

JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2023/24

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual + and Transgender people (LGBT+)

Summary points

- 23,650 people (aged 16+) in Bristol identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual or Other sexual orientation (LGB+) (Census 2021)
- The percentage of the population who identify as LGB+ in Bristol (6.1%) is nearly twice as high as the England and Wales average (3.2%) (Census 2021)
- 0.8% of the Bristol population (aged 16+) identify as Trans, higher than England and Wales average (0.5%)
- Almost a third (30%) of people who identify as LGB+ are disabled, compared with 19% of the heterosexual population (Census 2021)
- Despite having a younger age profile, twice as many people who identify as Trans are disabled (38%) compared with 19% of people not identifying as Trans (Census 2021)

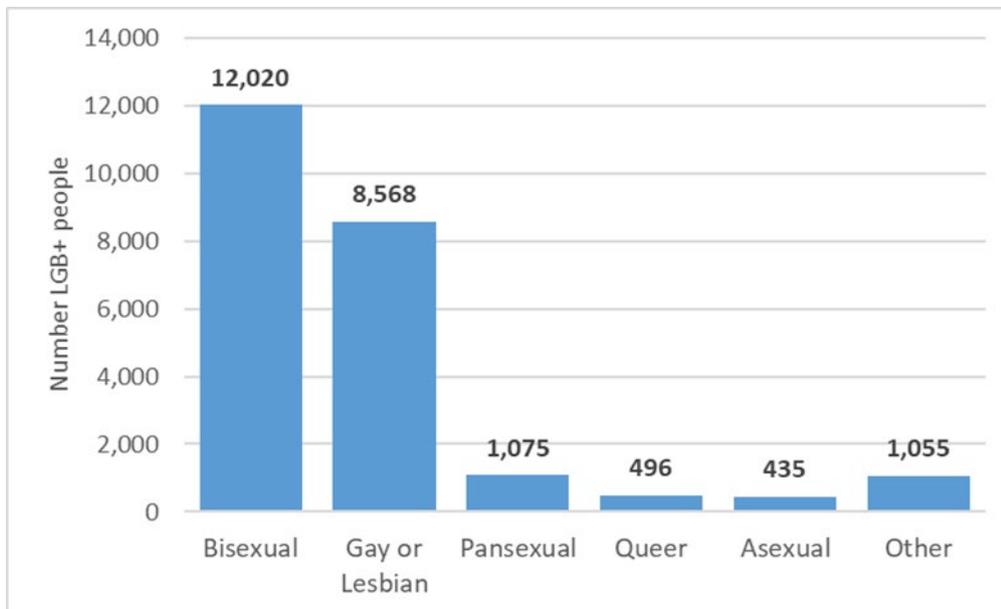
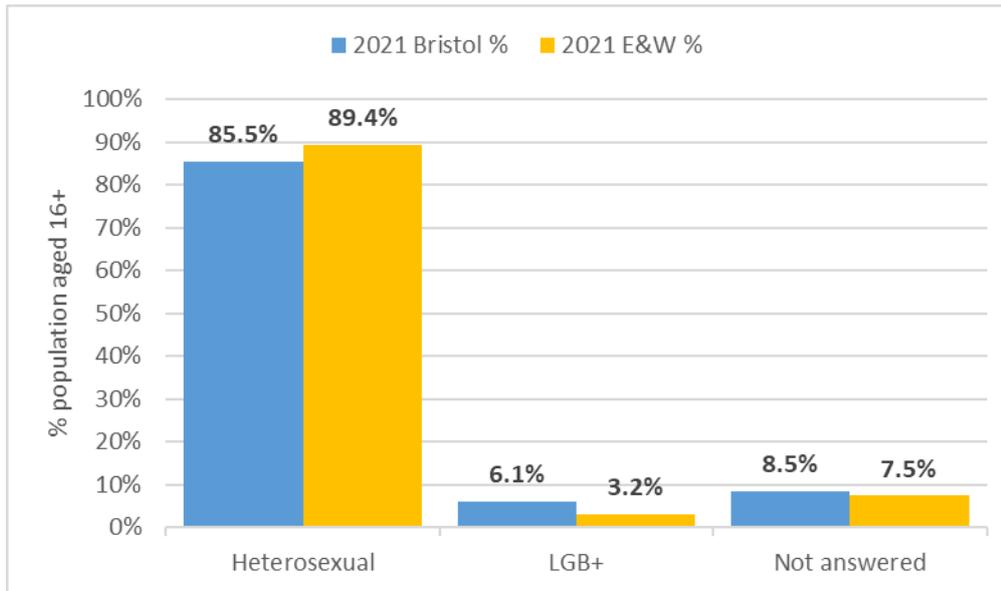
Sexual orientation

