

# **Southampton Strategic Assessment**

## **Dementia**

*Last updated October 2025*

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## 1. Dementia



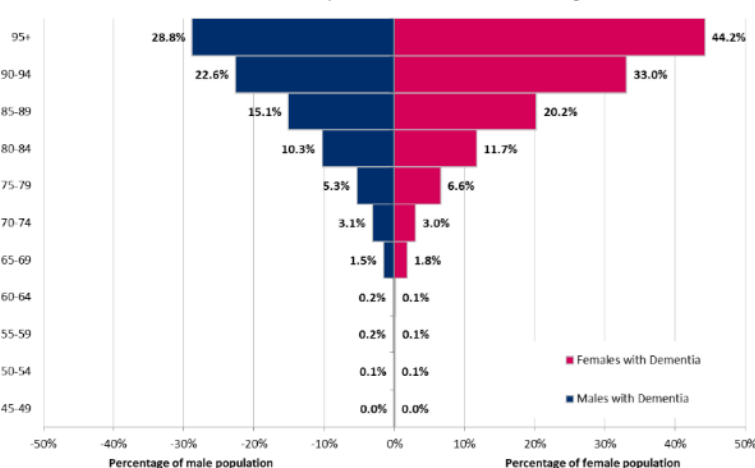
Dementia is a general term for a loss of memory, language, problem-solving or other thinking ability that is severe enough to interfere with daily life. There are different diseases that can be categorised as dementia with a variety of causes. Dementia is progressive, symptoms may be mild to begin with but get worse over time, having a substantial impact on a person's life and the people around them.

Dementia is also a life-limiting condition, it is the 6<sup>th</sup> most common primary cause of death in England (GBD 2019). Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia and accounts for more than half of England's dementia cases. It is estimated that more than 800,000 people are currently living with dementia in England. Dementia is significantly more prevalent amongst older people, around 87.4% of people with dementia in England are aged 65 or over. Due to England's ageing population, where the 65 and over age group is growing year-on-year, dementia cases are projected to reach over 1.2 million in England by 2045.

At around 80 years of age, some studies have found that dementia becomes [more prevalent among females](#). This gap appears to grow wider as people get older, women aged 95 or older are 53% more likely to have dementia than men.

This potentially higher female prevalence, along with the fact that women tend to live longer than men, means that women make up nearly two thirds of all dementia cases in England.

Male and female modelled prevalence of dementia in England, 2014



Source: Dementia UK (Update 2014) prepared by King's College London and the London School of Economics for the Alzheimer's Society.

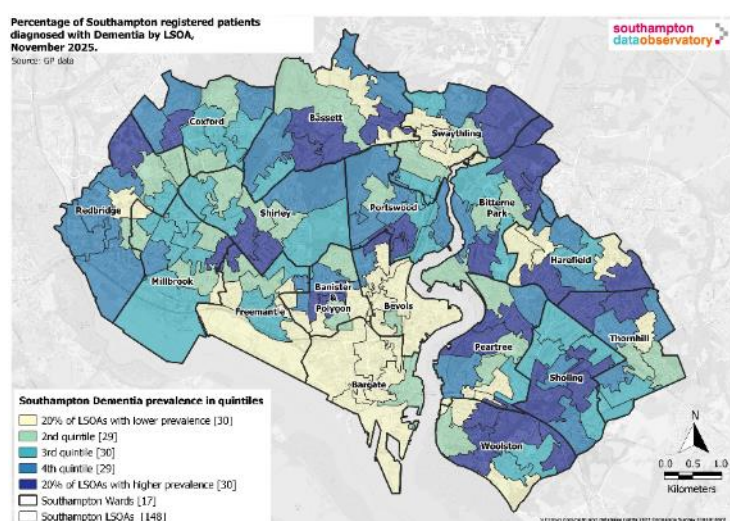
While under 65 year olds make up less than 2% of all dementia cases in England, this still equates to 15,501 people currently living with 'early onset dementia' in England. Early onset dementia is slightly more prevalent amongst men than women, some of the risks and causes of early onset dementia like head injuries and alcohol-related brain damage (ARBD) are more common among men. The number of early onset dementia cases is not expected to change significantly in England for the foreseeable future, as this age group is expected to remain similar in size.

Research on dementia prevention is still ongoing, however there are certain lifestyle risks that appear to influence an individual's chance of getting dementia later in life. These include [smoking](#), [obesity](#) and [drinking alcohol excessively](#). There is no known cure for dementia, however early detection and the right care helps people to live as well as possible. There is evidence that dementia diagnoses and care planning reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic and are yet to recover to pre-

pandemic levels. Dementia care is often informal and unpaid, provided by friends or family. Caring for a loved one with dementia can be challenging. More information is available from the [NHS – Looking after someone with dementia](#).

