

# Census 2021 Population Profile

## Somali Population

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# CENSUS 2021 POPULATION PROFILE

## SOMALI POPULATION IN BRISTOL

### CONTENTS

Somali population Headlines .....	2
1.0 Definitions.....	3
2.0 Census 2021 ethnic group and national identity questions .....	4
3.0 Overview .....	5
4.0 Somali population in Bristol.....	6
5.0 Age, sex, language, health, education & housing.....	9
5.1 Age and sex profile .....	9
Sex .....	9
Age .....	9
5.2 Language .....	10
5.3 Health .....	12
General health .....	12
Health issues and disability.....	12
Carers .....	13
5.4 Qualifications.....	14
5.5 Housing.....	15
Housing tenure.....	15
Housing type .....	16
Overcrowding.....	17
5.6 Family composition .....	17
6.0 Further information .....	18

# SOMALI POPULATION HEADLINES

## POPULATION SIZE

- 9,167 people identified as either 'Somali' or 'Somalilander' in the Census 2021 ethnic group question – the 4th largest Somali population after Birmingham, Brent and Ealing

## LOCATION

- In Lawrence Hill ward 19% of the population are Somali
- More than half of the Somali population live in Barton Hill (23%), Upper Easton (11%), St Pauls (10%) or Temple Meads (10%)

## AGE PROFILE

- In 2021 more than half (52%) of Somalis living in Bristol were aged under 20 (Bristol total population 23% aged under 20)

## QUALIFICATIONS

- A third (33%) of Somalis aged 16+ have no qualifications - more than double the Bristol average (15%)

## HOUSING

- The majority (85%) of the Somali population live in socially rented accommodation – a level four times higher than the Bristol average (19%)
- Levels of home ownership are very low in the Somali population – just 2% live in homes that are owner occupied compared to more than half (54%) of the Bristol population as a whole
- More than half (56%) of the Somali population live in flats - more than double the Bristol average (27%)
- Almost two thirds (63%) of the Somali population live in overcrowded accommodation – more than six times higher than the Bristol average (10%)

### Bristol Census 2021 Somali population estimates

**7,820** people stated their ethnic group, national identity, or both as Somali

**9,167** total identified as either 'Somali' or 'Somalilander' in ethnic group question

**7,324** people identified as 'Somali' in ethnic group question

**1,843** people identified as 'Somalilander' in ethnic group question

Ethnicity and national identity are multi-dimensional and subjective, with various ways in which a person may choose to define their ethnic group. This may include common ancestry, elements of culture, identity, religion, language and physical appearance. It is generally accepted that ethnic group and national identity includes all these aspects, and others, in combination.

Census 2021 uses two definitions of the Somali population – one based solely on the answer to the ethnic group question and the other based on answers to both the ethnic group question and national identity question.

The broader definition based on the ethnic group question includes all people who identified as 'Somali' or 'Somalilander' in the Census - 9,167 people in total in Bristol.

The combined definition using both the ethnic group and the national identity question includes all people who identified as Somali as either their ethnic group, national identity, or both through one of the write-in responses to the ethnic group or national identity questions - 7,820 people in total in Bristol. This definition does not include anyone who identified as 'Somalilander'.

This profile uses both definitions depending on the data that has been published as follows:

- Section 4 – for overall numbers and mapping where Somalis live in Bristol, the broader definition of 'Somali' and 'Somalilander' based on ethnic group has been used;
- Section 5 - for analysis of the Somali population by age, sex, language, health, education and housing, the combined definition is used where 'Somalilander' is not included. This is based on the data that has been published by the Office for National Statistics - detailed statistics are not available for people who described themselves as 'Somalilander'.

## Ethnic group

Ethnicity on the census is self-reported; people said 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. Within each of the five main categories there was an option to select 'Other' and write-in a response (see side panel).

In the Black, Black British, Caribbean or African' category people could select 'Black African background, write in below'. People could then write-in a response on the paper version of the Census form or, using the on-line version of the Census form, people could type in a response. A new 'Search-as-you-type' functionality for Census 2021, meant that when people started typing they were provided with options in a drop-down list. Someone typing 'Somali' would have been provided with the option to choose either 'Somali' or 'Somalilander'. The drop-down list was based on responses given to the ethnic group question in Census 2011.

## National identity

People were asked to describe their national identity and given the opportunity to write-in a response (see side panel).

### Bristol Somali population responses to the Census 2021 ethnic group and national identity questions

Most people who identified as Somali did so through the ethnic group question. The new write-in response option for 'Black, Black British Caribbean or African: African' has allowed insights into specific African backgrounds. In Bristol by far the largest ethnic groups specified within this write-in included Somali 6,660 (1.4%) and Somalilander 1,759 (0.4%). An additional

## Census 2021 Ethnic group question

### 15 What is your ethnic group?

Choose one section from A to E, then tick one box to best describe your ethnic group or background

#### A White

- ☐ English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
- ☐ Irish
- ☐ Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- ☐ Roma
- ☐ Any other White background, write in

#### B Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups

- ☐ White and Black Caribbean
- ☐ White and Black African
- ☐ White and Asian
- ☐ Any other Mixed or Multiple background, write in

#### C Asian or Asian British

- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Pakistani
- ☐ Bangladeshi
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Any other Asian background, write in

#### D Black, Black British, Caribbean or African

- ☐ Caribbean
- ☐ African background, write in below
- ☐ Any other Black, Black British or Caribbean background, write in

#### E Other ethnic group

- ☐ Arab
- ☐ Any other ethnic group, write in

## Census 2021 National identity question

### 14 How would you describe your national identity?

Tick all that apply

- ☐ British
- ☐ English
- ☐ Welsh
- ☐ Scottish
- ☐ Northern Irish
- ☐ Other, write in

268 people also identified as Somali under 'Black or Black British or Caribbean background' and Somali (396) and Somalilander (84) under 'Other ethnic group'. If all people who identified as Somali or Somalilander are aggregated, then this is a population of 9,167 people (1.9%) and makes the Somali population the largest minority ethnic group in Bristol in 2021.

