

census 2021



Sexual orientation and Gender identity – a briefing



Inform Gloucestershire

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1. What is the 2021 Census?

The census is a survey of all people and households in England and Wales that happens every 10 years. It is designed to collect detailed information about where people live, what they do for a living, what sort of homes and families they have, their general health, their educational attainment and how these factors have changed over time. There is simply nothing else that gives so much detail about us and the society we live in. It tells us what our needs are now and what they are likely to be in the future. It also gives a snapshot of how we live, for future generations to look back on.

The information given by the public during the census helps local authorities plan and fund public services. It informs where billions of pounds are spent, for instance on things like roads, schools and hospitals.

The 2021 Census was conducted on the 21st March 2021, it is unique as it was conducted during national lockdown as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This briefing provides analysis of the data around sexual orientation and gender identity, released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on the 6th January 2023.

2. Caveats – Covid¹

The 2021 Census took place during national lockdown which was initiated in response to COVID-19. *'For most of the population, the coronavirus pandemic would not have affected where they considered themselves resident.'*² However, there is indication that some subgroups of the population may have changed where they lived during this time, mainly students and some urban residents:

Students- There is evidence to suggest there was a higher proportion of students not living at their term-time address on the 21st March compared with previous years. Also, usually resident international students may have returned to their home country early and not have been residing in the UK at the time of the 2021 Census. To combat the impact of this, the ONS asked students to complete the form for their term-time address which they *'intended to stay at regularly during term time in this academic year, even if they are not currently there'*³. Furthermore, international students were counted if they were still present in the UK or had attended university during the Autumn 2020/Winter 2021 academic terms and were intending to return: up to the 21st March 2022.

¹ See

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/methodologies/qualityandmethodologyinformationqmiforcensus2021#quality-summary> for further information

² ONS, 2022

³ *Ibid.*

Urban residents- There is some evidence to suggest that the population of Greater London may have fallen in the COVID-19 pandemic due to young adults leaving, higher mortality of over 75s and increased internal migration. However, there is also indication that the population has begun growing since then. This may also have been reflected in other urban centers.

3. What do the results tell us about Gloucestershire?

3.1 Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is an umbrella term covering sexual identity, attraction and behavior. 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 relationships⁴.

The sexual orientation variable classifies people over the age of 16 years based on their answers to the sexual orientation question. The question was voluntary and there is a not answered category in the dataset. The sexual orientation question is new for Census 2021 and therefore is not comparable to the 2011 Census.

In Gloucestershire, 90.40% of residents (481,191 people) over the age of 16 stated that they are straight or heterosexual, 1.28% (6,814) said they are gay or lesbian, 1.21% (6,432) answered they are bisexual and 0.31% (1,660 people) of the population is classified as all other sexual orientations. In comparison, there was a similar proportion of the population in each of the sexual orientation categories in the South West and England and Wales.

Overall, 6.80% of Gloucestershire's population (36,188 people) over the age of 16 chose not to answer the sexuality question, this is a lower proportion than both the South West (7.30%) and England and Wales (7.47%).

⁴ [Sexual orientation, England and Wales: Census 2021, Office for National Statistics](#)

Table 1: Sexual orientation in England and Wales⁵

Area	Straight or Heterosexual	Gay or Lesbian	Bisexual	All other sexual orientations	Not answered
Cheltenham	89.18%	1.61%	1.84%	0.45%	6.92%
Cotswold	91.49%	1.15%	0.85%	0.19%	6.32%
Forest of Dean	90.61%	1.02%	0.97%	0.29%	7.11%
Gloucester	89.83%	1.39%	1.36%	0.35%	7.07%
Stroud	90.32%	1.24%	1.15%	0.31%	6.98%
Tewkesbury	91.58%	1.13%	0.86%	0.22%	6.21%
Gloucestershire	90.40%	1.28%	1.21%	0.31%	6.80%
South West	89.51%	1.43%	1.43%	0.34%	7.30%
England	89.37%	1.54%	1.29%	0.34%	7.46%
England and Wales	89.37%	1.54%	1.28%	0.34%	7.47%

