

Southampton

Strategic Assessment

**Language, ethnicity, religion
and national identity**

Last updated December 2022

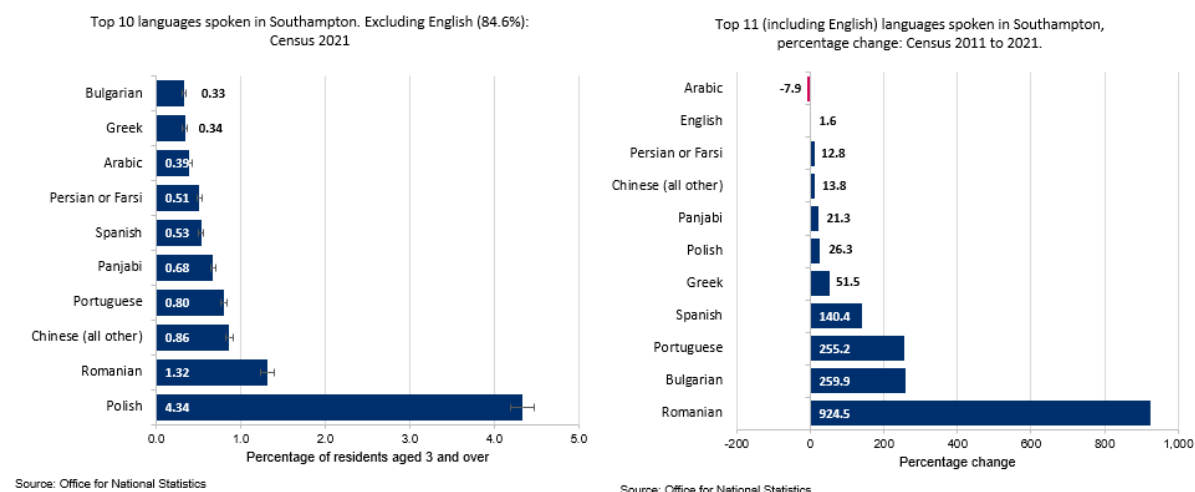


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1. Proficiency in English and languages spoken

One of the areas that the Census 2021 looked at was people’s ability to speak English, known as proficiency in English. In Southampton, 84.6% of residents have English as their main language and 37,044 (15.4%) of residents do not have English as their main language.

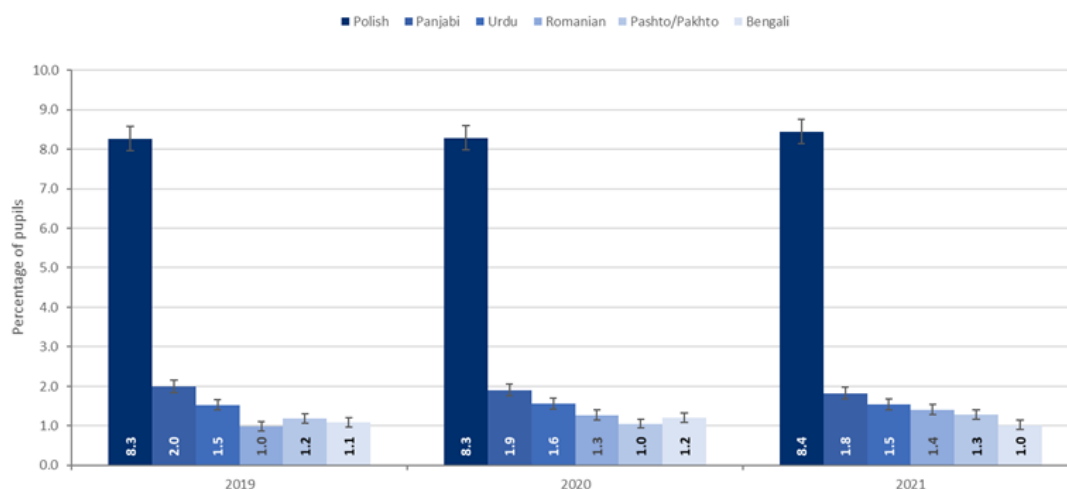


Of these 37,044 people, 83.4% speak English well or very well. 14.6% (5,398 people) cannot speak English well and 2.1% (761 people) cannot speak English at all. In Southampton, this is an increase of 17.7% from 4,587, in 2011, to 5,398 in 2021, who cannot speak English well. There was also an increase of 6.1% (44 people) in the number of people who cannot speak English. Nationally 17.1% cannot speak English well and 3.1% cannot speak English at all.

