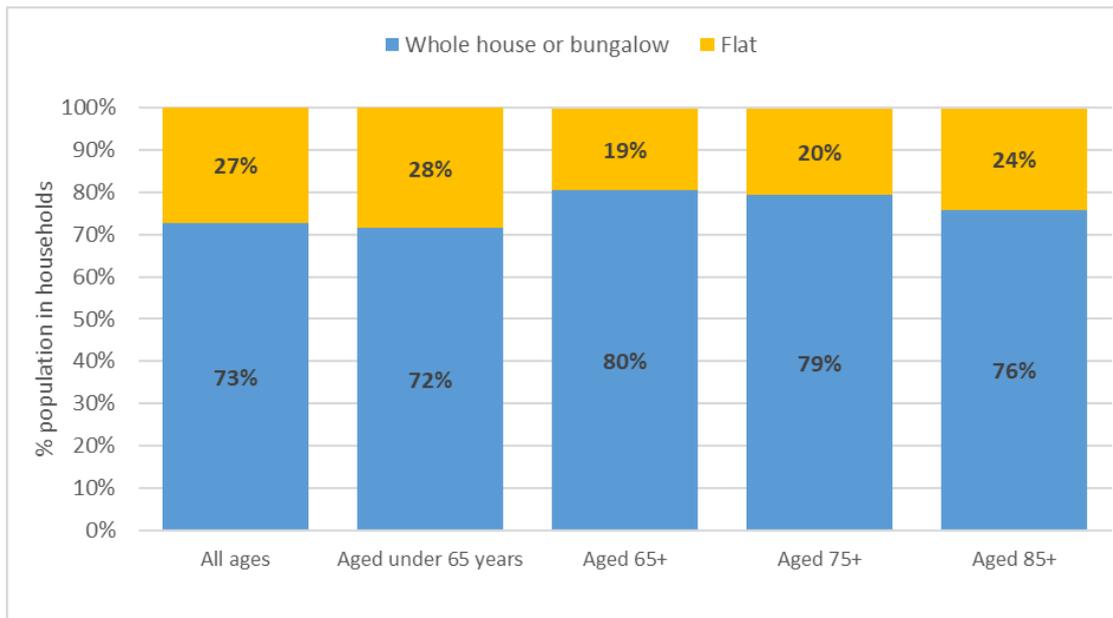
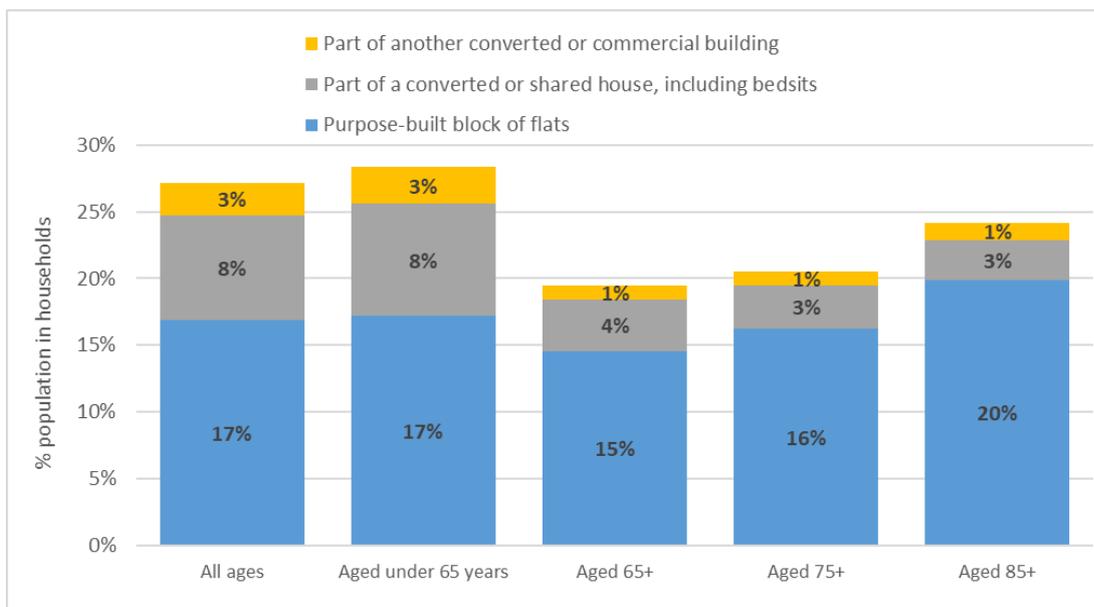