Out of Gloucestershire's six districts, Tewkesbury had the highest proportion of its population answering that they are straight or heterosexual with 91.58% (70,842 people) whilst the lowest proportion was in Cheltenham with 89.18% (87,790 people), a difference of 2.4 percentage points. Inversely, Cheltenham had the highest proportion of the population answering they were gay or lesbian (1.61%, 1,581 people), bisexual (1.84%, 1,812 people) and all other sexual orientations (0.45%, 443 people). The lowest proportion for the gay or lesbian category was Forest of Dean (1.02%, 747 people) whilst Cotswold accounted for the lowest proportion of people stating they are bisexual or stated a different sexual orientation, accounting for 0.85% (649 people) and 0.19% (144 people) respectively.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the population who are gay or lesbian, bisexual or stated another sexual orientation (LGB+) by MSOA (Middle Super Output Area) in Gloucestershire. The three MSOAs with the highest proportions of the population identifying as LGB+ are St. Paul's in Cheltenham (8.53%), Central Gloucester and Hempstead in Gloucester (6.23%) and Lansdown and Montpellier in Cheltenham (6.0%). In contrast, the MSOAs with the lowest proportion of people identifying as LGB+ are: Kemble and South Cerney in Cotswold (1.52%), Lydbrook, Newland and St.Briavels in Forest of Dean (1.67%) and Highnam, Longford and Norton in Tewkesbury (1.68%).