Amongst our comparators Liverpool is the highest with 20.7% of residents cannot speak English well, an increase of 90.2% between 2011 and 2021. The lowest is Bath and North East Somerset with 8.5%, an increase of 10.1%. Among our local neighbours the Isle of Wight saw a fall of -0.3%.

The top 10 languages spoken in Southampton, excluding English (84.6%) are Polish, Romanian, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, Persian or Farsi, Arabic, Greek and Bulgarian. Polish speakers make up 4.34% of the population an increase of 26.3% between 2011 and 2021. Although Romanian speakers make up only 1.32%, they have increased by 924.5% between the two Census.

Percentage of pupils by most spoken languages in Southampton schools, excluding English: 2019 to 2021



Source: Southampton City Council Children's Data Team. Totals where language is known

The school census in 2020/21 found that 28% of school pupils had a first language other than English; a rise of 3.2% percentage points from 2015/16.

More information on languages spoken in Southampton can be found in the slide set and data compendium available below and in the resources section at the end of the page.

2. Ethnicity

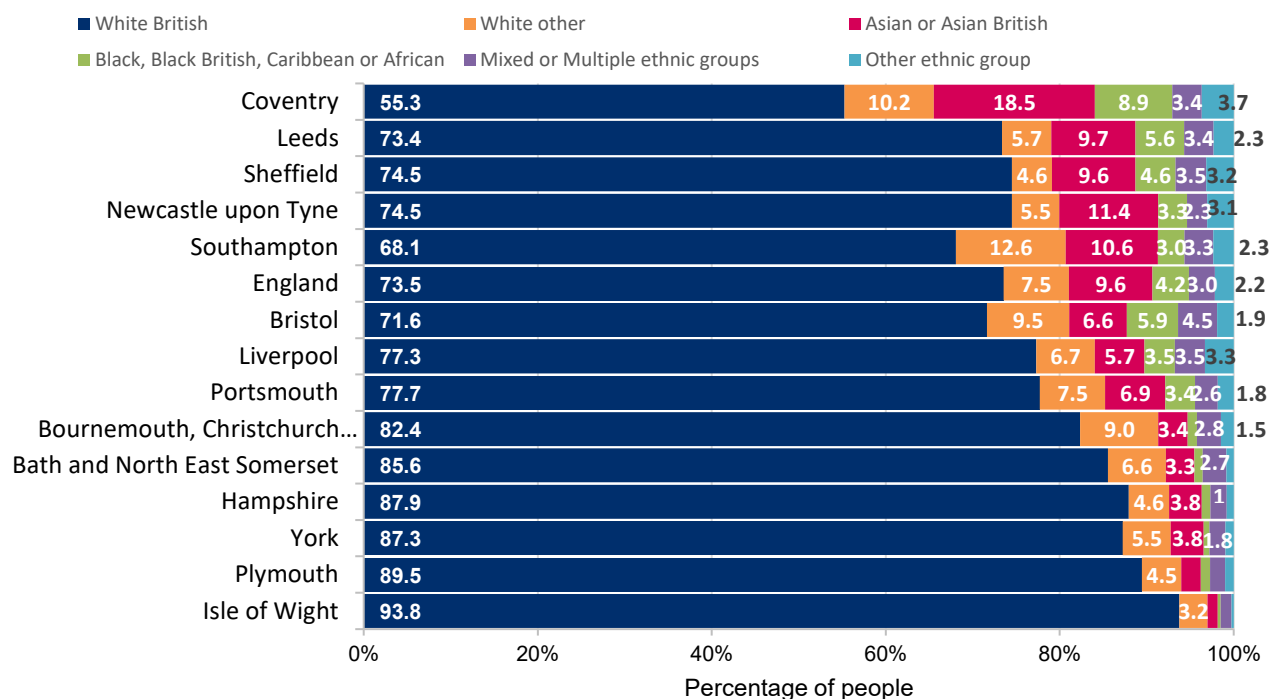
Results from the 2021 Census, recorded over 2,090 different ethnic groups nationally. In Southampton, 68.1% of usual residents are white British, a decrease of -7.9% since Census 2011. Compared with a decrease of -1.7% in England. Meaning that the population of Southampton is getting more culturally diverse.

