

Topic Summary Briefing: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity at Census Day 2021

Cumbria and Districts

Aim: On the 6th of January 2023 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) released the 6th in a series of 'topic summaries' based on the results of the 2021 Census, which related to sexual orientation and gender identity at Census Day 2021. This briefing provides an analysis of the sexual orientation and gender identity topic summary for Cumbria and districts.

Important Notes: In this briefing any reference to 'national' figures refers to England & Wales. Furthermore, while district results are included in all figures, they are only noted within the narrative text accompanying the figures if they are within the top or bottom five of all 331 Lower Tier Local Authorities (LTLAs) nationally. Any results relate to Census Day 2021. Finally, all Census results vary considerably across Cumbria's wards, Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) and Output Areas (OAs). A full range of sub-district level mapping and profiles will be provided via the Cumbria Observatory website (please see Further Information section).

Key Points

Sexual Orientation

- *Of Cumbria's 420,000 usual residents aged 16+, 93.5% answered the 2021 Census question about sexual orientation; this was slightly higher than the national average (92.5%).*
- *Compared to the national average, Cumbria had a slightly higher proportion of people who identified as straight or heterosexual (91.1% vs. national 89.4%).*
- *Inversely, Cumbria had marginally lower proportions of people who described themselves as gay or lesbian (1.2% vs. national 1.5%), bisexual (0.9% vs. national 1.3%) and selected "Other sexual orientation" (0.2% vs. national 0.3%).*

Gender Identity

- *Of Cumbria's 420,000 usual residents aged 16+, 95.1% answered the 2021 Census question about gender identity; this was slightly higher than the national average (94%).*
- *Compared to the national average, Cumbria had a slightly higher proportion of people who answered "Yes", indicating that their gender identity was the same as their sex registered at birth (94.7% vs. national 93.5%).*
- *Inversely, Cumbria had a marginally lower proportion of people who answered "No", indicating that their gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth but did not provide a write-in response (0.1% vs. national 0.2%).*
- *Finally, Cumbria had the same proportion as the national average in relation to people who identified as a trans man (0.1%), identified as a trans woman (0.1%) and who wrote in a different gender identity (0.1%).*

Background

Every 10 years the Office for National Statistics (ONS) carries out a census to find out more about the population of England & Wales and the make-up of local communities. The most recent census took place on Sunday the 21st of March 2021. The results of the Census are used to plan for, and allocate resources to, services such as transport, healthcare and education. Census data on population also informs decisions about the allocation of local authority funding.

Census results require significant quality assurance work to ensure accuracy, including adjustment for people who have not completed the Census questionnaire. 2021 Census results are being released in three phases. The ONS began the second phase of 2021 Census results on Wednesday the 2nd of November 2022 by releasing the first of a series of datasets grouped by theme, known as topic summaries. The 6th topic summary relates to sexual orientation and gender identity. The following briefing provides an analysis for Cumbria and districts based on the on the 2021 Census Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Topic Summary.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is an umbrella term covering sexual identity, attraction, and behaviour. For an individual respondent, these may not be the same. For example, someone in an opposite-sex relationship may also experience same-sex attraction, and vice versa. This means the statistics should be interpreted purely as showing how people responded to the question, rather than being about whom they are attracted to or their actual relationships.

The question on sexual orientation was new for Census 2021. The ONS have previously collected data on sexual orientation through the Annual Population Survey (APS), but including the question on the census questionnaire enables a much more detailed understanding of sexual orientation in England & Wales. The data will meet the needs for better quality information on the LGB+ population (“gay or lesbian”, “bisexual” or “other sexual orientation”) for monitoring and supporting anti-discrimination duties under the Equality Act 2010.