Figure 19b: Older people by type of flat or apartment in Bristol

Source: ONS Census 2021



## OVERCROWDING

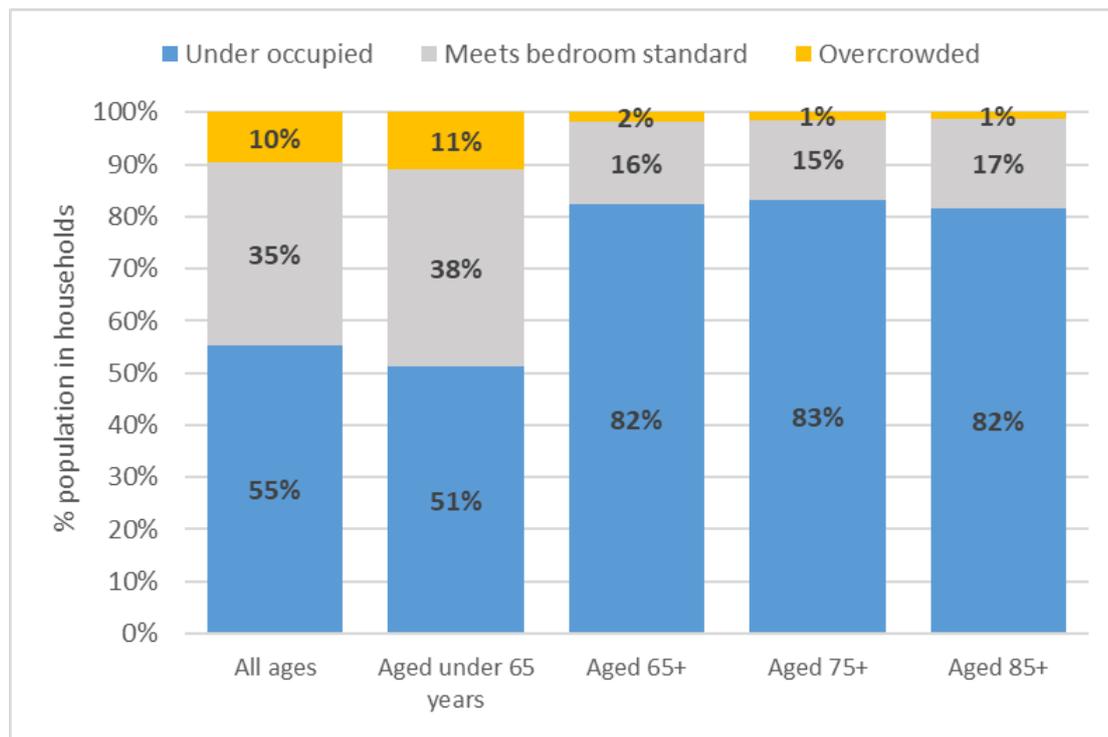
Occupancy rating provides a measure of whether a household's accommodation is overcrowded or underoccupied. An occupancy rating of minus 1 or less implies that a household has fewer bedrooms than the standard requirement (overcrowded), plus 1 implies that they have more bedrooms than required (under occupied), and 0 implies that they met the standard required.

Not unexpectedly, older people tend to live in larger houses. More than 4 in 5 people live in a household with more bedrooms than required compared to half (51%) of people aged under 65 years (figure 20). Conversely, just 2% of older people live in overcrowded households compared to 11% of people aged under 65 years.

Age is just one of many factors affecting occupancy rates, with large differences between equalities groups.