In Southampton, 12.6% of residents consider themselves white other than white British, compared with 8.3% in 2011. An increase of 66.9% or just over 11,900 people.

Amongst our ONS comparators, Coventry has the lowest percent (55.3%) of residents who are white British and Plymouth the highest at 89.5%. Among our local neighbours, the Isle of Wight has the highest at 93.8%. Coventry has the largest Asian or British Asian ethnic group (18.5%) compared with 10.6% in Southampton, 9.6% in England, Plymouth (2.2%) and for our local neighbours; only 1.2% in the Isle of Wight. Looking in more detail, in Southampton, 4.0% of residents are White Polish, 3.7% are Indian or British Indian and 1.7% are Chinese.

Within Southampton, there is a wide variation in ethnic diversity. In Bevois ward, the largest ethnic group is white British at 36.1% followed by Asian or British Asian (29.1%) and 18.2% of the population are White other (than white British). In Freemantle, the largest ethnic group is white British (56.1%) followed by White Other (than white British) (21.5%). Sholing has the largest white British ethnic group (87.3%).

Percentage of Ethnic Group - Southampton and ONS comparators: Census 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics

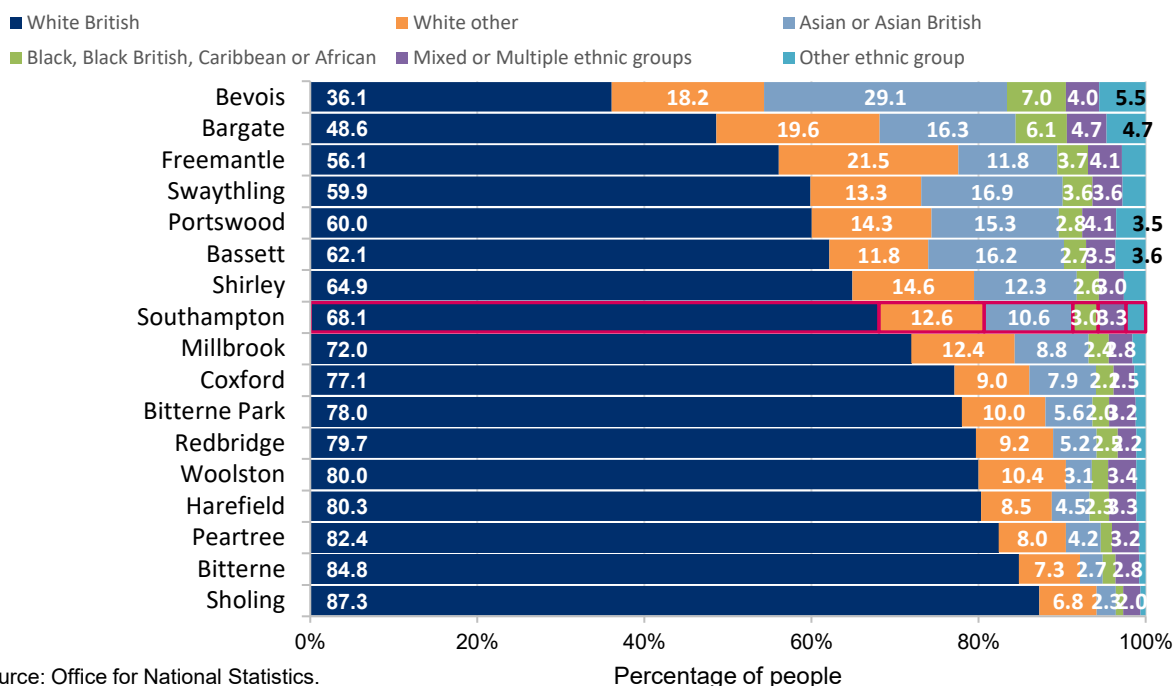
Looking in more detail at the changes in ethnicity across Southampton wards, there has been a fall in the white British population across all wards except Woolston (an increase of 1.4%), ranging from a fall of -0.9% in Redbride to a fall of -16.0% in Portswood.

