

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Communities

Introduction

This briefing relates to people who identified their ethnic group as either ‘Gypsy or Irish Traveller’ or ‘Roma’ in the 2021 Census. Readers are advised that due to statistical disclosure control measures applied by the ONS and the impact of rounding, there may be small differences between estimated numbers contained in this and other Census briefings and analysis (see page 10 of this briefing for further details).

Key Findings

- The 2021 Census recorded 870 people as Gypsy or Irish Traveller in 2021 in East Sussex, and 520 as Roma. However, this is likely to be an undercount, with many Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people reluctant to self-identify due to mistrust of the intent behind the data collection.
- Almost half (46%) of the residents who declared their ethnic group as Gypsy or Irish Traveller live in Wealden, particularly around Hailsham. The Roma community, conversely, were mostly concentrated in Eastbourne (26%) and Hastings (32%).
- Both the Gypsy or Irish Traveller population and the Roma population have a much younger age profile compared to the rest of the county, characterised by a much smaller proportion of the population aged 65+, as well as a higher proportion of younger people aged 0-15 in the case of the Gypsy or Irish Traveller group.
- One third (33%) of the Gypsy or Irish Traveller community identified as disabled under the Equality Act in the 2021 census, compared to 20% for the county as a whole. Members of this community also rated their health more poorly, with 15% rating their health as either “bad” or “very bad”, compared to just 6% in the county overall.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Community in East Sussex

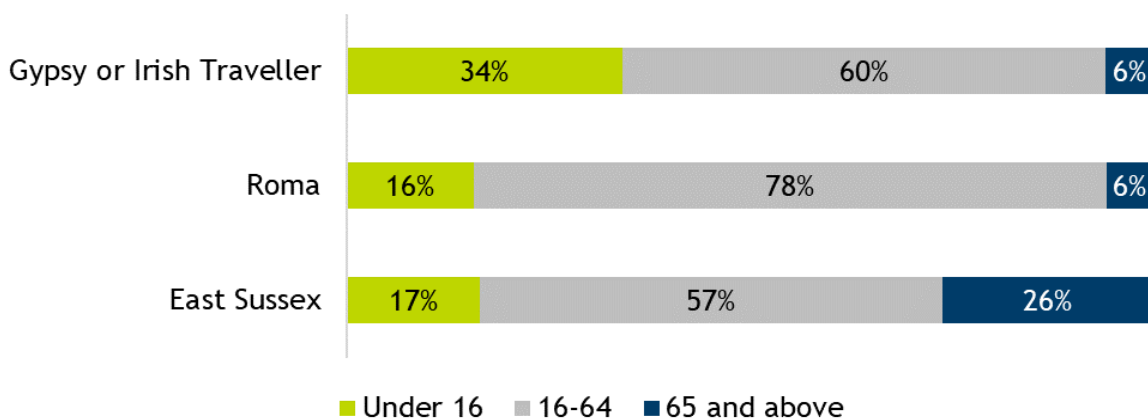
There were 870 residents identifying as Gypsy or Irish Traveller in the 2021 Census. This represents 0.2% of the county’s population, which is the same as the proportion recorded across the whole of the South East region, and slightly higher than the proportion found in England as a whole (0.1%).

Nearly half (46%) of the residents who declared their ethnic group as Gypsy or Irish Traveller live in Wealden, particularly around Hailsham, where the Swan Barn site is located.

A further 520 residents identified as Roma (0.1% of the usual resident population), over half (58%) of whom were resident in Eastbourne and Hastings. This is consistent with the proportion of Roma found across the South East region, but lower than the proportion found in England as a whole (0.2%).

Both groups - but especially the Gypsy or Irish Traveller community - have a much younger age profile compared to the rest of the county; the median age of a resident identifying as Gypsy or Irish Traveller in the 2021 Census was 28, while the median age of a resident identifying as Roma was 36. This compares to 48 across the county as a whole.

Population by Age Group in 2021



Source: ONS

Unlike in the 2011 Census, which recorded 113 females for every 100 males within the Gypsy or Irish Traveller population, the 2021 Census revealed an even split; exactly 50% of those stating they were Gypsy or Irish Traveller said they were female, and 50% said they were male. There was, however, some variation within the Roma population, with 54% stating they were male and 46% female. This contrasts with the county as a whole, where 48% of the population is male, and 52% female.