Figure 20: Older people and occupancy rating in Bristol

Source: ONS Census 2021



### 3.7 HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

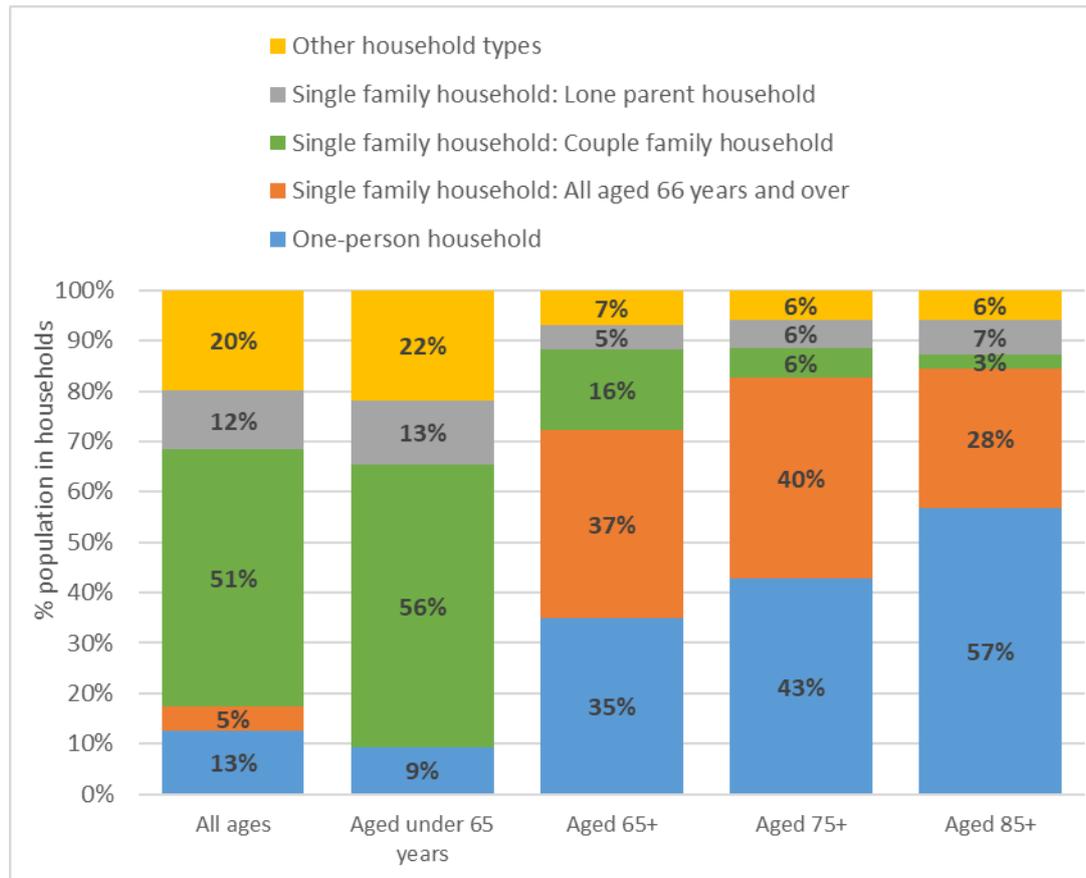
The majority of older people aged 65 and over living in households live in either one person households (35%) or households with one family where everyone in the household is aged over 65 years (37%). The proportion of older people living alone increases with age, with more than half of people aged over 85 years living alone (figure 21).

For people aged under 65 years, the majority (56%) live in couple family households, a further 13% live in lone parent household and 9% live in one person households.

‘Other household types’ include houses in multiple occupation and shared houses – just 7% of older people live in these household types compared to 22% of younger people.

Figure 21: Older people and household composition in Bristol

Source: ONS Census 2021



Note: 'Other household types' include households that aren't just one person or one family and include all student households and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).

See section on 'Households and communal establishments'.

### 3.8 CAR AVAILABILITY

Census 2021 asked households how many cars or vans the household owned or had available to them.

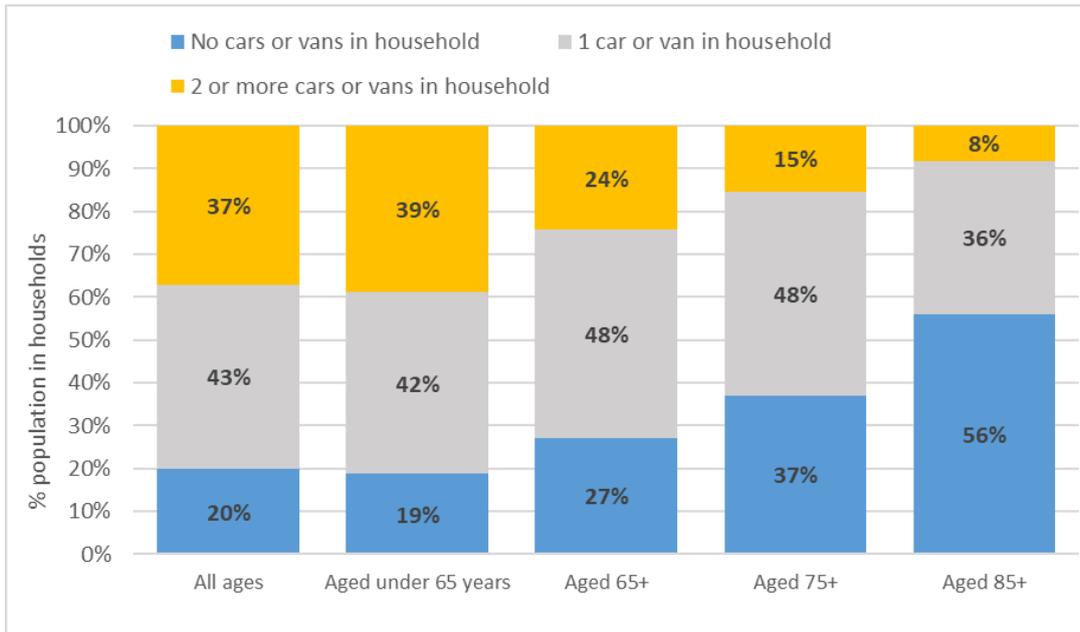
Overall in Bristol, a fifth (20%) of all people live in a household without a car or van. Car availability decreases with age (figure 22).