⁵ ONS, 2021

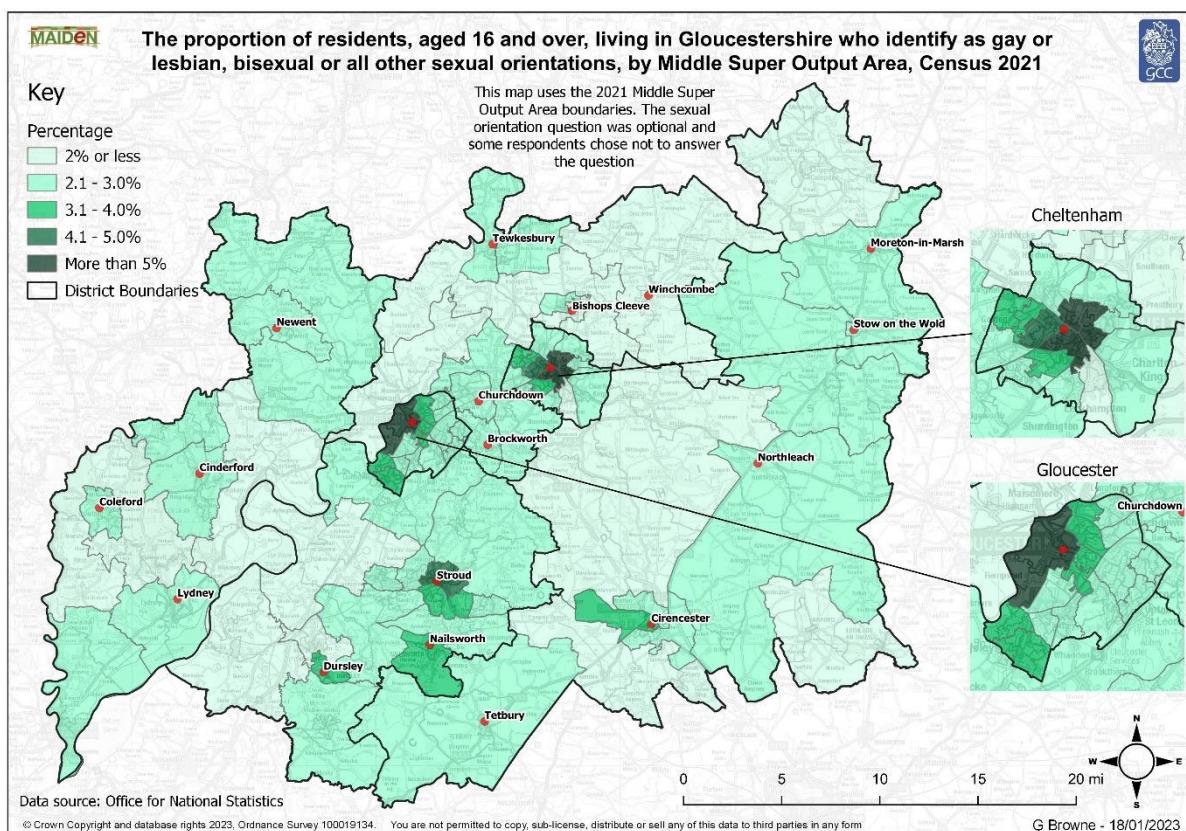


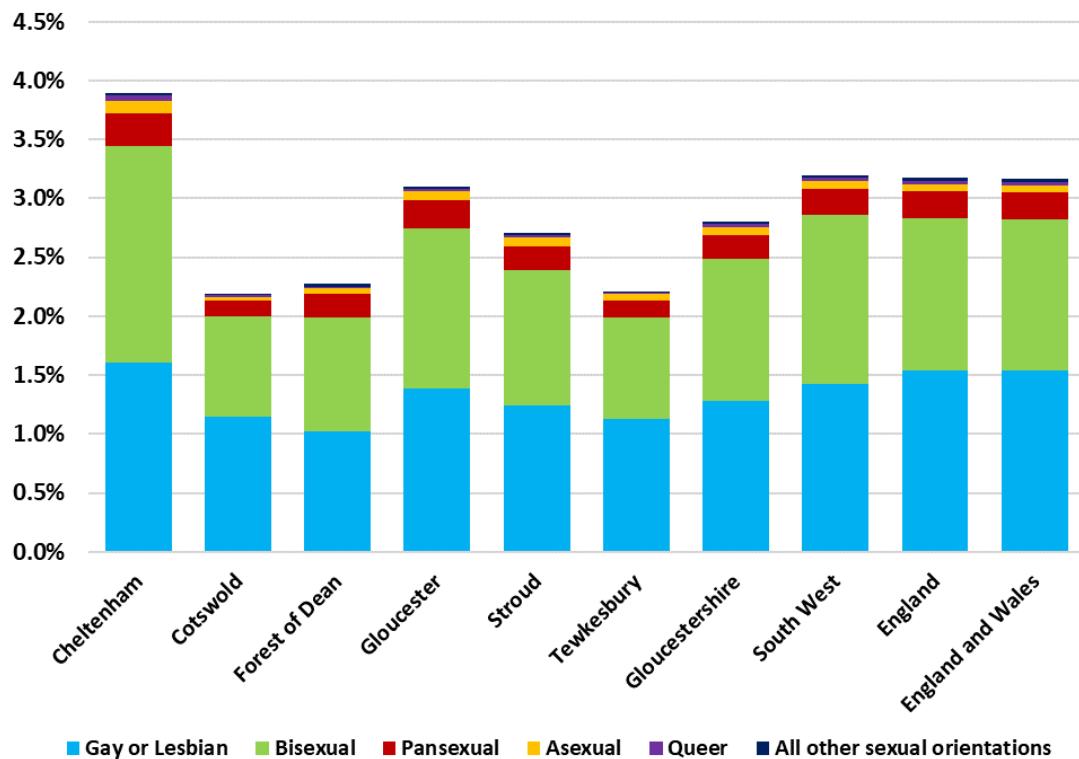
Figure 1: A map of the proportion of the population who identify as gay or lesbian, bisexual and all other sexual orientations by MSOA in Gloucestershire

Figure 2 provides greater detail on the sexual orientation categories excluding straight or heterosexual and no answer given. The all other sexual orientations category is broken down into greater detail to provide the categories: pansexual, asexual and queer. In Gloucestershire, 0.20% of the population (1,075 people) are pansexual, 0.07% (371 people) asexual and 0.02% queer (119 people). The proportions are representative of both the regional and national figures.

Furthermore, Cheltenham has the highest proportion and number of people identifying as pansexual (0.27%, 269 people) whilst all other districts had between 0.03-0.20% of the population identifying as pansexual. In all the districts apart from Cheltenham less than 0.1% of the population said they were asexual. In Cheltenham, 0.11% of the population stated they are asexual which is equivalent to 104 people. In addition, there was 50 people in Cheltenham who

stated they are queer, this is the highest district proportion accounting for 0.05% of the population.

Proportion of the population in each sexual orientation category* in England and Wales



*Excluding Straight or Heterosexual and the Not answered category

Figure 2: Proportion of the population who are gay or lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, queer or all other sexual orientations⁶

3.2 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 the sex registered at birth⁷.

The gender identity variable classifies people over the age of 16 years based on their answers to the gender identity question. The question was voluntary and there is a not answered category in the dataset. The gender identity question is new for Census 2021 and therefore is not comparable to the 2011 Census. By asking people about their gender identity, official data on the size of the transgender population can help to provide better quality information for monitoring, support anti-discrimination

⁶ ONS, 2021

⁷ [Gender identity, England and Wales: Census 2021, Office for National Statistics](#)

duties under the Equality Act 2010 and aid allocation for resources and policy development.