Ethnic group question	Somali	Somalilander
Black or Black British of African background:	6,660	1,759
Black or Black British or Caribbean background:	268	0
Other ethnic group:	396	84
National identity question	Somali	Somalilander
African: South and Eastern African:	1,311	0

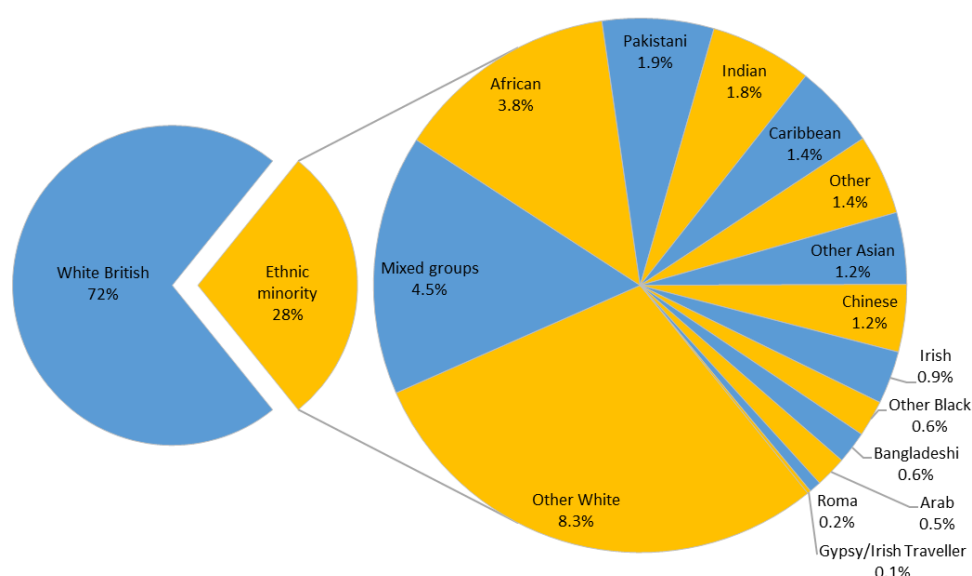
### 3.0 OVERVIEW

The population of Bristol is increasingly diverse. In 1991 the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic population accounted for 5.1% of the total population, in 2001 this increased to 8.2%, in 2011 to 16.0% and in 2021 to 18.9%.

Figure 1 shows the breakdown of the population of Bristol based on answers to the Census 2021 ethnic group question.

*Figure 1: Bristol population by ethnic group*

*Source: ONS Census 2021*

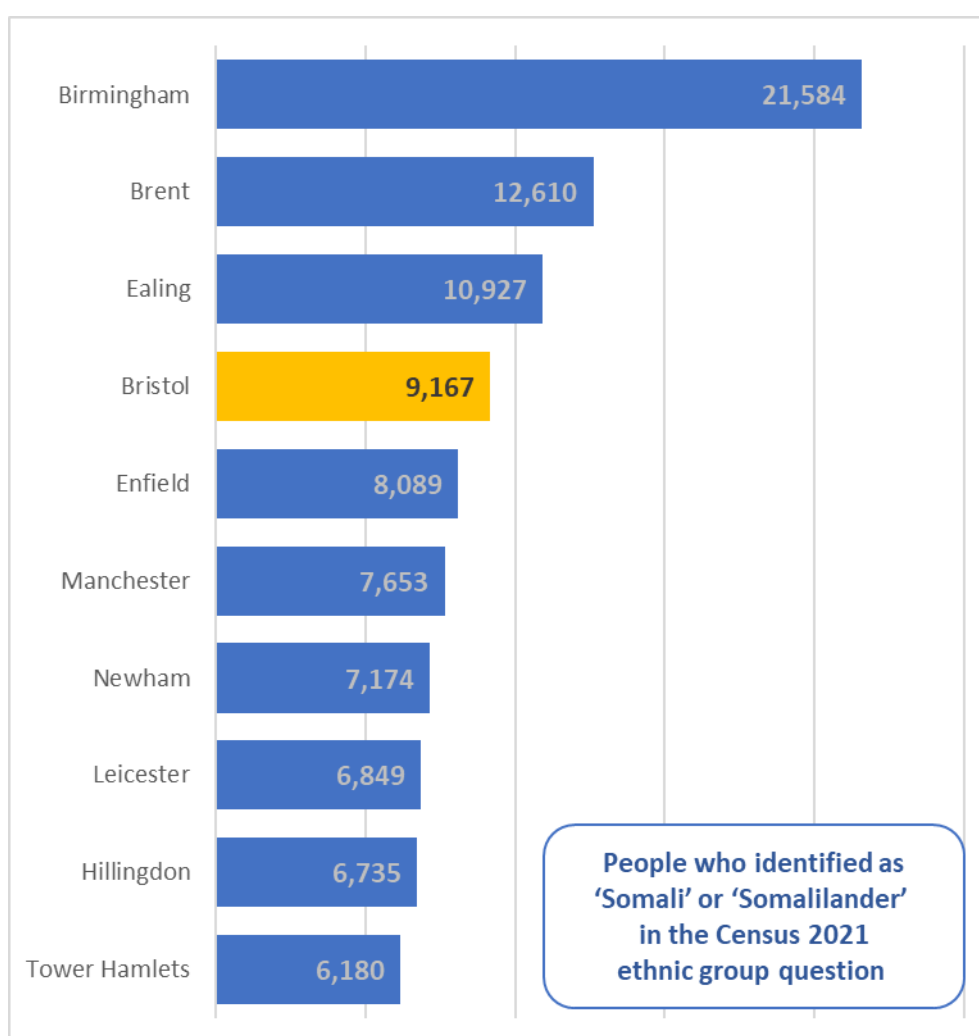


## 4.0 SOMALI POPULATION IN BRISTOL

**This section includes people who identified as ‘Somali’ or ‘Somalilander’ in the Census 2021 ethnic group question.**

In 2021 there were a total of 9,167 Somalis usually resident in Bristol local authority area. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest Somali population of all local authorities in England and Wales based on the number of people who identified as ‘Somali’ or ‘Somalilander’ in the Census 2021 ethnic group question (figure 2).

*Figure 2: Top 10 local authorities based on Somali population size*  
*Source: ONS Census 2021*