For the first time, the Census 2021 included a question on sexual orientation enabling national and local estimates to be produced. Results published in January 2023 showed that in England and Wales around 1.5 million people (3.2% of the population aged 16 years and over) identified with an LGB+ orientation (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Other sexual orientation).

In Bristol, 23,649 people (6.07% of residents aged 16+) identified as LGB+, which is a much higher proportion of the population than nationally, including:

- 12,020 people (3.08%) identified as Bi-sexual (*the 2nd highest number nationally*)
- 8,568 people (2.2%) identified as Lesbian or Gay (*10th highest nationally*)
- 3,061 people (0.78%) identified as Other sexual orientation, with write-in responses:
 - 'Pansexual' 1,075 people, 0.28% (E&W 0.10%)
 - 'Asexual' 435 people, 0.11% (E&W 0.06%)
 - 'Queer' 496 people, 0.13% (E&W 0.03%)
 - plus 1,055 people (0.27%) wrote in a different sexual orientation.

The remaining 8.5% of people aged 16 years and over did not answer the question. See Figures 1 and 2 overleaf.



Figures 1 and 2: Sexual orientation, 2021, Bristol. Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021

Based on the overall size of the LGB+ population, Bristol is ranked 5th nationally with 23,649 people LGB+. [Note - as a proportion of the population size (6.07%), Bristol is 15th largest (Brighton & Hove is highest with 10.7% LGB+)].

Other notable rankings based on population numbers for Bristol out of 331 local authorities in England and Wales include:

- Bristol has the largest ‘pansexual’ population of all local authorities in England and Wales
- 2nd for number of ‘bisexual’ people (Leeds 1st)
- 2nd for number of ‘queer’ people (Brighton and Hove 1st)
- 4th for number of ‘asexual’ people
- 10th for number of ‘gay or lesbian’ people

Gender identity / Trans

The 2021 Census included a new voluntary question, 'Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?'. Respondents had the option of selecting either 'Yes', or selecting 'No' and writing in their gender identity.

Across England and Wales a total of 45.4 million people (93.5%) answered 'Yes' indicating that their gender identity was the same as their sex registered at birth and a total of 262,000 people (0.5%) answered 'No' indicating that their gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth.

In Bristol, 360,274 (92.5%) of people indicated that their gender identity was the same as their sex registered at birth and 3,220 (0.83%) indicated that their gender identity was different from their sex at birth (*the 7th highest number nationally*).

Further detail for the Trans population (see Figure 3):

- 1,145 (0.29%) answered 'No' but did not provide a write-in response
- 794 (0.20%) identified as non-binary
- 466 (0.12%) identified as a trans woman
- 440 (0.11%) identified as a trans man
- 375 (0.10%) wrote in a different gender identity

The remaining 6.7% did not answer the question on gender identity.

