

**Protected Characteristics identified through the Equality Act 2010**

Age  
 The 2016 mid-year estimates were published in June 2017 and indicate that the population of Somerset has risen by 4,057 to **549,447**. The total is broken down by age group and district in the table below.

<b>Age</b>	<b>Mendip</b>	<b>Sedge-moor</b>	<b>South Somerset</b>	<b>Taunton Deane</b>	<b>West Somerset</b>	<b>Somerset</b>
<b>Under 16</b>	20,212	21,843	29,002	20,828	4,670	<b>96,555</b>
<b>16-34</b>	21,940	24,386	32,291	24,119	5,509	<b>108,245</b>
<b>35-49</b>	20,994	21,765	29,276	21,329	4,653	<b>98,017</b>
<b>50-64</b>	24,113	25,760	34,317	23,255	8,044	<b>115,489</b>
<b>65-74</b>	14,066	15,418	22,397	13,743	6,166	<b>71,790</b>
<b>75+</b>	11,220	12,264	18,362	12,241	5,264	<b>59,351</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>112,545</b>	<b>121,436</b>	<b>165,645</b>	<b>115,515</b>	<b>34,306</b>	<b>549,447</b>

The structure of Somerset’s population is rather older than the England average. Amongst the 65-74 age group, the annual rate of growth was an estimated 3.5%, five times the average rate. This partly reflects the attraction of Somerset as a retirement destination, and also the post-war baby-boom generation reaching retirement age. Whilst much smaller in population than the other districts, West Somerset’s population is particularly aged, with a median age (half the population older, half the population younger) of 51, compared to 39 for England.

Disability (self-described)

'Disability' is an imprecise category, affected by how people view any physical or mental restrictions and their choice of self-classification. For most purposes, the regular Census questions that ask respondents to categorize themselves as having 'bad or very bad health', or 'long-term conditions or disability that limit day-to-day activities a lot or a little' are used as a proxy. Using data from the current (2011) Census:

- In the 2011 Census, more than four in five Somerset residents considered themselves to be in good or very good health, while 5.1% (27,000 people) described their health as bad or very bad, in line with the regional average and slightly below the Eng;and and Wales mark of 5.6%.
- Just under 100,000 people in Somerset (18.8% of the population) said they had a long-term condition or disability which limited their day-to-day activities a lot or a little.
- Almost 41,000 of them were aged 16-64 (12.7% of that age group in Somerset). The proportion is on a par with both regional and national averages.
- Almost 1 in 3 people in Minehead North ward said their activities were limited in this way and the same ward had the fewest percentage of residents in very good health (35%) in Somerset.
- Wards with the healthiest residents tended to be those with high concentrations of armed forces (such as Yeovilton) and major new housing developments (such as Taunton's Nerrols Farm and Yeovil's Houndstone).
- 13,317 working-age residents (3.5% of those aged 16-74) described themselves as economically inactive because of long-term sickness or disability. Proportions were much higher in parts of Highbridge, Taunton and central Glastonbury.
- There are nearly 9,000 households (3.9% of all households in Somerset) containing at least one adult with a long-term disability or health condition and dependent children.
- There is a disability employment rate 'gap' in Somerset of 27.1 percentage points. This is the difference between employment rates of non-disabled (83.2%) and disabled people (56.0%). Nationally, the disability employment rate gap is higher, at 32.2 percentage points. In terms of the characteristics of Somerset's disabled population: 25% live in social housing; 11% have no qualifications; 35% have mental health problems; and 41% don't have a partner.

