

Southampton Strategic Assessment (JSNA)

Disability overview page content

Last updated June 2025

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1. Disability Overview

In the [Equality Act 2010](#), disability is defined as “a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.”

‘Substantial’ is defined as more than minor or trivial, e.g., it takes much longer than it would usually to complete a daily task, like getting dressed. ‘Long-term’ is defined as a condition lasting 12 months or longer.

These conditions may be cognitive, developmental, intellectual, mental, physical, sensory, or a combination of multiple factors. Conditions causing disability may be present from birth or occur during life or may even come and go.

2. Hidden disabilities

Invisible disabilities are those that are not immediately apparent to others. These can include neurodiversity, a mental health condition as well as mobility, sensory loss or a physical disability that causes pain, fatigue or impacts on movement. People who experience neurodiversity, interact with, and interpret the world in unique ways. Neurodiversity can include autism, dyslexia, dyscalculia, epilepsy, hyperlexia, dyspraxia, ADHD, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and Tourette's syndrome.

3. Disability estimates and projections

Estimates and projections of the number of disabled people in the city have been produced using national prevalence rates applied to local population data; these suggest that in Southampton, in 2025 there may be around 7,374 adults aged 18-64 who have impaired mobility (meaning that they experience either moderate, severe or complete difficulty with mobility, and certain activities are limited in any way as a result, such as walking or climbing stairs). By 2040 there are projected to be over 7,201 adults of working age impaired mobility. A fall of -2.3% between 2025 and 2040. [Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information \(PANSI\)](#) from Oxford Brookes University.

Modelling by [Projecting Older People Population Information System \(POPPI\)](#), also from Oxford Brookes University, estimates in 2025, there are 6,728 people aged 65 and over unable to manage at least one mobility activity on their own, (this estimate is adjusted for the underlying age and gender distribution). Activities include going out of doors and walking down the road; getting up and down stairs; getting around the house on the level; getting to the toilet; getting in and out of bed. This is predicted to increase to 8,631 Southampton residents aged 65 and over by 2040, an increase of 28.3% by 2040.

4. Leading causes and risk factors of disability

Years Lived with Disability (YLDs) is described as years lived in less than ideal health. This includes conditions such as influenza, which may last for only a few days, or epilepsy, which can last a lifetime. It is measured by taking the prevalence of the condition multiplied by the disability weight for that condition. Disability weights reflect the severity of different conditions and are developed through surveys with the general public.

In Southampton, the leading causes attributed to Years Lived with Disability (YLDs) are:

- Low back pain
- Major depression
- Migraine
- Anxiety disorders
- Type 2 diabetes

The top five risk factors include:

- High body-mass index
- High fasting plasma glucose (which is an indicator of a higher risk of diabetes)
- smoking
- High alcohol use
- Drug use

More information is available in the slide set below or on the [Global Burden of Disease](#) website.

5. Levels of disability in Southampton

In November 2024, data on [Disability Living Allowance](#) (DLA) claimants amongst the under 16 year olds shows that 4,283 Southampton children receive DLA.

The three main disabling conditions for children (aged under 16) in the city can be broken down as:

- Learning difficulties – 2,400 children (56.0%)
- Behavioural disorder – 1,010 children (23.6%)
- Hyperkinetic syndrome, also known as ADHD - 268 children (6.3%)

In the same period there were 1,002 working age adults (aged 16 to 64), the top three main disabling conditions are:

- Learning difficulties – 300 working age adults (29.9%)
- Psychosis – 90 working age adults (9.0%)
- Neurological diseases - 71 working age adults (7.1%)

There were 1,378 adults aged 65 and over and the main disabling conditions were:

- Arthritis – 437 adults aged 65 and over (31.7%)
- Back pain – 104 adults aged 65 and over (7.5%)
- Disease of the muscles, bones or joints – 90 adults aged 65 and over (6.5%)

There are currently 2,548 long-term Adult Social Care service users in Southampton, they are categorised by primary support reason:

- Physical care support – 1,415 (55.5%)
- Learning disability support – 517 (20.3%)
- Mental health support - 350 (13.7%)

Over half, 53.6% are female and nearly 1 in 3 (33.1%) of all service users are aged 80+ and 1 in 2 (50.9%) are aged 70+.