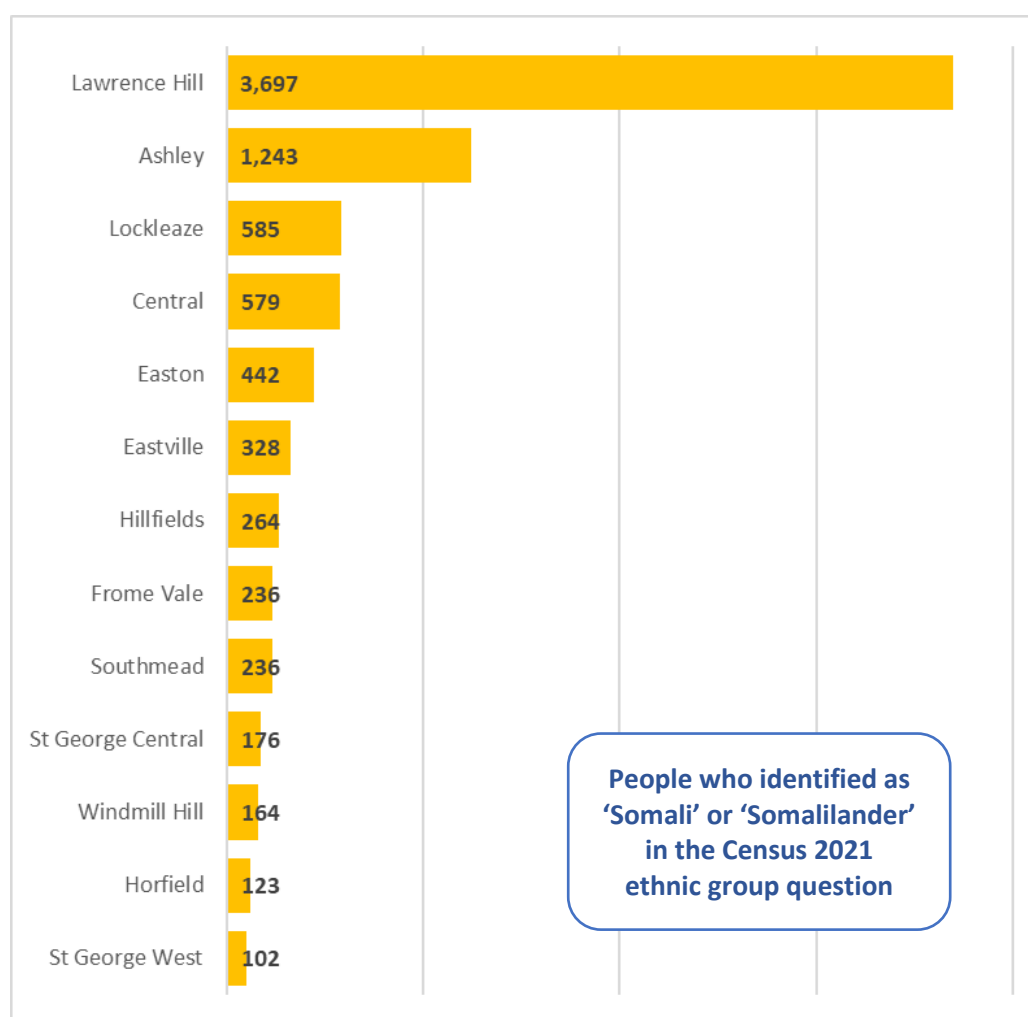
The proportion of the population in Bristol identifying as ‘Somali’ or ‘Somalilander’ was 1.9% - this is higher than the national average of 0.3%. Local authorities with a larger proportion of Somalis as a percentage of their total population include Brent (highest at 3.7%) and 10 other London boroughs.

Census 2021 data is available for smaller geographies, so we can map where the Somali population in Bristol live.

In total, 9,167 people in Bristol identified as 'Somali' or 'Somalilander' in the ethnic group question. Figure 14 shows wards where the Somali population is more than 100 people.

*Figure 14: Somali population by ward (only wards with more than 100 Somali residents)*

*Source: ONS Census 2021*



More than half of Somali population (54%) live in just two city centre wards - Lawrence Hill (40%) and Ashley (14%). In Lawrence Hill ward the Somali population accounts for 19% of all people living in the ward.

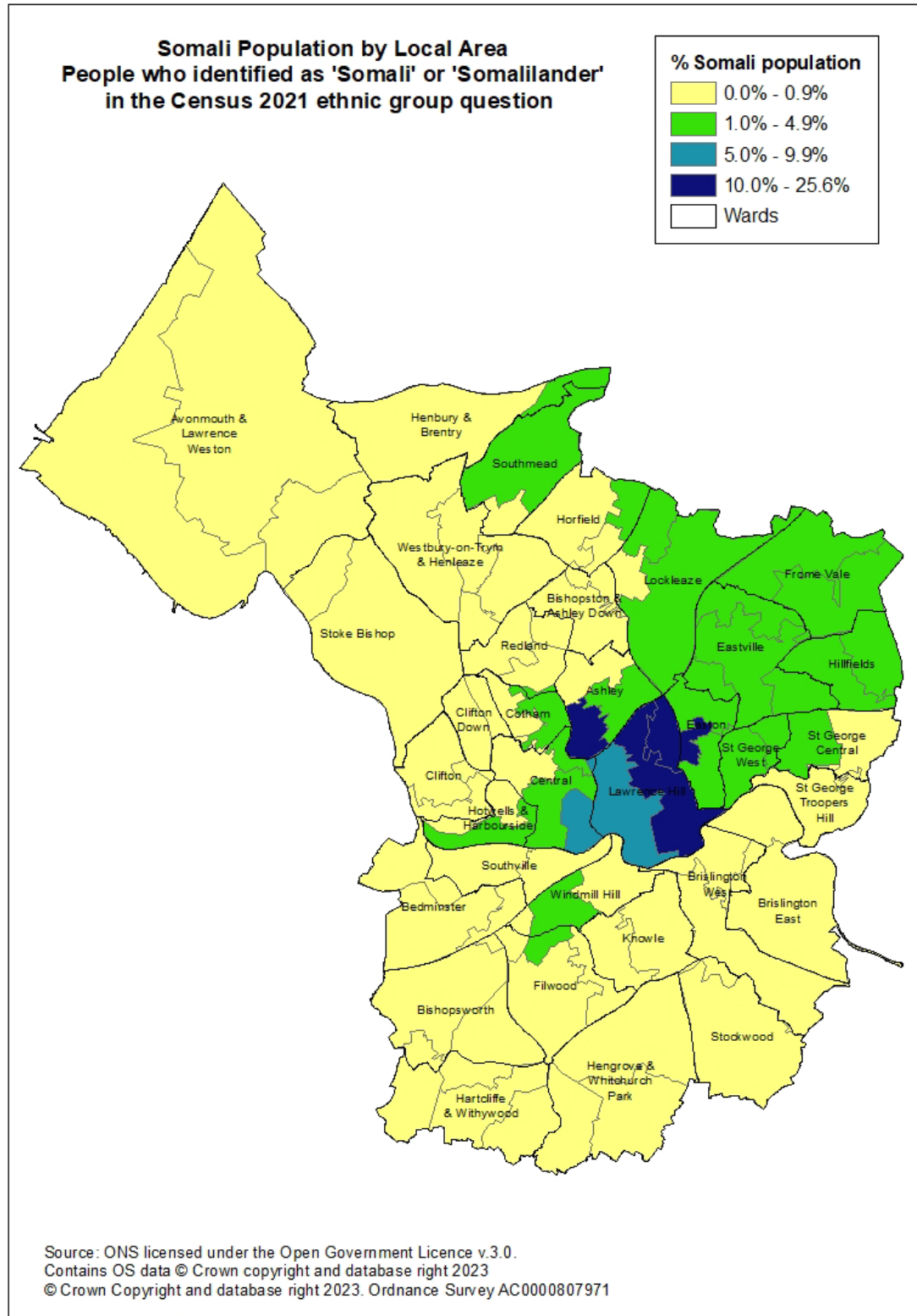
Figure 15 maps the proportion of the population who identified as 'Somali' or 'Somalilander' in the Census 2021 ethnic group question by local area (MSOA21)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Middle layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs) are a statistical geography created by the Office for National Statistics for presenting small area data in England and Wales. MSOAs are made up of groups of LSOAs, usually four or five. They comprise between 2,000 and 6,000 households and have a usually resident population between 5,000 and 15,000 persons. MSOAs fit within local authorities.