In Southampton wards, the largest changes in the number of people by ethnic groups, between Census 2011 and Census 2021, show an increase in Bargate of 2,154 White (Other than white British), 1,491 Asian or British Asian (including 582 Chinese) and 621 Black, Black British, Caribbean or African people. The wards with higher percentages of ethnic groups above the city average remain the same as were recorded for the 2011 Census (Bevois, Bargate, Freemantle, Swaythling, Portswood, Bassett and Shirley).

In terms of percentage point change, Bargate has seen the largest increases among ethnic groups showing Bargate's diversity has increased the most of electoral wards since the previous Census.



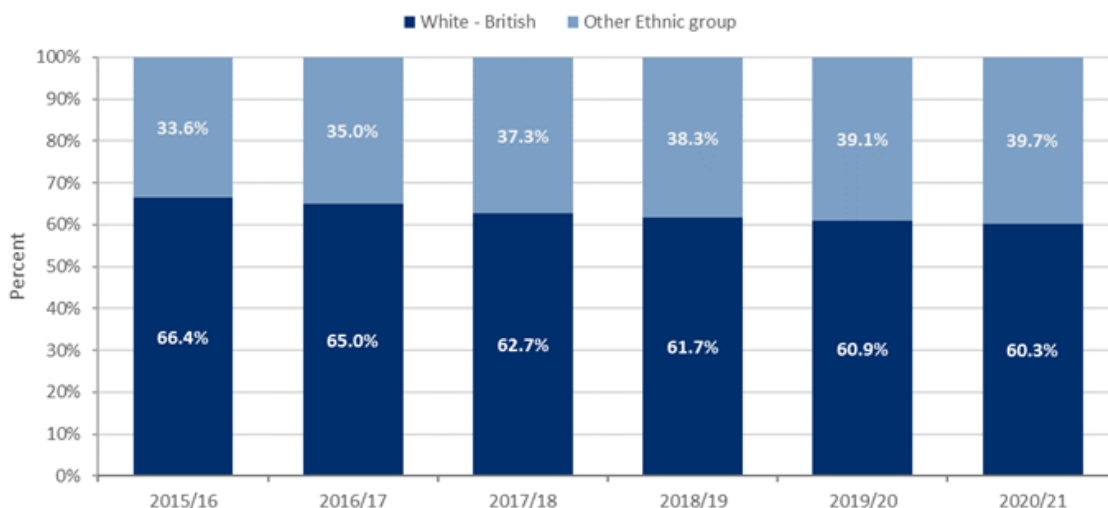
Percentage of Ethnic Group - Southampton and wards: Census 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics. Ward figures are combined from MSOA 2021 data. Ward data is due to be released between February and March 2023

The 2020/21 annual school census of pupils in Southampton revealed that 39.7% of pupils were from an ethnic group other than white British. This has increased from 33.6% in 2015/16, a 6.0 percentage point change.