Of the long-term service users, 309 (12.1% or 1 in 8) are supported outside the city. 100 of these out of city service users have a learning disability as their primary support reason.

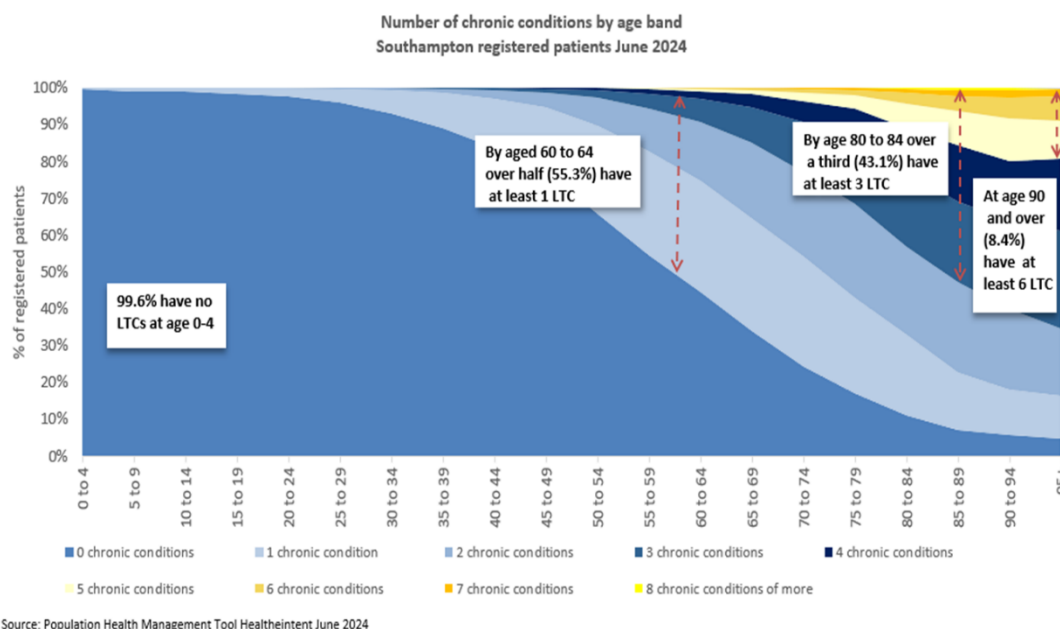
1 in 3 (32.5%) long-term service users who live in the city, live in the most deprived 20% neighbourhoods in England, higher than for the city population, where 27.6% of residents live in neighbourhoods classed as in the most deprived 20% in England.

For those who gave their ethnicity, 1 in 6 (16.8%) service users are non-white British, compared to 1 in 3 (31.9%) of the city's residents. The largest service user groups by ethnicity are white British (83.9%), all other white groups (5.2%) and Asian (4.6%), the percentages of these groups in the city are white British (68.1%), other white groups (12.6%) and Asian (10.6%) respectively.

More information is available on the [Supporting adults](#) page.

6. Multiple long-term conditions

Multiple long-term conditions which impact mobility and day-to-day living increase with age, this is illustrated using GP data for the city.



An ageing population compounds the prevalence of chronic/long-term conditions as people tend to develop more long-term or chronic conditions as they grow older. Age analysis shows multi-morbidity increases with age, by 60-64 over half of residents have at least one chronic/long-term condition and by 80-84 over a third will have at least three long term conditions. Analysis of snapshots from 2024 GP patient data shows more diagnoses of multiple chronic/long-term conditions earlier in their life course than in 2024 but excludes low back pain

In Southampton there are 37,100 residents aged 65+ are registered with a GP. They are categorised using the medical model eFI (Electronic Frailty Index) into frailty categories of:

- Fit (41%)
- Mild (32%)
- Moderate (20%)
- Severe (7%)

Just over 1 in 4 (27%) of aged 65+ are categorised as moderate or severe frailty (10,100 people), 1 in 14 (7%) have severe frailty (2,600 people). By age band, 6 out of 10 (59%) 85 to 89 year olds and 7 out of 10 (71%) 90+ year olds have moderate or severe frailty. As our residents age, the percentage being frail and the frailty severity increases. More information is available on the [Supporting adults](#) page.