## 2. Dementia prevalence and diagnosis

A snapshot of GP data from November 2025 shows that diagnosed dementia rates were more prevalent in the East of Southampton, which had the highest number of neighbourhoods with rates above the city average. Every neighbourhood in the East also had a higher proportion of residents aged 65 and over compared to the Southampton average.



In 2020, Southampton's crude prevalence of dementia among under 65 year olds (2.2 per 10,000 population) was significantly lower than the England average (3.1 per 10,000) and was the second lowest rate among its CIPFA comparators. Southampton also has one of the lowest crude dementia rates of its CIPFA comparators for people aged 65 or over (4.0% in 2020). This may be explained by Southampton's relatively young population, it could

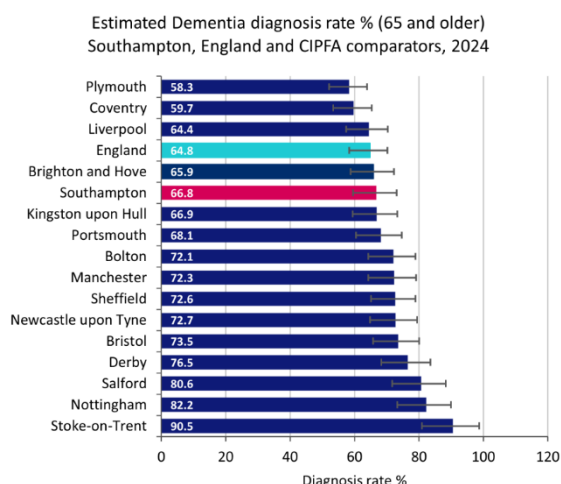
also be influenced by disparities in how well dementia is diagnosed in different parts of the country.

To understand the true scale of dementia in a population, it is more useful to use modelled estimates rather than diagnosed cases as many people have dementia without a formal diagnosis. Dementia prevalence is surveyed in a sample population by age and sex; these prevalence rates are then applied to the population structure of a given area. In 2025 there were 1,917 people aged 65 or over in Southampton diagnosed with dementia, however the number of people living with dementia in the city was estimated to be significantly higher (2,480). This is estimated to reach 3,581 by 2045.

These estimates can also be used to calculate how well an area is diagnosing dementia. In 2024 it was estimated that Southampton diagnosed 66.8% of all dementia cases, statistically similar to the England average (64.8%) and slightly above [NHS England's target of two thirds \(66.7%\)](#).

Southampton has the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest dementia diagnosis rate of its CIPFA comparators. Nine of them are diagnosing more than 70% of their estimated dementia cases. Stoke-on-Trent achieved a diagnosis

rate of 90.5%.



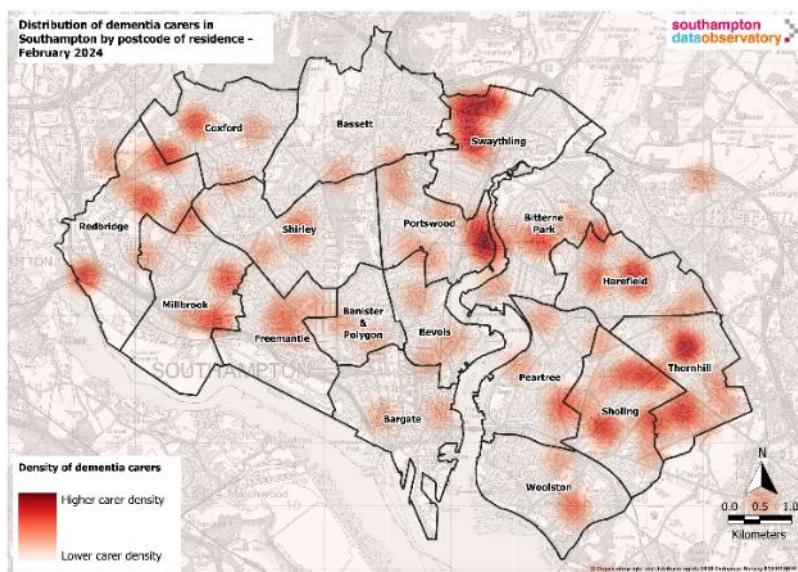
The NHS and central government have committed to increasing dementia diagnosis rates. Formal diagnoses can help dementia carers and healthcare professionals provide the best care possible. Southampton's dementia diagnosis rate dropped by 5.5 percentage points in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, potentially due to some people avoiding healthcare settings. While rates have increased year on year since then, pre-pandemic levels have only been reached as of 2025. Increasing the percentage of dementia diagnoses in the future will be made more difficult by England's ageing population structure, the number of new dementia cases to diagnose will increase each year.