More than half of the Somali population live in just four local areas - 'Barton Hill' (23%), 'Upper Easton' (11%), 'St Pauls' (10%) or 'Temple Meads' (10%).

*Figure 15: Somali population as a proportion of the total population by Local Area (MSOA21)*  
Source: ONS Census 2021



## 5.0 AGE, SEX, LANGUAGE, HEALTH, EDUCATION & HOUSING

**This section includes people who stated their ethnic group, national identity, or both as Somali on Census 2021. This could have been through one of the write-in responses to the ethnic group or national identity questions. People who identified as ‘Somalilander’ are not included in the statistics.**

**Census 2021 data on the Somali population cross-tabulated with characteristics such as age, sex, language, health, education and housing is only available for this definition.**

Health, education and housing outcomes vary considerably between ethnic groups. Many of these outcomes will be influenced by how many young or old people are within each ethnic group. They will also overlap. People in poor health or caring for others may be less able to work or gain education. Income and where people live will also have a large effect on how people live, as well as any cultural differences.

### 5.1 AGE AND SEX PROFILE

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#### SEX

There were more females who identified as Somali in Bristol 4,180 (53.5%) compared with males 3,645 (46.6%). This difference was larger than in the overall population of Bristol with 50.4% female and 49.6% male.

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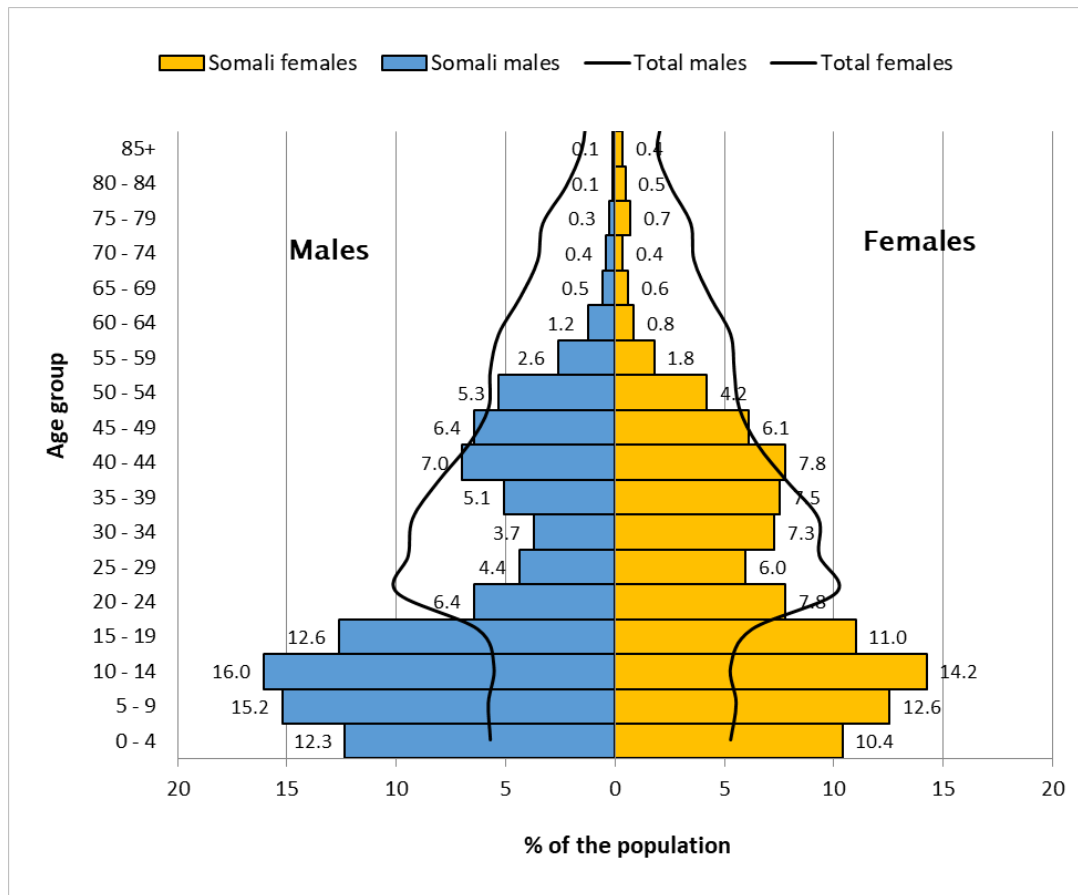
#### AGE

The population pyramid in Figure 5 shows that those who identified as Somali have a younger age profile than the Bristol population overall, which itself has a young age profile when compared to the England and Wales population overall.

In 2021, more than half (52%) of Somalis living in Bristol were aged under 20 years old, compared with 23% of the overall Bristol population. Somali residents aged under 15 years accounted for 40% of the population, compared with 17% in the Bristol population as a whole. Somali residents aged 50 years and over accounted for just 10% of the total Somali population, compared with 28% of people aged 50 years in Bristol total population.

Figure 3: Bristol Somali population age and sex profile

Source: ONS Census 2021



Note: 'Somali' includes people who stated their ethnic group, national identity, or both as Somali on Census 2021

## 5.2 LANGUAGE

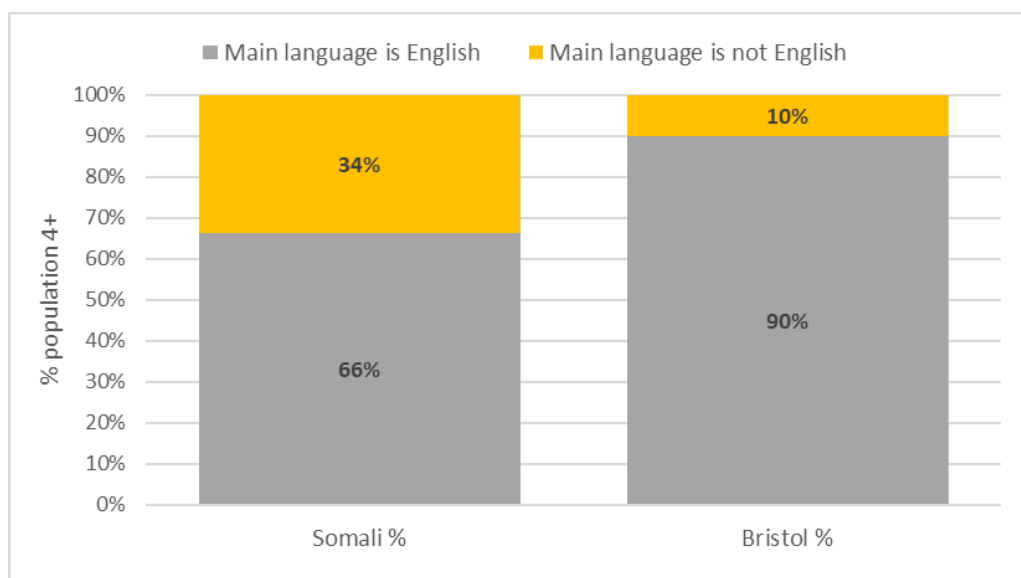
For main language, we looked at individuals who were aged 4 years and over.