7. People with a Learning Disability

In Southampton, 4,988 people (aged 18 and over) are estimated to have a learning disability in 2025, forecast to increase by 5.8% to approximately 5,278 people by 2040 ([Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information](#) (PANSI)).

In Southampton 0.5% (1,648) of GP registered patients are diagnosed with a learning disability in 2023/24. The diagnosed prevalence by ward shows the range across the city (730.1 per 100,000 population for Coxford nearly 2.2 times compared to 332.6 per 100,000 population in Banister and Polygon. Approximately 5 in 200 people have a learning disability, but only 1 in those 200 people who have a learning disability, have it recorded by the GP.

In Southampton the key characteristics of people with learning disabilities are:

- More males, than females have a learning disability
- A higher percentage of residents who have a learning disability live in Coxford, Redbridge and Thornhill
- Prevalence in the most deprived areas of Southampton is four times higher than in the least deprived areas (6.72 per 1,000 population in the 20% most deprived areas compared to 2.61 per 1,000 population in the least deprived areas)

More information is available on the [Learning disabilities](#) page.

8. Autistic people

Autism is a lifelong condition that can affect how a person communicates with and relates to other people. It can also affect how a person makes sense of the world around them.

There are several names and terms that are used to describe autism, such as Asperger's Syndrome, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or autism spectrum condition (ASC). Some professionals may also refer to autism by different names, such as classic autism or Kanner autism, pervasive developmental disorder (PDD) or high-functioning autism (HFA). The word "spectrum" is used because individuals can be affected in such different ways. While all people with autism share certain difficulties, their condition will affect them in different ways. Some autistic people can live relatively independent lives, but others may have accompanying learning disabilities and need a lifetime of specialist support. Autistic people may also experience over or under-sensitivity to sounds, touch, tastes, smells, light or colours. ([Autism Hampshire](#))

In Southampton, it has been predicted that by 2040, there will have been an increase of 6.4% in the number of people, aged over 18, with autism from 2,111 in 2025 to 2,247 in 2040. A lower overall increase than that of the England average of 8.1%. The largest increase is predicted to be in the over 65 year age group with an increase of 23.1% in Southampton, lower when compared to a 27.5% increase in England over the same period (2025 to 2040). These predictions are based on

information for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in adults living in households throughout England: Report from the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey 2007 was published by the Health and Social Care Information Centre in September 2009. The prevalence of ASD was found to be 1.0% of the adult population in England, using the threshold of a score of 10 on the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule to indicate a positive case. The rate among men (1.8%) was higher than that among women (0.2%), which fits with the profile found in childhood population studies. The data for Autism comes from [Projecting Older People Population Information System \(POPPI\)](#) created by the Institute of Public Care.

More information is available on the [Learning disabilities](#) page.

9. Sight loss

Modelling from [PANSI](#) and [POPPI](#) predict that in 2025, there are 110 Southampton residents aged 18-64 predicted to have severe visual impairment. Among those aged 65 and over it is predicted that there are 1,146 people with a moderate or severe visual impairment. By 2040 this is predicted to rise by 2.7% for those ages 18 to 64 (113 residents) and 30.1% for those ages 65 and over (1,491 residents).

Sight impaired (SI) and severe sight impairment (SSI) replace the terms partially sighted and blind for registration purposes. In 2023/24, 69 children were known to Southampton schools (state funded schools) to have a visual impairment. In May 2025, 956 individuals are registered with Adult Social Care to have a visual impairment.

In 2022/23 there are 125 people aged 65-74 registered blind or partially sighted in Southampton and 370 people aged 75+.

In Southampton, in November 2024, there were 105 people (1.6% of people claiming DLA) claiming Disability Living Allowance (DLA), with the main disabling condition recorded as having visual disorders and diseases, higher than the rate for England (1.4% of people claiming DLA).

Of those residents recorded as having visual disorders and diseases, 34.3% were aged under 16, 24.8% were of working age (18 to 64) and 38.1% were aged 65 and over.