<p>Disability (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – SEND)</p>	<p>Evidence for Special Education Needs and Disabilities in children is provided by schools identifying those needs and making the appropriate plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In January 2016, Somerset had just over 12,000 children and young people with identified (SEND).</li> <li>• 15.6% of all children in schools, including free and independent schools have identified SEND.</li> <li>• In state-funded schools, the January 2016 School Census identified 9,607 pupils with SEND, representing 14% of all pupils (68,794). This proportion is in line with regional and national averages (14.9% and 14.3%, respectively)</li> <li>• In total, 1,403 Somerset pupils had a Statement of SEND or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, representing 1.6% of all pupils (England 2.8%).</li> <li>• The total number of young people with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans/Statements and/or high needs funding 0-25 years is 4,207 (3.8% of the under 19 population approximation).</li> <li>• Male learners are almost twice as likely as females to have special educational needs.</li> <li>• Pupils with SEND are almost three times as likely as those without SEND to be eligible for free school meals.</li> <li>• In 2015/16, 1 in 5 young people aged 16-17 in Somerset with SEND did not remain in education or training, but this proportion is falling.</li> </ul>
<p>Gender Reassignment</p>	<p>There are no official estimates of the numbers of transgender people at a national, let alone local level. However, in a Home Office-funded study, the Gender Identity Research and Education Society estimated between 0.6% and 1% of the UK adult population experience some degree of gender variance. Such figures, insofar as they could be applied to Somerset, would suggest somewhere between 2,700 and 4,500 adults in the county in this category.</p> <p>Research by the Diversity Trust in Somerset has found that Trans (along with Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual) young people were more likely to suffer from anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicidal ideation and have higher levels of smoking, alcohol use and substance misuse, likely to be linked to stress from isolation, bullying and harassment. Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying were common in schools across the area and could be aimed at anyone who did not conform to a gender or sexual identity norm (whether they are 'out' or not). Trans young people are more likely to experience adverse mental health and emotional wellbeing outcomes than their peers in the general population.</p>

## Marriage and Civil Partnership

According to data published in April 2017, the number of marriages taking place in Somerset increased by 4% in 2014 compared to the previous year in figures released by the Office for National Statistics. Part of the increase is attributed to same sex marriages (which were introduced in March 2014).

A total of 3,194 marriages occurred in Somerset in 2014 of which 3,155 were marriages of opposite sex couples and 39 were marriages of same sex couples (17 male and 22 female couples).

There were increases in numbers of both civil ceremonies and religious ceremonies in Somerset in 2014. Civil ceremonies continue to account for more than two-thirds of all ceremonies.

According to the current 2011 Census:

- More than half of Somerset adults aged 16 or older are married or in a same-sex civil partnership, but the proportion of co-habiting families has risen from 8% to 10% in the past decade.
- There were 215 households containing couples in a same-sex civil partnership, 85% of them without children in the household.

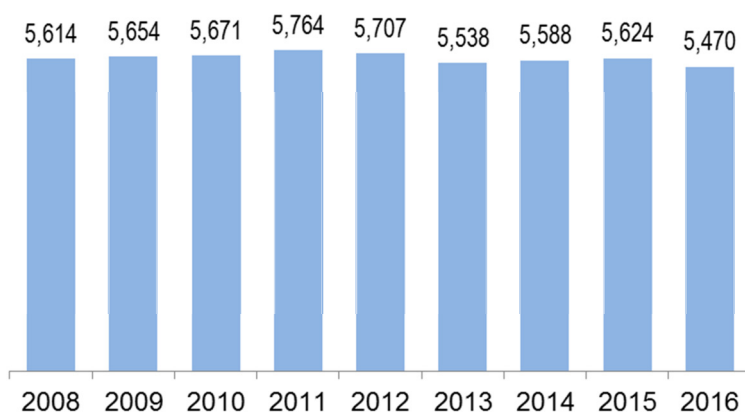
Full data for Somerset in the 2011 Census are shown in the table below:

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>All persons</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
<b>All categories: Marital and civil partnership status</b>	435,382	210,003	225,379
<b>Single (never married or never registered a same-sex civil partnership)</b>	120,825	65,730	55,095
<b>Married</b>	224,255	112,246	112,009
<b>In a registered same-sex civil partnership</b>	699	317	382
<b>Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a same-sex civil partnership)</b>	10,322	4,615	5,707
<b>Divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved</b>	44,329	19,232	25,097
<b>Widowed or surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership</b>	34,952	7,863	27,089

## Pregnancy and Maternity

There were 5,470 live births in Somerset in 2016 according to latest annual figures published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This represented the lowest annual total for at least nine years, following a recent peak in 2011.

### Trends in Live Births, Somerset, 2008 to 2016



Nationally and in the South West as a whole the birth rate is highest in the 30 to 34 age group, while, based on 2015 data, in Somerset the profile is younger, with the highest birth rate in the 25 to 29 age group (116.4 per 1,000 women in the age group). In 2015, contrary to the national average, most births (53%) in Somerset were outside marriage (or civil partnership). Within the county, only in Taunton Deane were the majority registered within marriage/ civil partnership.