### 3. Dementia care

Most people diagnosed with dementia continue living at home, particularly in the early stages. There are ways to make a home more [dementia friendly](#), however almost all people with dementia will eventually need help from other people with day-to-day tasks. This may be from professional carers, friends or family. Living at home with dementia isn't the right choice for everyone, it is estimated that 70% of people with dementia may eventually need long-term residential care. In 2023, it was calculated that Southampton had enough residential and nursing home bed capacity for 65.7% of registered dementia patients, below the estimate of 70% and significantly lower than the England average of 73.3%.

Care planning is critical to ensuring dementia care is as effective as possible. Care plans must be personalised to each individual and need to be regularly reviewed to keep up with the patient's changing needs. Dementia care plan reviews dropped significantly in the period 2020/21 during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Southampton just over one in every three dementia care plans were reviewed annually (33.6%), significantly lower than the England average of 39.7%.

While Southampton's registered dementia carers are spread across all Southampton localities, parts of the city with a younger average age or a lower deprivation score (IMD-2019) seem to have fewer dementia carers living there. Southampton's least deprived neighbourhoods are in Bassett, where there are very few registered dementia carers (despite Bassett having some of Southampton's highest dementia rates). Bargate has some of the youngest neighbourhoods in the city and also has a low number of registered carers living there.



## 4. Dementia hospital admissions



While Southampton has relatively low dementia prevalence rates, it has some of the highest rates of dementia related hospital admissions in the whole of England. For age standardised emergency admissions among people aged 65 and over Southampton has the 7<sup>th</sup> highest rate in England (5,507 per 100,000 people in 2019/20), this is 57% higher than the England average (3,517). Short stay emergency admissions are also significantly higher than the England average. While these rates are noteworthy, hospital admission statistics are easily skewed by different coding practices. An admission in Southampton may have a dementia code added to it where it wouldn't in other parts of the country. We know from alcohol and obesity related admission statistics that Southampton hospitals use secondary coding to improve care pathways, this may make comparisons less robust as Southampton looks exceptionally high.

## 5. Dementia related mortality

For age standardised mortality from dementia among people aged 65 and over, in 2023 Southampton had a higher, but similar rate (909 DSR per 100,000 people) to the England average (828 DSR per 100,000 people) however there is not a statistically significant difference. Southampton has the 8<sup>th</sup> lowest mortality rate of its CIPFA comparators and is statistically similar to them all.

The majority of people with dementia die in care homes. In Southampton in 2023, this accounted



for 52.4% (165 people) of all dementia related deaths, with a mention of dementia or Alzheimer's disease in the death record that occurred in a care home (similar to the England average of 56.4%).

In the same period 60 people (19.1%) were recorded as dying at home, similar to the England average of 15.5%. And 85 people (27.0%) died in hospital. Similar when compared to England (26.3%).

## 6. Resources

### 6.1 OHID Fingertips – Dementia Profile

Data for a range of measures on dementia prevalence, preventing well, diagnosing well, living well, supporting well and dying well. Indicators are available for England, local authorities, ICB, sub ICB and historical health geographies.

[Dementia Profile - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](https://phe.org.uk/dementia-profile)

### 6.2 NHS – Dementia Guide

This NHS guide has general information on dementia, symptoms and diagnosis, living with dementia and information on dementia care. It also has support and information for people living with dementia and their families and friends.

[NHS – Dementia Guide](https://www.nhs.uk/dementia-guide)

### 6.3 NHS England – Dementia

Information on NHS England's dementia strategy, partnerships and resources for dementia care. There is also information on central government dementia related initiatives such as the Prime Minister launched his Challenge on Dementia 2020.

[NHS England – Dementia](https://www.nhs.uk/dementia)

### 6.4 Dementia UK – Information and Support

Information on dementia from a specialist dementia nursing charity. Contains information and support for all dementia related issues. You can also contact dementia specialist nurses through Dementia UK if you have any further questions about dementia.

[Dementia UK – Information and Support](https://www.dementiauk.org/)

## 6.5 Alzheimer's Society – About Dementia

Information on dementia from a specialist dementia charity. Contains information and support for all dementia related issues. You can also contact dementia specialist nurses through the Alzheimer's UK if you have any further questions about dementia.

[Dementia UK – Information and Support](#)

## 6.6 Census 2021 – Interactive Dashboard

A range of data insights from Census 2021, age related statistics will be particularly relevant to dementia. 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 – interactive dashboard](#)