Diabetic retinopathy or diabetic eye disease is the leading cause of preventable sight loss in working aged people in the UK and early detection through screening halves the risk of blindness.

In 2023/24 Southampton's rate of preventable sight loss due to diabetic eye disease in those aged 12 years and over was a crude rate of 4.9 per 100,000 population, 11 people. This is higher but statistically similar to the crude rate for England of 3.0 per 100,000 population.

Age related macular degeneration (AMD) and glaucoma are the two other types of eye disease which can result in blindness or partial sight if not diagnosed and treated in time. In 2023/24, Southampton's rate of AMD was a crude rate of 91.2 per 100,000 population (32 people) aged 65 and over. This was lower but not significantly when compared to the England crude rate of 105.1 per 100,000 population.

In the same period, 2023/24, Southampton's rate of preventable sight loss due to glaucoma was a crude rate of 15.9 per 100,000 population (17 people) aged 40 and over, higher but not significantly compared to the England crude rate of 14.3 per 100,000 population.

More information is available in the slide set in the resources section below.

10. Hearing loss and deafness

The newborn hearing test is offered to babies in their first four to five weeks and helps to identify if a baby has hearing loss in one or both ears. Nationally 1 to 2 babies in every 1,000 are born with permanent hearing loss in 1 or both ears. This increases to about 1 in every 100 babies who have spent more than 48 hours in intensive care. Most of these babies are born into families with no history of permanent hearing loss. In Southampton, in 2023/24, the newborn hearing screening coverage was 99.6% significantly better than the England average of 99.0%.

In 2023/24, 104 pupils in state schools had a hearing impairment in Southampton. In May 2025, 1,336 individuals are known to Adult Social Care registered as having a hearing impairment.

In November 2024, 93 Southampton residents were receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) with the main disabling condition recorded as hearing disorders. Of these 97 residents, 61.3% were aged under 16 years, 20.4% were of working age (aged 18 to 64 years old) and 6.5% people were aged 65 years and over.

11. Resources

11.1 Statistics on people living with a disability in Southampton

The slide set collates data of those people with disabilities in Southampton. There is no current single source available to establish how many people have disabilities in the city. The resource brings together data sources recording those people known to have disability, by the council, the Department for Work and Pensions and GP practices. Estimates and projections by applying national prevalence have also been included.

[Disability slide set – Southampton June 2025](#)

11.2 Census 2021 interactive dashboard

Users can access a range of Census data across different topic areas including population, education, identity, housing, health and work. With the ability to view benchmarking between Southampton and ONS comparators and mapping of data by Census geographies, such as lower layer super output areas (LSOAs) a neighbourhood of around 1,500 residents.

[Census 2021 dashboard](#)

11.3 IHME – Global Burden of Disease

The Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study provides a comprehensive picture of mortality and disability across countries, time, age, and sex. It quantifies health loss from hundreds of diseases, injuries, and risk factors, so that health systems can be improved and disparities eliminated.

[IHME – Global Burden of Disease](#)

11.4 Projecting Older People Population Information (POPPI)

Projecting Older People Population Information (POPPI) is a view-only system developed by the Institute of Public Care (IPC). It is a programme designed to help explore the possible impact that demography and certain conditions may have on populations aged 65 and over.

Oxford Brookes University - [Projecting Older People Population Information \(POPPI\)](#)

11.5 Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information (PANSI)

Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information (PANSI), sister site to POPPI, is a view-only system is developed by the Institute of Public Care (IPC). With a programme designed to help explore the possible impact that demography and certain conditions may have on populations aged 18 to 64.

Oxford Brookes University - [Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information \(PANSI\)](#)

11.6 OHID - Fingertips - Vision profile

The vision profile provides local areas with comparable indicators of risk factors, healthcare provision and outcomes for vision health to support commissioning and planning and to identify unwarranted geographical variation. The vision profile is an online tool showing eye health data from a range of sources and is presented in the following domains: Outpatient indicators, Procedures, such as intravitreal injections and cataract surgery, Sight loss outcomes and Risk factors.

OHID – Fingertips - [Vision - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](#)