Ethnicity of School Pupils in Southampton 2015/16 to 2020/21



Source: Annual School Census, Department for Education. Note: Totals do not include unknown ethnicities

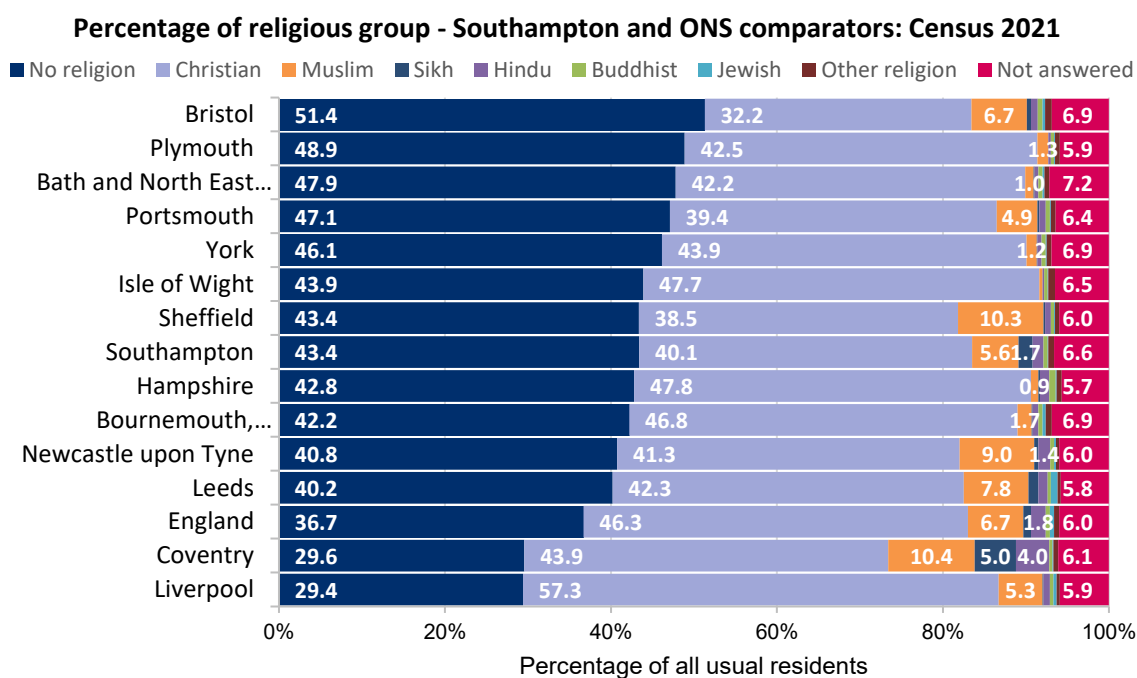
In 2020/21, just over 42.9% of live births in Southampton (where ethnicity was known) were non-White British or Irish. Trends in ethnicity of live births show the 'Other White' background has risen most significantly in recent years; from 10.7% (2008/09) to 18.9% (2020/21).

More information on ethnic groups can be found in the slide set, data compendium available below and in the resources section at the end of the page.

3. Religion

According to the 2021 Census, 43.4% of the population of Southampton, had no religion, compared with 36.7% in England. 40.1% of the population reported their religion to be Christian, compared to 46.3% in England. This is a fall of -18.1% from the 2011 Census.

The second largest religion in Southampton is Muslim. In 2021, 5.6% of Southampton’s population were Muslim, the third largest were Sikh at 1.7% of the population, Hindu at 1.3% and other religions make up 0.7% (1,664 people) of the population. Of other religions; Pagan’s are the largest group of 465 people or 0.2% of the population.