In Gloucestershire, 94.39% of the population (502,440 people) over the age of 16 years have the same gender identity as their sex registered at birth, this is a higher proportion than both the South West (93.99%) and England and Wales (93.46%), shown in Table 2. In comparison, 0.41% of the population (2,163 people) answered that their gender identity is different to the sex they were assigned at birth. This is similar to the proportion in the South West and England and Wales.

In more detail, 0.08% of the population of Gloucestershire (423 people) identify as a trans woman, 0.07% of the population (380 people) as a trans man, 0.07% of the population (355 people) as non-binary and 0.04% of the population (229 people) specified other gender identities. These proportions are in-line with the regional and national proportions.

Overall, 5.20% of Gloucestershire's population chose not to answer the gender identity question, this is a smaller proportion than in the South West (5.59%) and England and Wales (5.59%).

Table 2: Gender identity in England and Wales⁸

Area	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	Non-binary	All other gender identities	Not answered
Cheltenham	94.26%	0.14%	0.09%	0.09%	0.12%	0.08%	5.21%
Cotswold	95.07%	0.07%	0.07%	0.07%	0.04%	0.03%	4.65%
Forest of Dean	94.14%	0.16%	0.05%	0.04%	0.04%	0.03%	5.54%
Gloucester	93.75%	0.26%	0.11%	0.10%	0.05%	0.04%	5.69%
Stroud	94.46%	0.11%	0.07%	0.06%	0.09%	0.04%	5.17%
Tewkesbury	94.93%	0.09%	0.08%	0.05%	0.04%	0.03%	4.79%
Gloucestershire	94.39%	0.15%	0.08%	0.07%	0.07%	0.04%	5.20%
South West	93.99%	0.14%	0.08%	0.08%	0.07%	0.04%	5.59%
England	93.47%	0.25%	0.10%	0.10%	0.06%	0.04%	5.98%

A more detailed breakdown of the gender identity is not the same as sex registered at birth population is given by a map of Gloucestershire in Figure 3. It shows the distribution of the population who answered that their gender identity is different to the sex they were assigned at birth by MSOA (Middle Supper

⁸ ONS, 2021

Output Area). The MSOAs with the highest concentration of people who do not have the same gender identity as their assigned sex at birth were located in the urban districts of Gloucester and Cheltenham. The three MSOAs with the highest proportion of people are Central Gloucester and Hempstead in Gloucester (1.30%,), Barton in Gloucester (1.11%) and St. Paul's in Cheltenham (1.09%). 7 MSOAs had less than a 0.1% proportion of the population whose gender identity was different to the sex they were assigned at birth, these MSOAs are located in all the districts apart from Stroud.