The most common main language for those who identified as Somali was English at 66% (figure 4). In Bristol, 3,135 people reported that their main language was Somali. Some 74% of these people also identified their ethnic group or national identity (or both) as Somali.

Figure 5 shows the proportion of the population whose main language wasn't English and their proficiency in English:

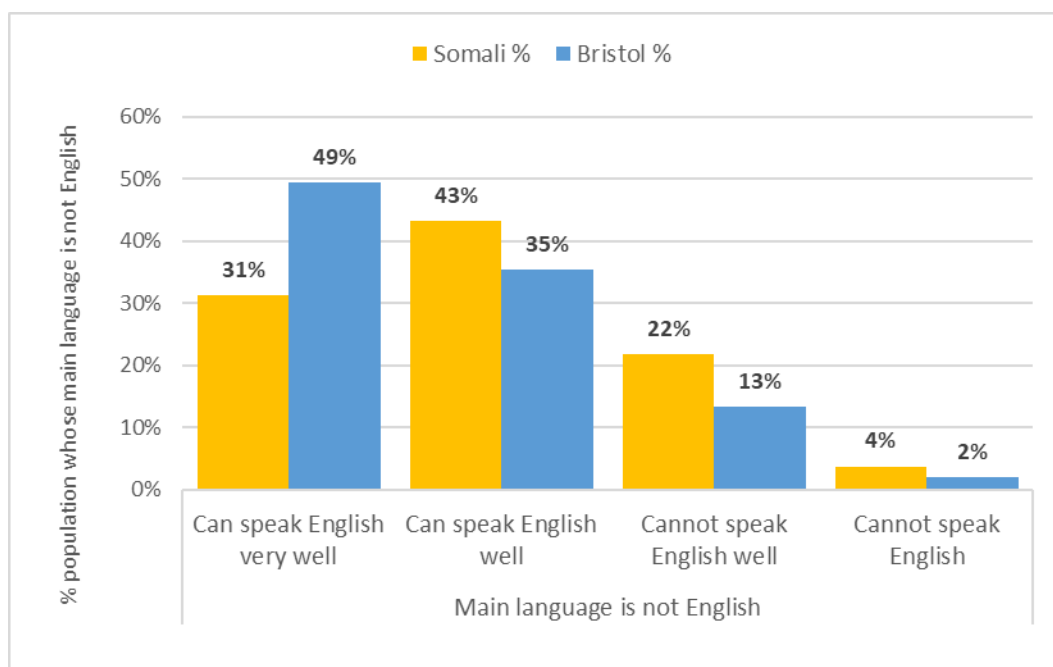
- 75% said they could speak English very well or well
- 22% said they cannot speak English well
- 4% said they cannot speak English

**Figure 4: Somali population and main language in Bristol**  
**Source: ONS Census 2021**



*Note: ‘Somali’ includes people who stated their ethnic group, national identity, or both as Somali on Census 2021*

**Figure 5: Somali population and proficiency in English in Bristol**  
**Source: ONS Census 2021**



*Note: ‘Somali’ includes people who stated their ethnic group, national identity, or both as Somali on Census 2021*

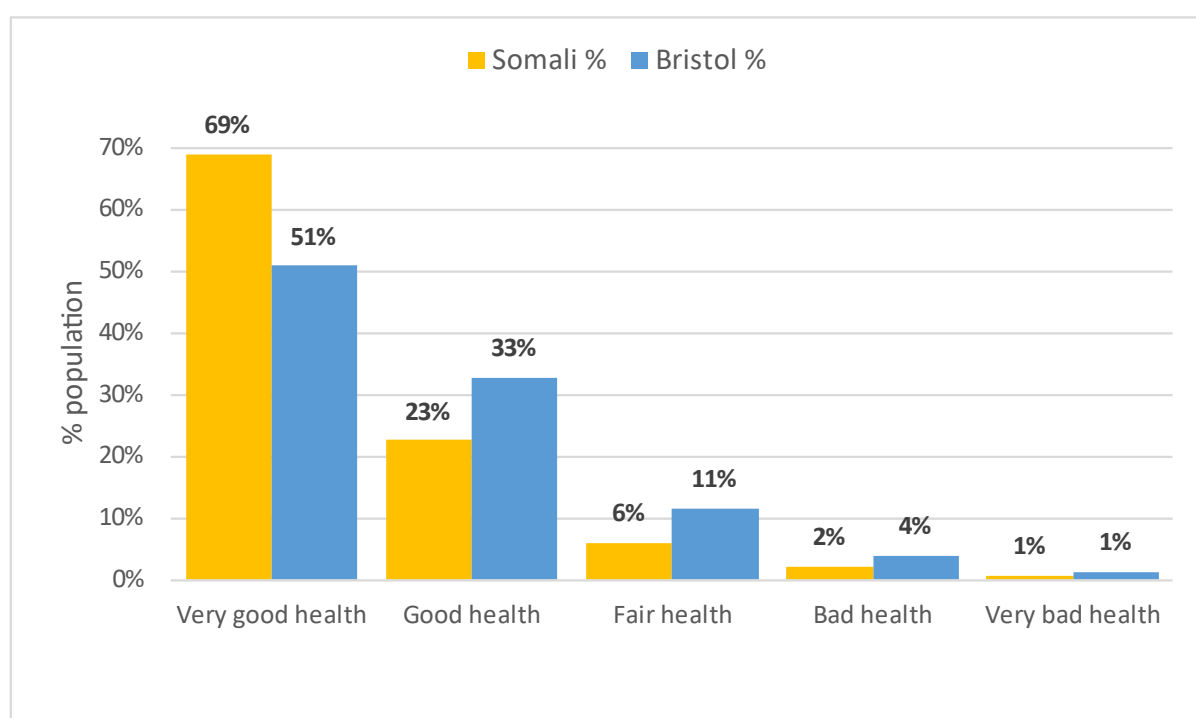
## 5.3 HEALTH

### GENERAL HEALTH

The Somali population in Bristol has better general health than the population as a whole. Of those who identified as Somali, 69% reported having 'Very good health' compared with 51% of the total Bristol population (figure 6); this is likely because of the younger age profile of those who identified as Somali.