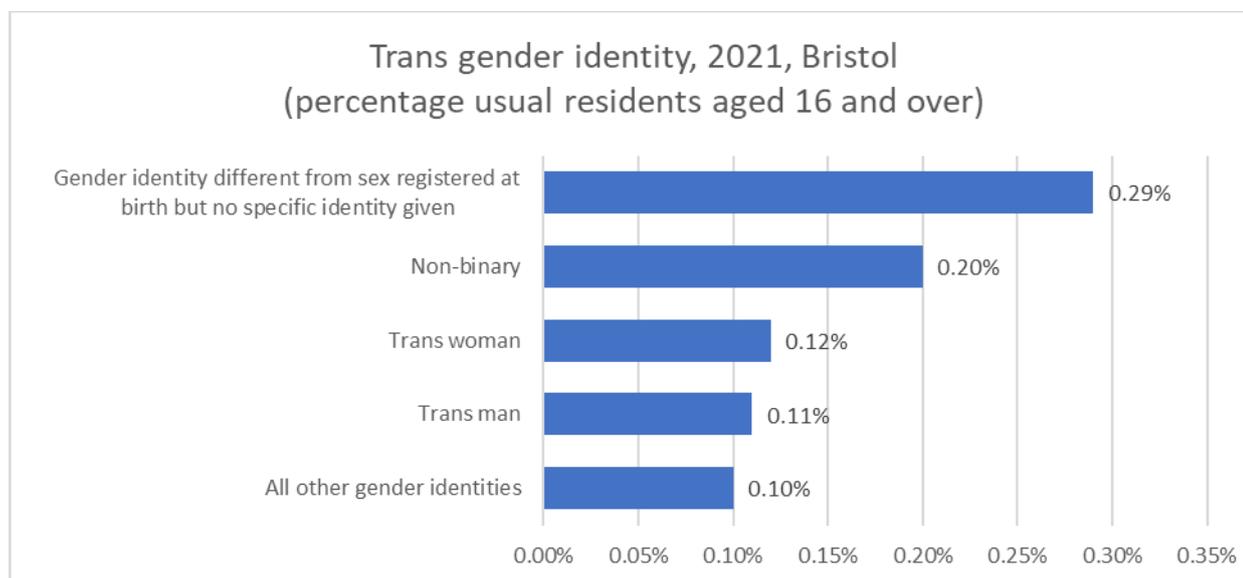


Figure 3: Trans gender identity, 2021, Bristol. Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021

Health (Census 2021)

Census 2021 population profiles have been developed for a number of population groups in Bristol, including 'Sexual Orientation' and 'Trans population' and are accessible on the following webpage: [Population of Bristol](#). Health information has been extracted from the profiles to inform the following section.

The 2021 Census was also able to provide data on health and disability by sexual orientation for Bristol. 81% of people who identified as LGB+ reported very good or good health, the same as

in the heterosexual population. This is despite those identifying as LGB+ tending to be younger than average and younger people being more likely to report very good or good health.

Disability¹ 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.

People who identified as LGB+ were more likely to have 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 than either the overall population or the heterosexual population of Bristol.

Despite having a younger than average age profile, which is generally associated with lower levels of disability, almost a third (30%) of people who identified as LGB+ were disabled, compared with 19% of the heterosexual population (figure 4). Breaking down the LGB+ group further (figure 5), even higher proportions of people who identified as ‘bisexual’ or with ‘other sexual orientation’ were disabled (33% and 40%, respectively).

For level of limitation, twice as many people who identified as LGB+ had a disability that limited day-to-day activities a little, 22% compared with 11% of the heterosexual population of Bristol. Those identifying as LGB+ were also slightly more likely to have disabilities that limited day-to-day activities a lot (8.1% compared to 7.5%).