Area	Total Population	Gypsy or Irish Traveller Population	Roma Population
East Sussex	545,850	870	520
Eastbourne	101,680	70	140
Hastings	91,000	130	160
Lewes	99,910	100	70
Rother	93,110	170	50
Wealden	160,150	400	100

Source: ONS

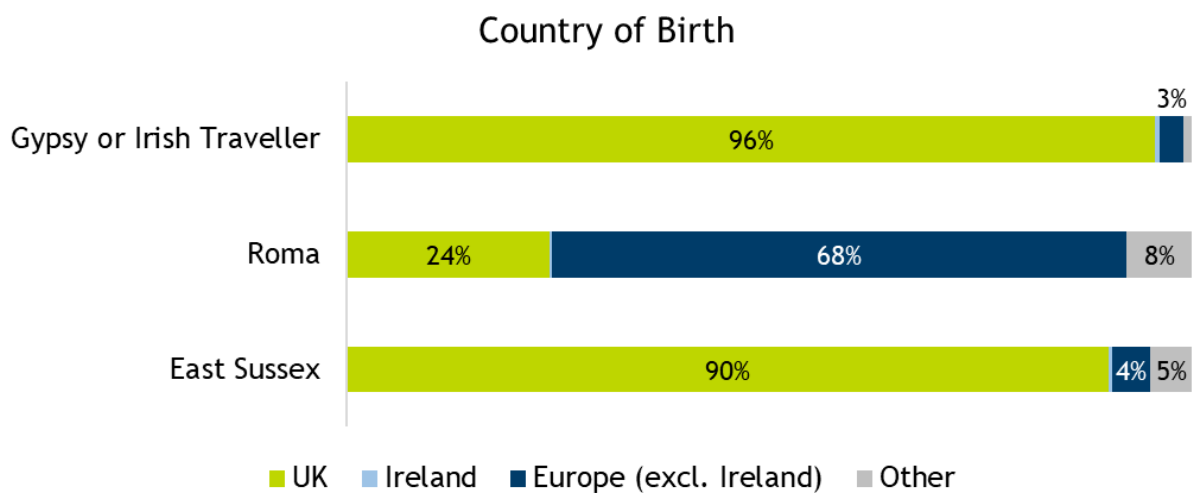
Religion, identity and country of birth

37% of East Sussex residents identifying as Gypsy or Irish Traveller in the 2021 Census stated their religion as Christian, while 53% stated that they do not follow a religion. By contrast, 66% of Roma stated their religion as Christian, and just 20% said they had no religion. Across the county as a whole, 46% of residents described themselves as Christian, and 45% said they had no religion.

The census also asked people about their national identity. The majority (95%) of the Gypsy or Irish Traveller population considered themselves to have a UK identity only. Fewer than 5 members of the Gypsy or Irish traveller community specified their

national identity as “Irish”. Among the Roma population, conversely, only 34% said they had a UK only identity, with 62% stating they had a non-UK identity only.

96% of East Sussex Gypsy or Irish Traveller were born in the UK, compared to just 24% of the Roma community. Out of the 520 people identifying as Roma in the 2021 Census, 350 (68%) said they were born in Europe and 35 (7%) said they were born in the Americas and the Caribbean. Of those Roma born outside of the UK, 74% were under the age of 35 when they arrived in the UK.



Source: ONS

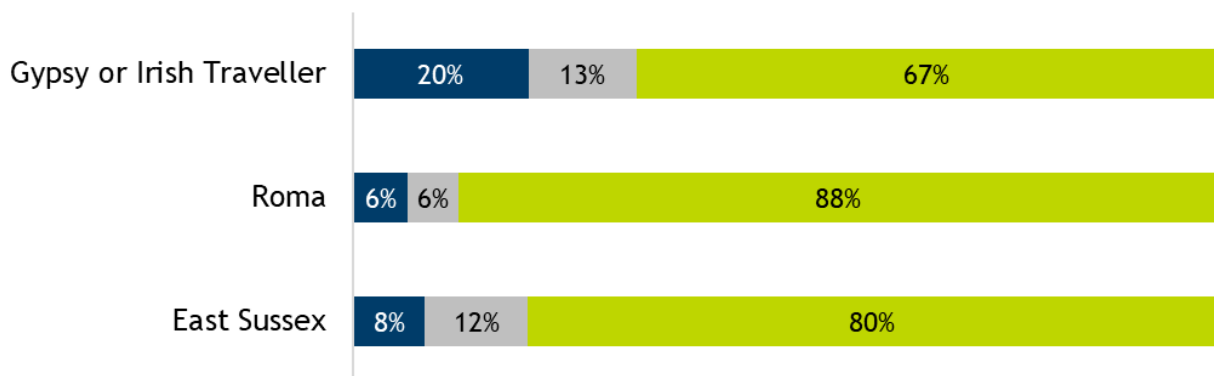
Health and unpaid care

Despite having a lower age profile than the East Sussex population as a whole, rates of disability were substantially higher in the Gypsy or Irish Traveller community than in the rest of the county. One third (33%) of the Gypsy or Irish Traveller community identified as disabled under the Equality Act in the 2021 census, compared to 20% for the county as a whole. Members of this community also rated their health more poorly, with 15% rating their health as either “bad” or “very bad”, compared to just 6% in the county overall.