*Figure 6: Somali population and general health in Bristol*

*Source: ONS Census 2021*



*Note: 'Somali' includes people who stated their ethnic group, national identity, or both as Somali on Census 2021*

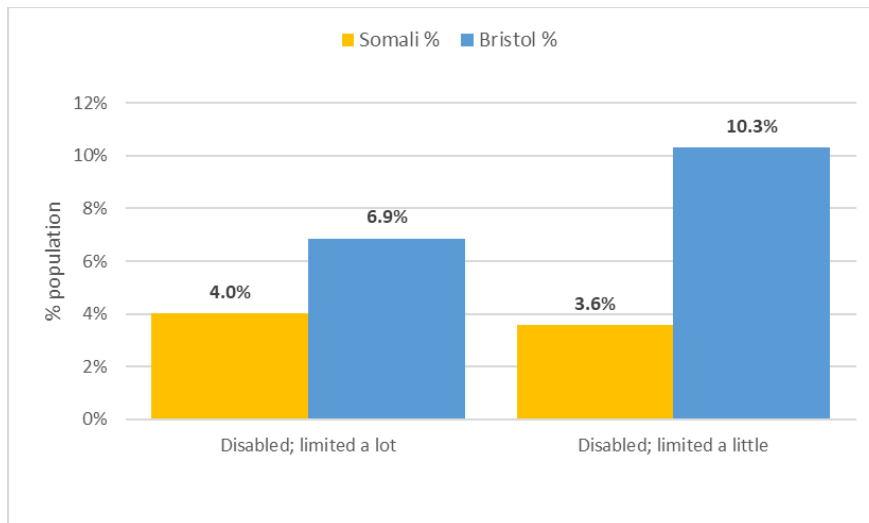
### HEALTH ISSUES AND DISABILITY

Disability is also 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.

Fewer residents who identified as Somali reported being disabled (7.6%), compared with Bristol overall (17.2%) (figure 7); again this is likely because of the younger age profile of those who identified as Somali, as disability rates tend to increase with age.

*Figure 7: Somali population and long-term health issue or disability in Bristol*

Source: ONS Census 2021



*Note: 'Somali' includes people who stated their ethnic group, national identity, or both as Somali on Census 2021*

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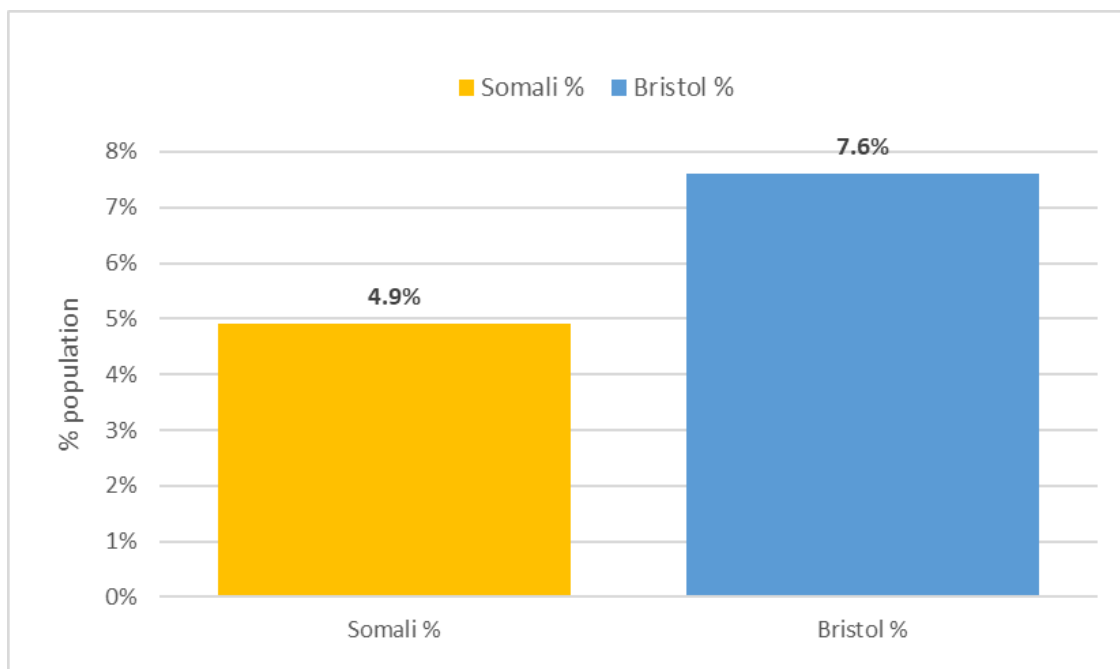
## CARERS

For unpaid care, the census looked at individuals who were aged 5 years and over.

The percentages of the population providing unpaid care were similar for both those who identified as Somali and the population of Bristol overall, with 4.9% of those who identified as Somali providing unpaid care, compared with 7.6% of the Bristol population (figure 8).

*Figure 8: Somali population and provision of unpaid care in Bristol*

Source: ONS Census 2021



*Note: 'Somali' includes people who stated their ethnic group, national identity, or both as Somali on Census 2021*