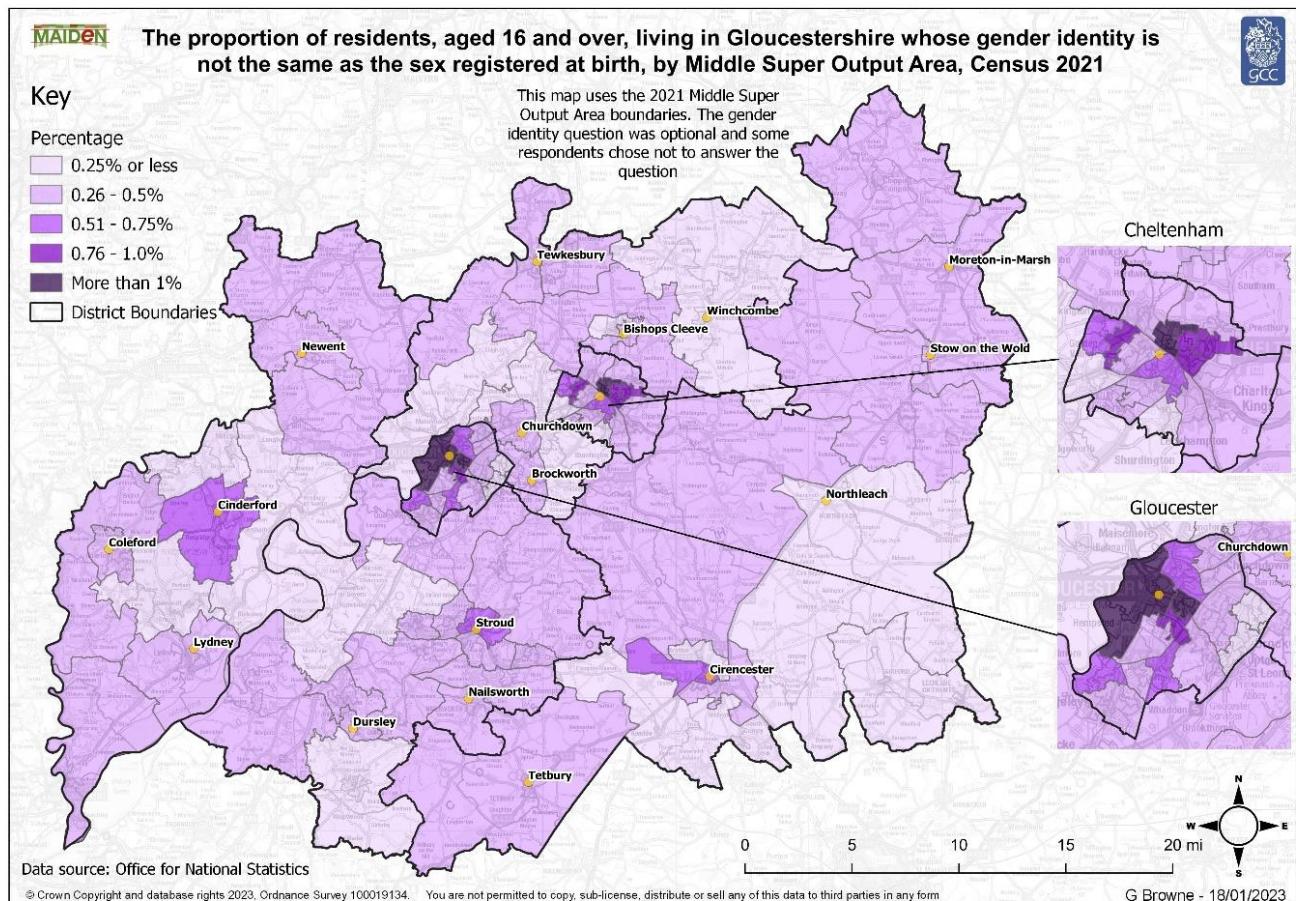


Figure 3: The proportion of residents whose gender identity is not the same as the sex registered at birth by MSOA in England and Wales⁹

Figure 4 indicates the district with the highest proportion of people whose gender identity is the same as their assigned sex at birth is Cotswold with 95.07% (72,549 people) whereas Gloucester has the lowest proportion with 93.75% of the population (100,259 people).

⁹ ONS, 2021

Inversely, Gloucester has the highest proportion of the population whose gender identity is not the same as their assigned sex at birth (0.56%, 600 people) and Cotswold the lowest proportion with a 0.28% proportion (213 people).

The gender identity is different to sex registered at birth category can also be broken down into more detail by district:

- Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given: Cheltenham has the highest proportion of people (0.26%, 282 people) and Cotswold the lowest with 0.07% of the population, equivalent to 57 people.
- Trans woman: Gloucester has the highest proportion with 0.11%, 114 people, whereas Forest of Dean has the lowest with 0.05% of the population, 38 people.
- Trans man: Gloucester has the highest proportion with 0.10%, 107 people, and Forest of Dean the lowest with 0.04% of the population, 30 people.
- Non-binary: Cheltenham has the highest proportion of the population with 0.12%, equivalent to 123 people, whereas Cotswold, Forest of Dean and Tewkesbury have the lowest with a 0.04% share, equivalent to 33, 30 and 29 people respectively.
- All other gender identities: Cheltenham has the highest proportion of people (0.08%, 80 people) and Cotswold, Forest of Dean and Tewkesbury the lowest proportion with 0.03% of the population, equivalent to 21, 20, and 21 people respectively.