Members of the Gypsy or Irish Traveller community also provided more unpaid care compared to residents across East Sussex as a whole. Around one sixth (16%) of Gypsy

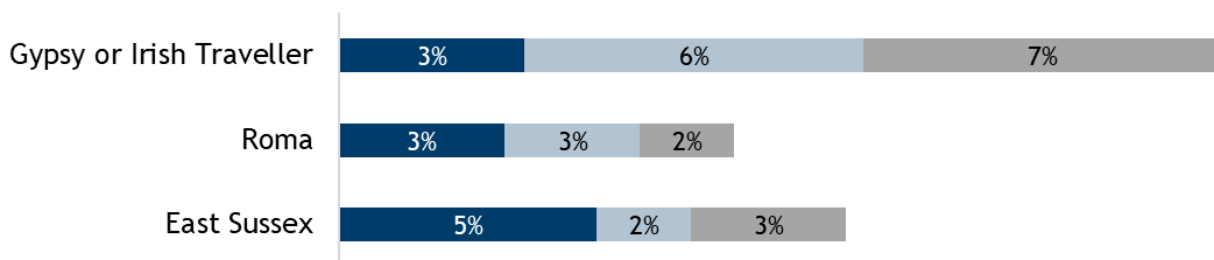
or Irish Travellers provided unpaid care in 2021, compared to 10% in the county as a whole. By contrast, members of the Roma community provided less unpaid care than average for the county as a whole (7% among the Roma community vs 10% in East Sussex overall), and also had lower rates of disability (12% versus 20% for the county as a whole).

Disability Status



- Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a lot
- Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a little
- Not disabled under the Equality Act

Proportion of Residents Providing Unpaid Care

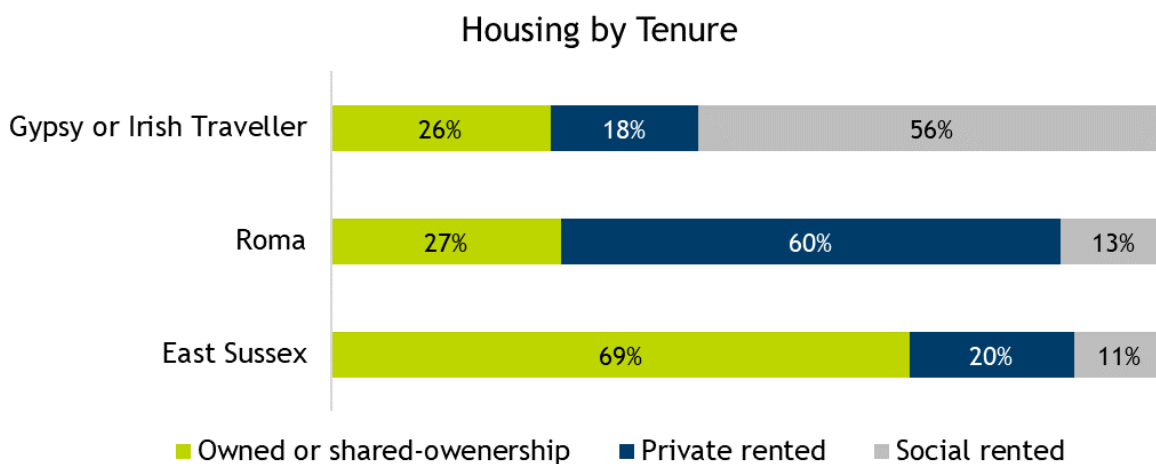
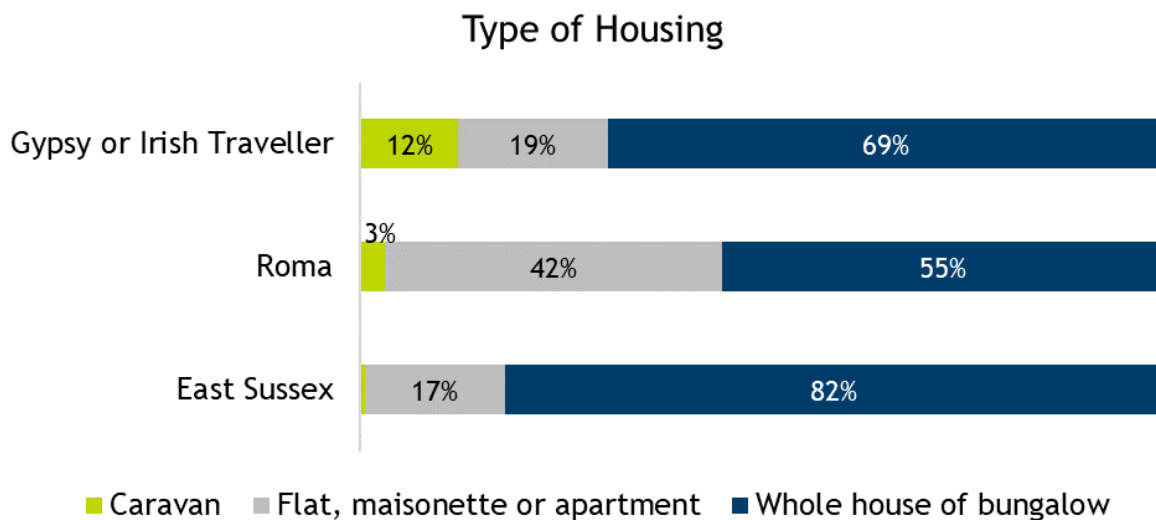