The proportion of older people without a car or van is considerably higher than for younger people - 27% of people aged 65 and over do not have access to a car or van, increasing to 37% for people aged 75 and over and more than half (56%) of people aged 85 and over. Just 19% of people aged under 65 do not have access to a car or van.

39% of people aged under 65 years live in households with two or more cars or vans compared to 24% of older people. Again this proportion decreases with age.

Figure 22: Older people and car availability in Bristol

Source: ONS Census 2021

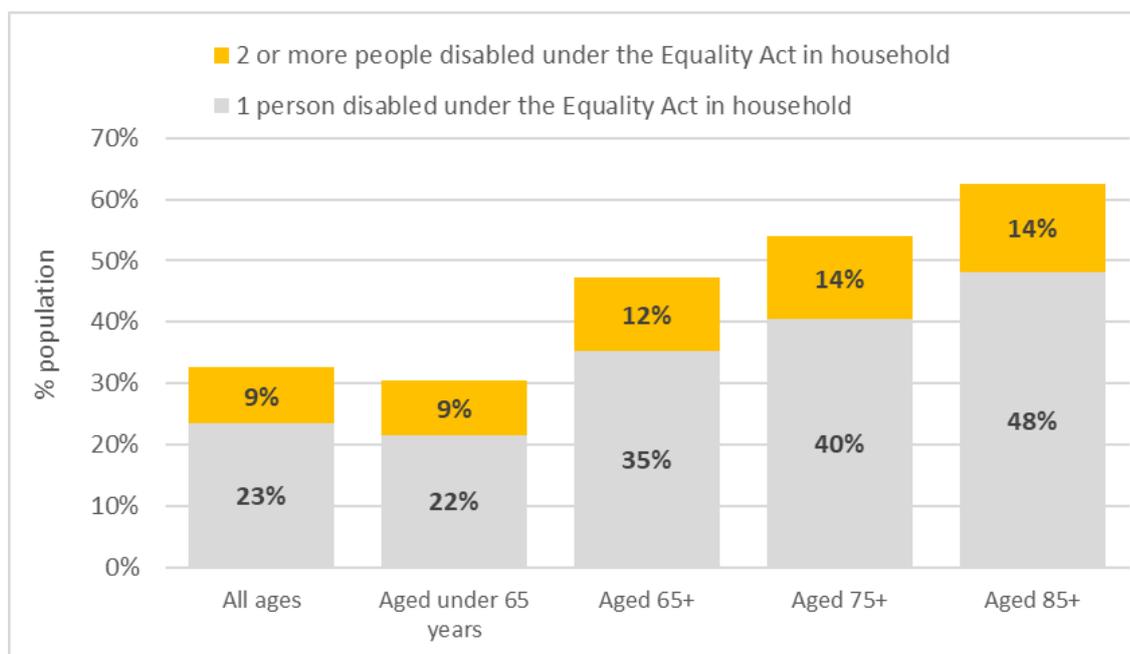


#### 4.0 HOUSEHOLDS WITH HEALTH ISSUES AND DISABILITIES

As well as collecting information about the numbers and characteristics of people who have long-term physical or mental health issues or disabilities, Census 2021 also collects information on numbers of Disabled people in a household.

Figure 23: Households in Bristol which include a Disabled person

Source: ONS Census 2021



In 2021, a third (32%) of all people lived in households which included at least one person with long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses whose day-to-day activities are limited (figure 23).

For people aged 65 and over, this increases to 47% of people living in a household with at least one disabled person, more than half (54%) of people aged 75 and over and almost two thirds (63%) of people aged 85 and over.

In 2021, a third (32%) of all people lived in households which included at least one person with long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses whose day-to-day activities are limited (figure 23).

For people aged 65 and over, this increases to 47% of people living in a household with at least one disabled person, more than half (54%) of people aged 75 and over and almost two thirds (63%) of people aged 85 and over.

## 5.0 FURTHER INFORMATION

ONS Census 2021 articles on older people:

[Profile of the older population living in England and Wales in 2021 and changes since 2011 - Office for National Statistics](#)

Read more about ONS analysis on older people [Ageing analysis plans](#)

Alongside this profile, a new interactive [Equalities Dashboard](#) presents more detailed results from Census 2021. Each equalities group is available for a selection of age groups and by ward.

More information about census results for Bristol, including links to our Census 2021 Dashboards, can be found on the [Bristol City Council Census web page](#). Links to a selection of useful ONS Census tools can also be found here.

A guide to equalities statistics and profiles for other population groups, together with wider information about the Bristol population can be found on our [population web page](#).

If you have any questions about this report please contact:

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