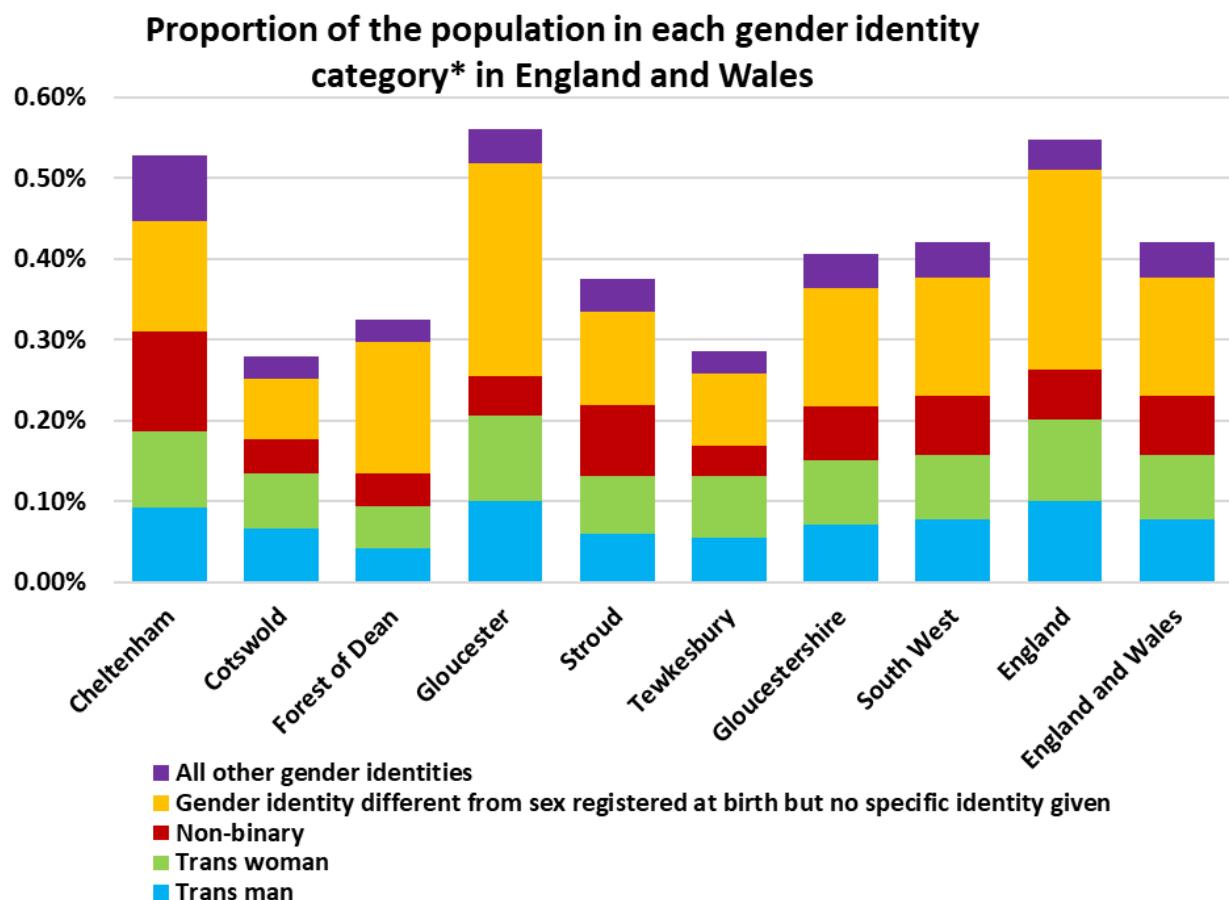


Figure 4: Proportion of the population by gender identity in England and Wales¹⁰

¹⁰ ONS, 2021

4. Key messages

- Nine out of ten people identify as Straight or Heterosexual in Gloucestershire.
- There is a slightly lower proportion of the population in Gloucestershire who identify as LGB+ compared to the regional and national proportion.
- In general, there is a higher density of people who are LGB+ in the MSOAs located in Cheltenham and Gloucester compared to the rural districts.
- A similar proportion of the population in Gloucestershire have a different gender identity than the one assigned at birth compared to the regional and national proportion.
- The MSOAs with the highest proportions of people whose gender identity is not the same as assigned at birth are in the urban districts of Cheltenham and Gloucester.
- By identifying where there is a greater number of people who are part of the LGBTQ+¹¹ population, better informed decisions can be made to monitor and support anti-discrimination duties.

5. What's next?

In 2023 the Office for National Statistics will release multivariate data which will allow us to combine variables and explore relationships between the data.

6. Where can you find out more?

For further information please visit:

<https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/inform/population/census-of-population/census-2021/>

Or contact us by emailing informgloucestershire@goucestershire.gov.uk

¹¹ This acronym refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer, plus other sexual orientations and gender identities