## Race

Comprehensive information on ethnicity and national identity is only available in the ten-yearly census. According to the current 2011 Census:

- 4.6% of Somerset's population are 'White British'. This proportion is typical of that seen in Somerset's neighbouring local authorities but much higher than the England and Wales average (80.5%). Somerset's non-'White British' residents tend to be concentrated in and around the county's principal towns.
- The BME (Black and Ethnic Minority) population of Somerset was estimated at 10,717 in 2011, an increase of around 5,000 people since the 2001 Census. The BME population now comprises 2.0% of Somerset's overall population, which is well below the national average of 14.0%.
- Somerset has seen a large increase in Polish-born residents since the accession of the A8 East European countries to the EU in 2004. Of the 8,171 East European-born residents recorded in the 2011 Census, around two-thirds were from Poland.
- Polish is the most common 'non-UK' ethnicity in all Somerset's districts, and Polish-born residents now account for 1% of Somerset's overall population. There are significant pockets of residents in parts of Shepton Mallet, Yeovil, Minehead, Taunton and Bridgwater.
- The size of the Portuguese population in Somerset has also increased markedly in the last ten years, from 53 residents at the time of the 2001 Census to 965 residents in 2011. There are now notable groupings of Portuguese residents in areas of Chard and Shepton Mallet.
- India and the Philippines account for the highest numbers of Asian-born residents. Information about the Philippines was not published in the last Census but Somerset has seen an eightfold increase in residents of 'Other Asian' ethnicity since 2001, of which new residents from the Philippines are likely to be a key factor. Wellington, Minehead and Taunton have small pockets of Filipino residents.
- At a broader (district) level, there are also noteworthy, albeit small, concentrations of Italian people in Mendip; Chinese in Taunton Deane; and people from the Baltic States in Sedgemoor. West Somerset has a small representation of 'Other Eastern European' ethnicity, notably Hungarians in Minehead..
- There are established German, Irish and South African-born populations in Somerset, each accounting for between 0.3% and 0.5% of the county's overall population. The numbers have not changed significantly since the 2001 Census. These residents are generally found throughout the county, with no particular local concentrations.
- There are an estimated 733 Gypsy or Irish Traveller residents in Somerset, the second highest number of any local authority in the South West. Just over a third are resident in Mendip.
- An estimated 20,912 Somerset residents do not identify themselves as British (or English, Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish). A total of 20,329 Somerset residents hold a non-UK passport.

Religion or Belief

Comprehensive information on religion and belief is only available in the ten-yearly census. According to the current 2011 Census:

- In line with the national trend, the proportion of Somerset people saying they were Christian dropped sharply since 2001, from 76.7% to 64.0%. This is still one of the highest figures in the South West region.
- Christian prevalence is relatively high in rural or suburban areas such as Exmoor, Bridgwater Wyndham ward and the south eastern corner of Somerset.
- The proportion claiming no religious affiliation rose from 14.9% to 26.6%. Figures were particularly high in parts of Frome, Taunton and Bridgwater.
- Although overall numbers were relatively small, there were substantial increases in the number of Buddhist, Muslim and Hindu people in Somerset in the last decade.
- Somerset has a high proportion of the population affiliated to one of the other religions, relative to the national average. This is true of all five districts in the county.
- Based on 'write-in' responses, there are 1,147 followers of Paganism, more than the combined total of those of Hindu, Sikh and Jewish faith.
- Mendip had the fourth highest proportion of the population affiliated to one of the other religions of any LA in England and Wales. It was number one for Paganism (0.4% of the population) as well as Mixed Religion, Shamanism and the Druid religion.
- The four wards in Somerset with the highest proportions of people following non-Christian religions were all in Glastonbury. In St. Edmunds ward, the figure was 8.3% (four times the county average), most of whom were Mixed Religion or Pagan.
- Yeovil Central was the ward with the highest number of both Muslim and Hindu followers in Somerset.
- Street South was ranked in the top five wards in Somerset for the numbers of each of the four major non-Christian religions: Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Jewish.

Sex

The population of Somerset broken down by sex is shown in the table below. These figure are taken from the 2011 census.

	<b>Somerset Total</b>	<b>Somerset %</b>	<b>South West %</b>	<b>England &amp; Wales %</b>	<b>2001 Somerset %</b>
<b>Population Resident population</b>	529,972	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Total males</b>	258,396	48.8%	48.8%	49.2%	48.6%
<b>Total females</b>	271,576	51.2%	51.2%	50.8%	51.4%

The higher proportion of females in the population figures is the result of women living longer than men, more than offsetting the slightly higher proportion of male births.