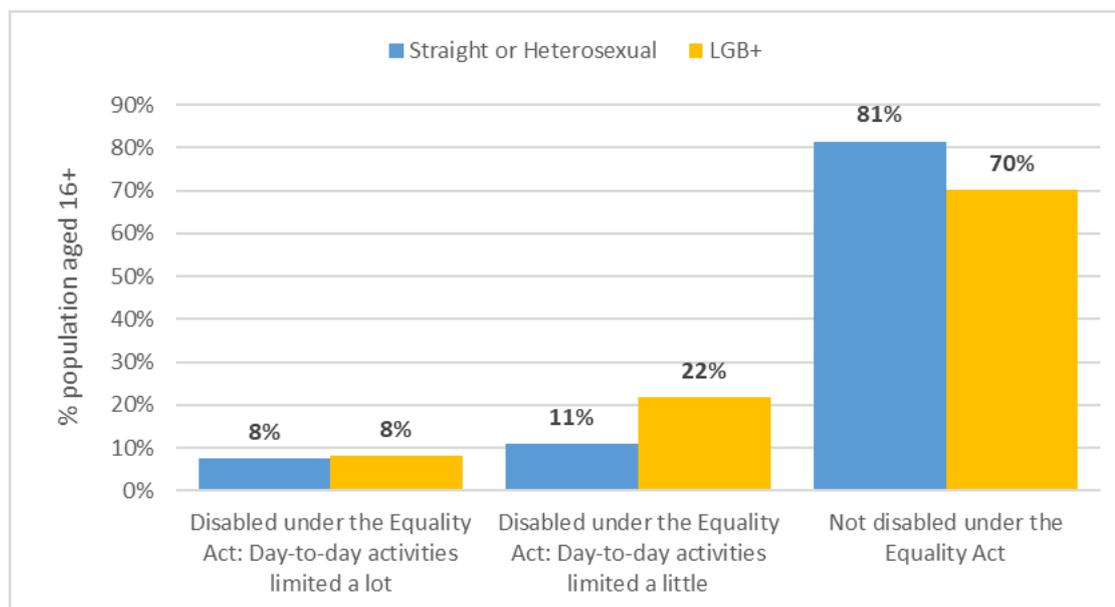


Figure 4: Sexual orientation and long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses that negatively impact daily life in Bristol. Source: ONS Census 2021

¹ This data uses the Census 2021 Equalities Act definition of disability, that is including people who have physical or mental health conditions or illnesses that negatively impact their daily life either a lot or a little. It does not look at whether people self-identify as Disabled.

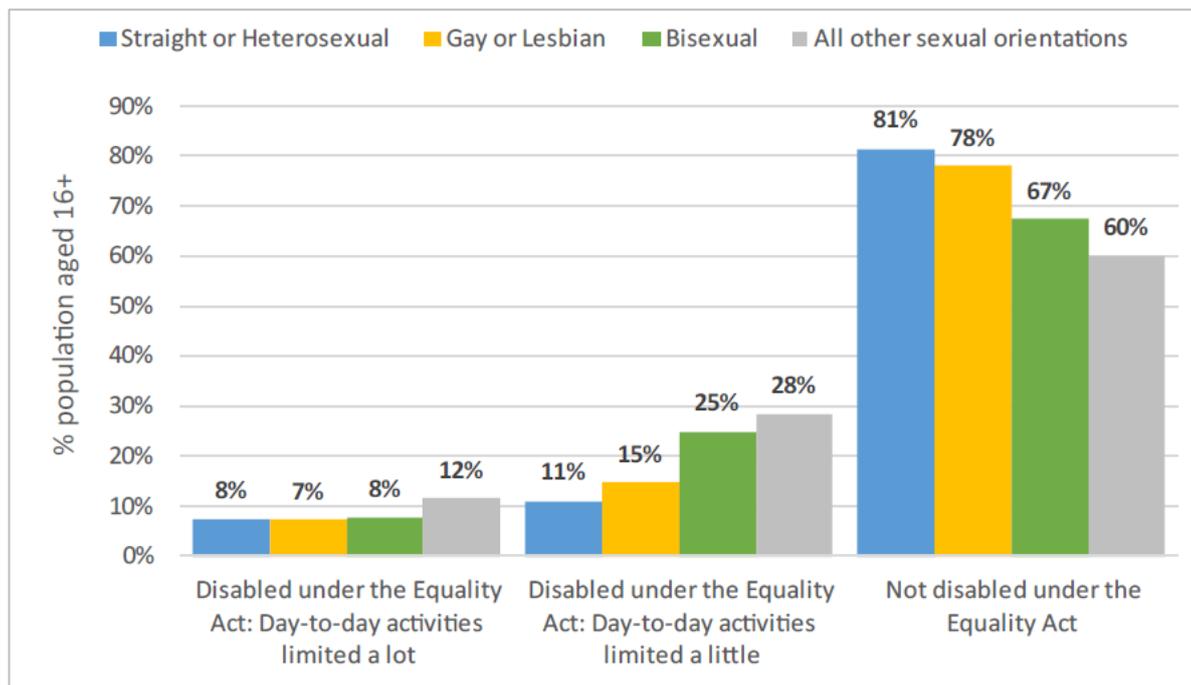


Figure 5: Sexual orientation (detailed) and long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses that negatively impact daily life in Bristol. Source: ONS Census 2021

Health and disability data for the Bristol Trans population reported 72% of people in very good or good health, lower than the population whose gender identity was the same as sex registered at birth (81%). Despite having a younger age profile, twice as many people who identified as Trans had a disability that limited day-to-day activities – 38% compared with 19% of people not identifying as Trans.

Health and health-related behaviours of LGB adults

A report published by NHS digital in 2021 analysed over 58,000 responses to the Health Survey for England between 2011 and 2018, with 2% of adults surveyed identifying as LGB. The following findings have been extracted from their report, which can be accessed in full here: [Health and health-related behaviours of LGB adults - NHS Digital](#).