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

Figure 1: Sexual Orientation at Census Day 2021:

Sexual Orientation: 2021 %

Area Code	Area Name	All persons aged 16+	Straight or Heterosexual	Gay or Lesbian	Bisexual	All other sexual orientations	Not answered
E07000026	Allerdale	80.5K	91.8%	1.1%	0.8%	0.2%	6.2%
E07000027	Barrow-in-Furness	55.8K	91.1%	1.2%	1.0%	0.3%	6.4%
E07000028	Carlisle	91.3K	90.8%	1.4%	1.1%	0.3%	6.5%
E07000029	Copeland	56.0K	91.6%	1.1%	0.9%	0.2%	6.2%
E07000030	Eden	46.6K	91.0%	1.0%	0.8%	0.2%	7.0%
E07000031	South Lakeland	89.7K	90.8%	1.1%	0.9%	0.2%	7.0%
E10000006	Cumbria	420.0K	91.1%	1.2%	0.9%	0.2%	6.5%
K04000001	England and Wales	48566.4K	89.4%	1.5%	1.3%	0.3%	7.5%

Source: 2021 Census, Office for National Statistics, figures may not sum due to rounding.

Of Cumbria’s 420,000 usual residents aged 16+, 93.5% answered the 2021 Census question about sexual orientation; this was slightly higher than the national average (92.5%). Compared to the national average, Cumbria had a slightly higher proportion of people who identified as straight or heterosexual (91.1% vs. national 89.4%). Inversely, Cumbria had marginally lower proportions of people who described themselves as gay or lesbian (1.2% vs. national 1.5%), bisexual (0.9% vs. national 1.3%) and selected “Other sexual orientation” (0.2% vs. national 0.3%).

Gender Identity

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

The question on gender identity was new for Census 2021. It was added to provide the first official data on the size of the transgender population in England and Wales. The data will help to provide better quality information for monitoring purposes, support anti-discrimination duties under the Equality Act 2010 and aid allocation for resources and policy development.

The question was voluntary and was only asked of people aged 16 years and over. People were asked “Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?” and had the option of selecting either “Yes” or selecting “No” and writing in their gender identity.

Figure 2: Gender Identity at Census Day 2021:

Gender Identity: 2021 %

Area Code	Area Name	All persons aged 16+	Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth	Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given	Trans woman	Trans man	All other gender identities	Not answered
E07000026	Allerdale	80.5K	95.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	4.6%
E07000027	Barrow-in-Furness	55.8K	94.8%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	4.9%
E07000028	Carlisle	91.3K	94.6%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	5.0%
E07000029	Copeland	56.0K	95.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	4.7%
E07000030	Eden	46.6K	94.4%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	5.3%
E07000031	South Lakeland	89.7K	94.5%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	5.2%
E10000006	Cumbria	420.0K	94.7%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	4.9%
K04000001	England and Wales	48566.4K	93.5%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	6.0%

Source: 2021 Census, Office for National Statistics, figures may not sum due to rounding.

Of Cumbria's 420,000 usual residents aged 16+, 95.1% answered the 2021 Census question about gender identity; this was slightly higher than the national average (94%). Compared to the national average, Cumbria had a slightly higher proportion of people who answered "Yes", indicating that their gender identity was the same as their sex registered at birth (94.7% vs. national 93.5%). Inversely, Cumbria had a marginally lower proportion of people who answered "No", indicating that their gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth but did not provide a write-in response (0.1% vs. national 0.2%). Finally, Cumbria had the same proportion as the national average in relation to people who identified as a trans man (0.1%), identified as a trans woman (0.1%) and who wrote in a different gender identity (0.1%).

Implications

The figures outlined within this briefing represent just a small proportion of the data that was collected by the 2021 Census. Cumbria Intelligence Observatory will coordinate relevant analysis of 2021 Census statistics for Cumbria. This analysis will be used to:

- Build a more detailed picture of Cumbria and its communities.
- Compare results with the profile of people who use council services to assess whether they are providing fair access to public services, taking steps where a group is experiencing inequalities or potential discrimination.
- Enable informed strategic planning.
- Inform planning and delivery of services including schools, health provision, transport and housing.
- Inform a wide range of statutory needs assessments.
- Support lobbying activities.
- Support third sector organizations in funding applications and advocacy.

Further Information

The ONS plan to release all the main 2021 Census results within two years of Census Day. Please check the Cumbria Intelligence Observatory website over the coming months for further 2021 Census briefings and statistics as results are published: <http://www.cumbriaobservatory.org.uk/>

For more information: Email: info@cumbriaobservatory.org.uk