Source: Office for National Statistics

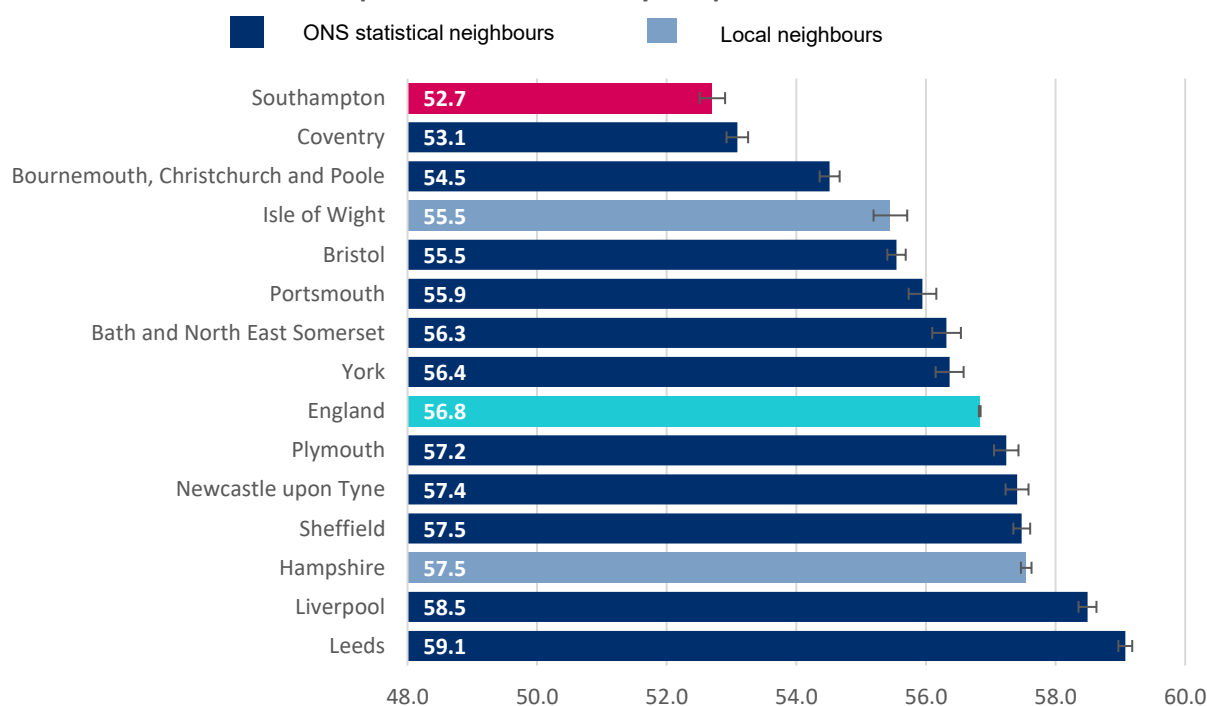
More information on religious groups in Southampton can be found in the slide set and data compendium available below and in the resources section at the end of the page.

4. National Identity

In the Census 2021, 52.7% of residents of Southampton, identified themselves as British, lowest amongst our comparators and the England average of 6.8%. The highest percentage among ONS comparators was Leeds at 59.1%.

In Southampton, 5.3% of residents identified themselves as of Non-UK identity only. Compared with 10.0% in England. Amongst our ONS comparators Coventry had the highest percentage at 18.2% and our local neighbour Isle of Wight had the lowest at 3.3%.

National identity: British identity only - percentage of usual residents - Southampton and local authority comparators: Census 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics. Please note: Respondents could select more than one national identity.

More information on national identity in Southampton can be found in the slide set, data compendium available below and in the resources section at the end of the page.

5. Sexual orientation and gender identity

For the first time Census 2021 included questions on sexual orientation and gender identity, for more information on these questions see the main [Census 2021](#) page.

6. Resources

6.1 Local resources

Releases from the 2021 Census, compared with 2011 Census and other population estimates. Results include population by age and sex, population density and households, religion, language, ethnicity and national identity. A summary slide set and a data compendium comparing Southampton, local and national comparators and England can be downloaded using the links below.

- [2021 Census results slide set](#)
- [2021 Census data compendium](#)

6.2 ONS data links

Data releases from the 2021 Census, from the Office for National Statistics (ONS)

ONS - [Ethnic group, national identity, language, and religion: Census 2021 in England and Wales](#)

Nomis – [Census 2021 results](#)

ONS – [Census 2021 maps - Southampton](#)

ONS – [How the population changed where you live: Southampton 2021 Census](#)

ONS - [Play the Census 2021 population map game](#)

ONS - [Census 2021 quiz: how well do you know your area?](#)

ONS – [Future release timetable](#)

6.3 Terminologies

- Ethnicity hub - [Why we no longer use the term 'BAME' in government?](#)