- A higher proportion of LGB adults (7%) reported 'bad' or 'very bad' health compared with heterosexual adults (6%).
- A lower proportion of LGB adults were overweight or obese⁵ (51%) than heterosexual adults (63%).
- The prevalence of limiting longstanding illness⁶ was higher among LGB adults (26%) compared with heterosexual adults (22%).
- The prevalence of musculoskeletal conditions (including arthritis/rheumatism/fibrositis and back problems/slipped disc/spine/neck) was lower in LGB adults (13%) compared with heterosexual adults (16%).
- LGB adults were more likely to drink at levels which put them at increased or higher risk of alcohol-related harm, (that is more than 14 units in the last week): 32% of LGB adults compared with 24% of heterosexual adults.
- More LGB adults (27%) than heterosexual adults (18%) were current smokers. The proportion of adults who currently smoked cigarettes was highest among LGB women at 31% and lowest among heterosexual women at 16%.

- LGB adults had lower average mental well-being scores on the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) (48.9) compared with heterosexual adults (51.4), with LGB women reporting the lowest well-being scores (47.3).

LGBT+ Mental Health

[Rethink](#) updated their LGBT+ mental health worksheet in September 2020 which explains why LGBT+ people are more likely to have a mental illness and where help can be accessed. The following summary has been extracted from the worksheet:

Being LGBT+ does not automatically mean you will have mental health issues. But you may be more likely to develop mental health issues. A review of studies on mental health issues in the LGBT+ community found the following:

- LGBT+ people are at more risk of suicidal behaviour and self-harm than non-LGBT+ people.
- Gay and bisexual men are 4 times more likely to attempt suicide across their lifetime than the rest of the population.
- LGBT+ people are 1½ times more likely to develop depression and anxiety compared to the rest of the population.
- 67% of trans people had experienced depression in the previous year. And 46% had thought of ending their life.
- Stonewall's 'Prescription for Change' report found lesbian and bisexual women had higher rates of suicidal thoughts and self-harm compared to women in general.
- Of all the common sexual identity groups, bisexual people most frequently have mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, self-harm and suicidality.
- The reasons why there are higher rates of mental health issues among LGBT+ people are complex. There are many experiences that LGBT+ people will often have to deal with as a minority community, such as stigma, prejudice and discrimination.

Some of the common issues as well as where to seek help, are detailed in the full factsheet which can be accessed [here](#).

Bristol Trans community Health & Wellbeing needs (2018)

During 2017-18 Healthwatch Bristol worked with the Diversity Trust and other partners² to identify health inequalities, and discrimination, experienced by Trans and Non-Binary people and communities across the South West.

The project worked with over 200 Trans and Non-Binary people, aged from 16 to 80. Headline figures / findings include:

- 1 in 5 participants said they felt unsafe
- 71% of participants had thought about suicide
- 71% of participants had sought help for anxiety or depression
- 60% of participants have felt discriminated against because of their gender identity
- 30% of participants felt discriminated against in the health care system

² Source: [Trans Health, Care & Wellbeing research report](#), April 2018. Healthwatch Bristol and The Diversity Trust:

In January 2019 in response to the report, University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust wrote to Healthwatch acknowledging the work undertaken and highlighting their ongoing commitment to reviewing current equality and training policies to incorporate Trans Awareness.

Further data / links / consultations:

- Bristol City Council [Census 2021 data](#)
- BCC Census 2021 [Equality Profiles](#) for [Sexual orientation](#) and [Trans population](#)
- BCC Equalities Statistics – on [Population of Bristol](#)
- [LGBT+ Pride 2021 Global survey](#)
- Healthwatch Bristol web-site: [Trans Health, Care and Wellbeing Report 2018](#)
- [National LGBT Survey: Research report 2018](#)
- [The Diversity Trust](#)
- Stonewall: [LGBT Health in Britain](#)
- Galop - LGBT+ anti-violence charity: [Reports and research](#)
- University of Bristol: [Developing inclusive care homes for older people who identify as LGBT](#)
- [Shut out: the experiences of LGBT young people not in education, training or work \(stonewall.org.uk\)](#)
- LGBT Foundation – [Trans Sexual Health Survey 2017](#)

Date updated: March 2024**Date of next update:** January 2025