## Sexual orientation

In April 2017, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published experimental estimates of sexual identity at a local authority (county) level for the first time, based on survey data covering 2013 to 2015.

- The estimates suggest that 95.2% of Somerset's adult (aged 16 or over) population identify themselves as heterosexual or straight; 0.9% (4,000 residents) identify as gay or lesbian; 1.1% (5,000 residents) identify as bisexual; and 0.4% (2,000 residents) as 'Other' ('other' indicates that respondents did not consider themselves to fit into the heterosexual or straight, bisexual, gay or lesbian categories). 2.4% of respondents didn't know or refused to answer.
- UK wide, the proportion of adults identifying as heterosexual or straight ranged from 72% in Camden to 99% in Monmouthshire.

In October 2017, the Office for National Statistics published estimates of sexual identity at a national level, based on the 2016 Annual Population Survey:

- 2.0% of UK adults identified themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual (LGB) in 2016, representing a statistically significant increase on the 1.7% figure the previous year.
- The population aged 16 to 24 were the age group most likely to identify as LGB in 2016 (4.1%).
- More males (2.3%) than females (1.6%) identified themselves as LGB.
- If national proportions were applied to Somerset's population demographic, it would equate to around 9,000 lesbian, gay or bisexual adults in the county.

In the 2014 GP Patient Survey conducted by NHS England:

- 1.6% of respondents (138 of 8,682 respondents) in Somerset in 2014 gave their sexual orientation as gay, lesbian or bisexual.

It is widely accepted that these overall figures are likely to be an underestimation of the size of the LGB population, due to respondents not being ready or able to openly identify themselves as LGB. Several historical reports and surveys, in the UK and overseas, have variously put the size of the LGB population at between 5% and 7%. For the purposes of assessing the impact of the Civil Partnership Act 2004, the Department for Trade and Industry made an assumption that 5% of the adult GB population was lesbian, gay, or bisexual. If applied to the Somerset population, this would equate to around 22,000 adults in Somerset



Carers through association with disability and age

Comprehensive information on carers is only available in the ten-yearly census. According to the current 2011 Census:

- One in nine people, or just over 58,000, said they provided unpaid care to a friend or relative
- This is approximately 8,000 more than the number identified in the 2001 Census.
- About 43,000 were under the age of 65, many more than the 3,640 people of working age claiming Carer's Allowance (*DWP, November 2012*). Even this is considered to under-estimate the true number of those providing unpaid care.
- Around 3,300 of the unpaid carers identified in the Census were younger than 25. More than a thousand are estimated to be children under the age of 16.
- More than one in five people aged 55-64 provide unpaid care.
- 58% of unpaid carers are women, in line with the national average.
- Almost one in four 50-64 year-old women (13,500) are unpaid carers
- About 12,300 people provide at least 50 hours of unpaid care a week.
- Of these, more than 5,300 are aged 65 or older and an estimated 1,600 are 85 or older.
- Around 3,500 of unpaid carers are themselves in bad or very bad health, and almost half of them (1,500) provide at least 50 hours of care a week.
- In South West England, the number of young unpaid carers (aged 5 to 17) has increased by more than a third since 2001. If Somerset is typical of the region there are an estimated 1,750 such carers in the county. Caring has a detrimental effect on their health, too.

## Protected Characteristics adopted locally

### Rurality

Comprehensive information for small areas – and so amenable for detailed breakdown into urban and rural - is only available in the ten-yearly census.

According to the current 2011 Census:

- Around 48% of Somerset's population is classified as 'rural' and 52% 'urban' according to the Defra/ONS classification of small areas.
- Rural Somerset has an older population demographic, particularly in respect of people aged 45 and over. Linked to this, a higher proportion of rural residents provide unpaid care to friends or relatives.
- Nevertheless, rural residents are in better (self-reported) overall health than their urban counterparts.
- Residents in rural areas are, on average, more highly qualified, and more likely to work in 'high-tech' industries (ICT; professional, scientific and technical activities)
- People in rural areas are more likely to be self-employed and to work from home, and also more likely to work long hours (more than 49 hours per week).
- Unemployment is lower in rural Somerset, although due to the population demographic, unemployment in the key '50 and over' age group is relatively high.
- Car ownership is high, although around 1 in 9 rural households do not have access to a car (or van).
- Residents in rural areas are much more likely to live in a detached house (and also be mortgage-free) than their urban counterparts.
- Rural households are more likely to have no central heating. They are also much more unlikely to have access to mains gas, with a greater dependency on oil.