*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.*

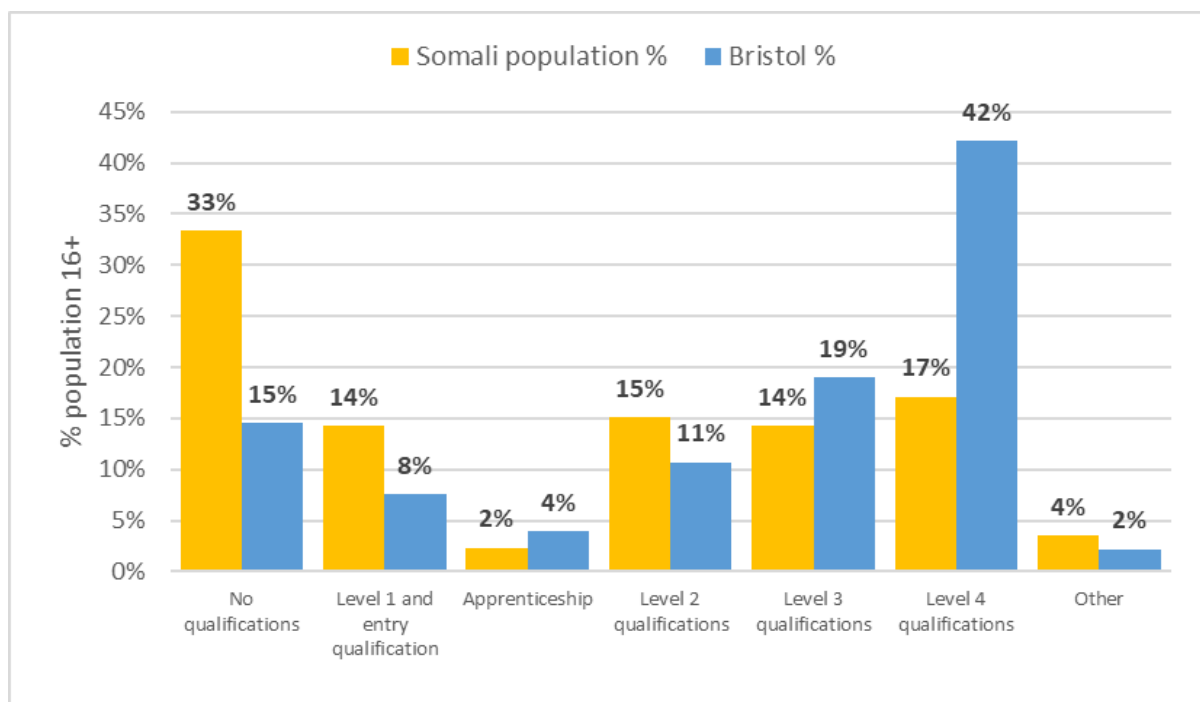
## 5.4 QUALIFICATIONS

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

*Figure 9: Somali population and highest qualification level in Bristol*

*Source: ONS Census 2021*



*Note: 'Somali' includes people who stated their ethnic group, national identity, or both as Somali on Census 2021*

In Census 2021, residents aged 16 years and over were asked to record the qualifications they had achieved.

A third (33%) people aged 16 and over who identified as Somali had no qualifications – twice the proportion in the Bristol population as a whole (15%), and lower levels of people with a degree or higher (Level 4 qualifications) at 17% compared with the Bristol population at 42% (figure 9).

People could also say they had ‘other qualifications’ not within an educational level described on the census questionnaire. These can include qualifications people gained in another country. The Somali population had a higher percentage of people with ‘other qualifications’ at 4%, compared to 2% in Bristol overall.

## 5.5 HOUSING

Home ownership, renting and overcrowding vary hugely between ethnic groups. This analysis looks at the percentages of people in households, rather than the percentage of households, and looks at the composition of those households and their residents. This does not include communal establishments, such as university halls of residence or care homes.

In 2021, there were 7,780 usual residents who identified as Somali living in households.

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### HOUSING TENURE

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

People who identified as Somali in Bristol were most commonly in households living in socially rented accommodation (85%), at a level more than four times higher than the overall population (19%) (figure 10). The second most common tenure for those who identified as Somali was private rented or living rent free (13%), lower than the overall population (27%).

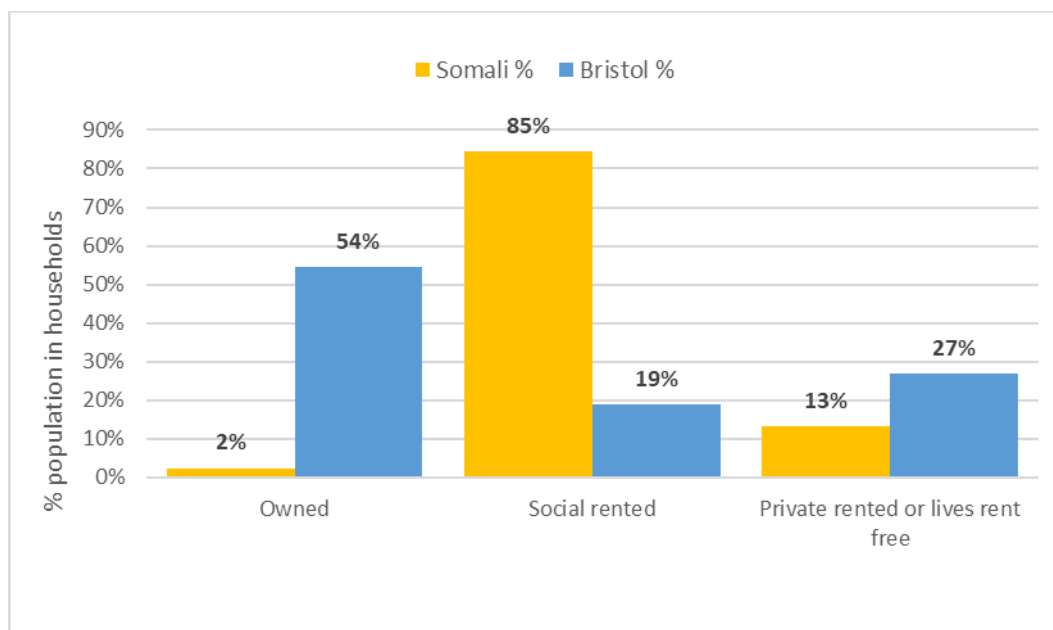
Levels of home ownership were very low among those who identified as Somali (2%). In contrast, in Bristol overall, more than half residents (54%) were in households that owned their accommodation.

Home ownership rates are affected by age, because older people have had longer to accumulate wealth, but there are also other factors such as income.



*Figure 10: Somali population and housing tenure in Bristol*

*Source: ONS Census 2021*



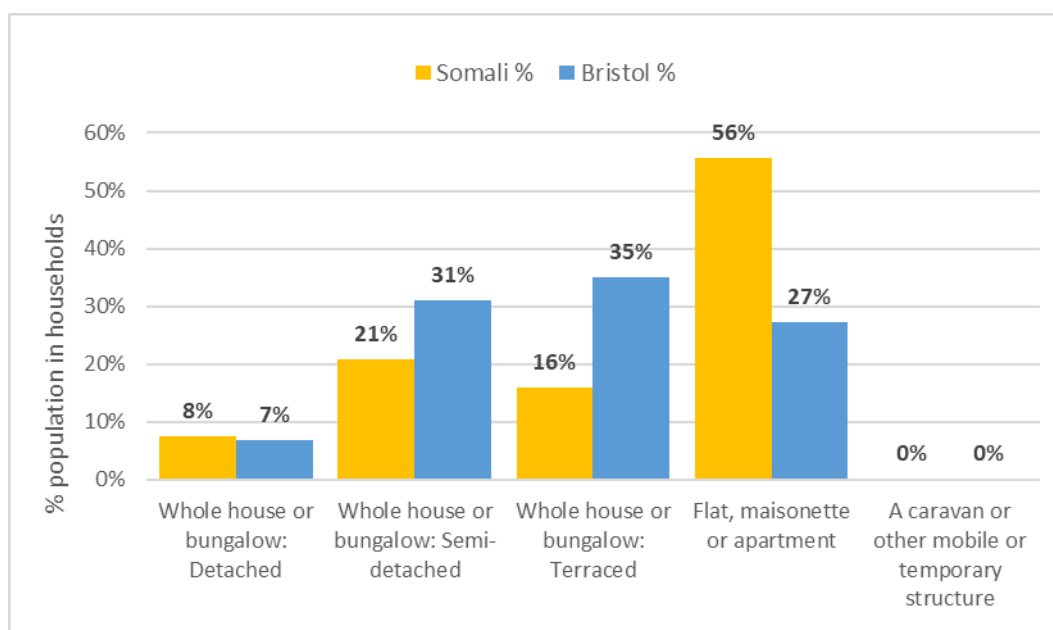
*Note: 'Somali' includes people who stated their ethnic group, national identity, or both as Somali on Census 2021*

## HOUSING TYPE

More than half of those who identified as Somali in Bristol (56%) lived in flats, maisonettes or apartments, more than double the overall population (27%). Conversely, those who identified as Somali were less likely to live in a whole house or bungalow (44%), compared with the overall population (73%) (figure 11).

*Figure 11: Somali population and accommodation type in Bristol*

*Source: ONS Census 2021*



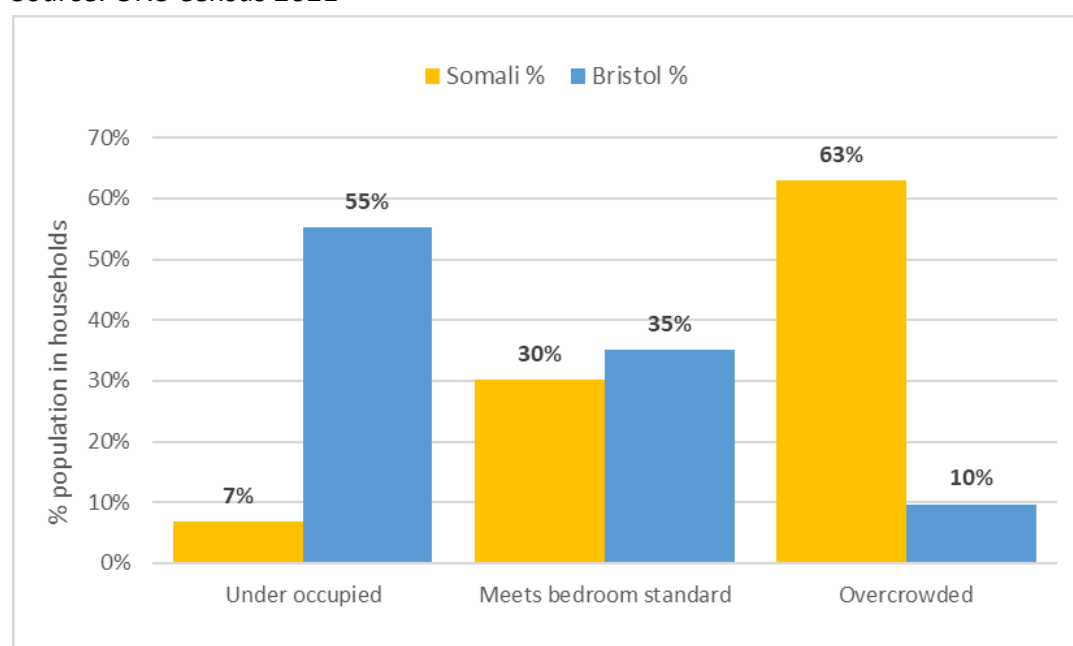
*Note: 'Somali' includes people who stated their ethnic group, national identity, or both as Somali on Census 2021*

## OVERCROWDING

The occupancy rating for bedrooms provides a measure of whether accommodation is overcrowded or under occupied ie a household has fewer or more bedrooms than the standard requirement.

*Figure 12: Somali population and occupancy rating in Bristol*

*Source: ONS Census 2021*



*Note: 'Somali' includes people who stated their ethnic group, national identity, or both as Somali on Census 2021*

Of those who identified as Somali, almost two thirds (63%) were living in overcrowded accommodation; this is more than six times higher than the percentage of the Bristol overall population (10%) (figure 12).

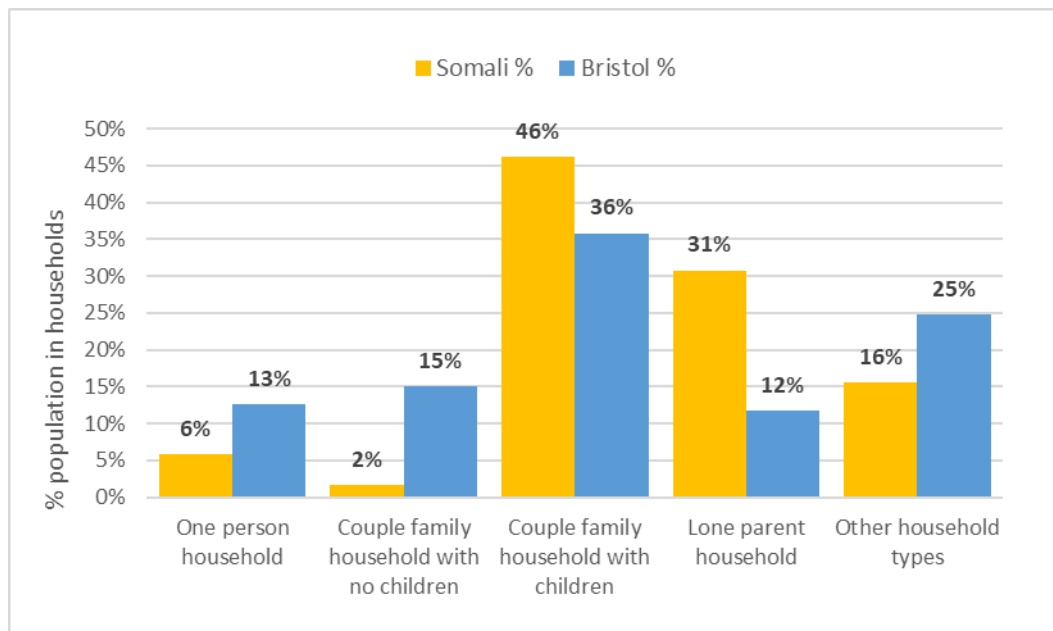
## 5.6 FAMILY COMPOSITION

The most common living arrangement of households with occupants who identified as Somali and residents of Bristol overall was 'Single family couple household with children' (46% compared with 36%, respectively) (figure 13).

The second most common living arrangement of households with occupants who identified as Somali was 'Single family lone parent household' (31%), higher than Bristol overall at 12% of all people living in households.

*Figure 13: Somali population and family composition in Bristol*

*Source: ONS Census 2021*



*Note: 'Somali' includes people who stated their ethnic group, national identity, or both as Somali on 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)*

## 6.0 FURTHER INFORMATION

ONS Census 2021 articles on the Somali population:

[Somali populations, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

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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