## Low income

The 2017 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings found the average gross income for full time workers in Somerset to be £513/week, lower than the £556/week figure for England.

More than one in eight households are estimated to be living in fuel poverty, and at least one in five in West Somerset.

An estimated 57,000 adults in Somerset have been at least 3 months behind with bills or say that debts are a heavy burden. One in four problems handled by Citizens Advice in Somerset are related to debt.

Nationally, poverty is the strongest predictor of a child's future life-chances:

- The highest early achievers from poorer backgrounds are overtaken by lower achieving children from advantaged backgrounds by age seven; by the end of Key Stage 1 the odds of a pupil eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) achieving Level 2 in reading, writing and maths are one third those of a non-FSM pupil;
- The gap widens further during secondary education and persists into Higher Education. The odds of a FSM pupil achieving five or more GCSEs at A\*-C including English and Maths are less than one third those of a non FSM pupil;
- A pupil from a non-deprived background is more than twice as likely to go on to study at university as their deprived peers

The proportion of Somerset households living in poverty (after housing costs) ranges from 10.6% in the Comeytrowe/Trull area of Taunton, to 32.8% in the Hamp area of Bridgwater, according to estimates published by the Office for National Statistics in March 2017

The latest Children in Low-Income Families Measure statistics were published in September 2016 and represent a snapshot as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2014 (the two-year time lag is due to the reconciling of tax credit figures).

### **Key facts for Somerset:**

- In Somerset, 14,200 children (aged under 16) were considered to be living in poverty in 2014, equating to 15.3% of all children.
- This proportion was the highest since 2009, at the time of the economic recession.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>England</b>	22.4	21.6	21.9	21.1	20.6	19.2	18.6	20.1
<b>South West</b>	16.9	16.5	17.2	16.6	16.2	15.1	14.8	16.1
<b>Somerset</b>	15.5	14.8	15.6	14.9	14.9	14.1	14.1	15.3

*Source: Children in Low-Income Families Local Measure, HMRC*

## Military status

Somerset has long-standing links with the armed forces; particularly the major units based here, such as RNAS Yeovilton and Norton Manor Camp (40 Commando). Local organisations, including councils, already have good relationships with these bases and the charities that support in-service and ex-service ('veterans') personnel, their families and dependants.

There is no single, definitive source of information on the numbers in the armed services community. Using estimates based on data from the Royal British Legion, we have an overall estimate of almost 50,000 veterans and dependants in addition to about 3,000 current serving personnel. However, if we apply the veterans prevalence estimates by each age group, the relatively elderly population of Somerset means that the estimated total is somewhat higher at about 53,500, although the 'sample error' means that the true figure could be much higher, or indeed lower.

	<b>TOTAL recipients</b>	<b>Veterans</b>	<b>AFPS recipients</b>	<b>WPS recipients</b>	<b>AFCS recipients</b>
<b>Mendip</b>	1,015	960	845	261	24
<b>Sedgemoor</b>	1,028	974	837	278	37
<b>South Somerset</b>	3,564	3,352	3,042	771	220
<b>Taunton Deane</b>	1,356	1,212	997	377	185
<b>West Somerset</b>	344	327	275	102	12
<b>Somerset Total</b>	<b>7,307</b>	<b>6,825</b>	<b>5,996</b>	<b>1,789</b>	<b>478</b>
<b>Total 2016</b>	7,241	6,775	5,945	1,854	383
<b>Total 2015</b>	7,205	6,750	5,905	1,910	310

**Location of Armed Forces Pension,  
War Pension & Compensation recipients: 31st March 2017**

Both working age veterans and veterans aged 65+ are slightly less likely to say their general health is good or very good compared to the general population (74% vs 78% and 55% vs 59%).

78% of working age veterans are employed, 4% are unemployed, and 19% are inactive (75.9%, 5.2% and 19.9% in 2015).

All data from Somerset Intelligence/Joint Strategic Needs Assessment ([www.somersetintelligence.org.uk](http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk)) .