- Provides 19 or less hours unpaid care a week
- Provides 20 to 49 hours unpaid care a week
- Provides 50 or more hours unpaid care a week

Source: ONS

Housing

The majority (69%) of those identifying as Gypsy or Irish Traveller lived in a whole house or bungalow in 2021. 12% lived in a flat, maisonette or apartment, with the remaining 12% living in a caravan. And while whole house or bungalow was also the most common type of housing for Roma, the proportion living in a flat, maisonette or apartment was around 2.5 times more than in the county overall (42% versus 17% across the whole of East Sussex).



Source: ONS

Social rented accommodation was the most common housing tenure amongst Gypsy or Irish Traveller households in East Sussex. Over half of East Sussex Gypsy or Irish Travellers lived in social rented accommodation, with the remaining half split between ‘owned or shared ownership’ and ‘private rented’ accommodation. Conversely, the majority (60%) of Roma households lived in private rented accommodation, with only 13% in social housing. Levels of home ownership were significantly lower in both the Gypsy or Irish Traveller and Roma communities compared to East Sussex as a whole.

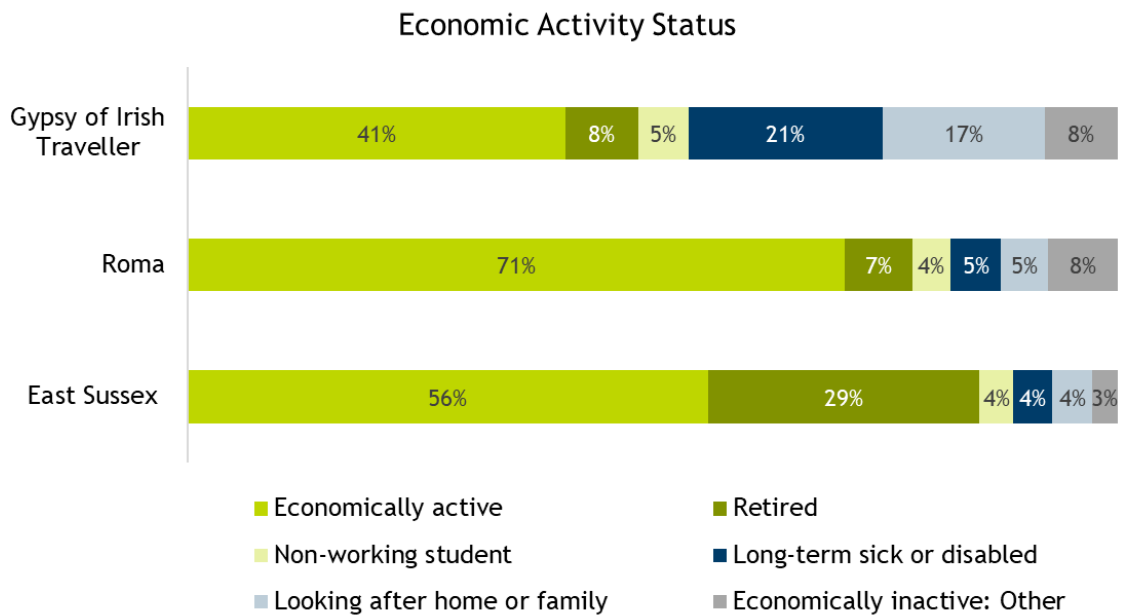
Car ownership

Rates of car ownership among Gypsy or Irish Traveller and Roma households were lower than across the county as a whole. In 2021, 77% of Gypsy or Irish Traveller households and 78% of Roma households had at least one vehicle, compared to 87% in East Sussex overall. Car ownership has increased significantly since 2011, when only 62% of people identifying as Gypsy or Irish Traveller had a car or van.

Labour market and Qualifications

Levels of economic inactivity are higher among the Gypsy or Irish Traveller population than the county average, with 21% of those aged 16 and above stating that they are economically inactive due to their being long-term sick or disabled, and a further 17% economically inactive due to “looking after home or family”, compared to 4% for both categories in East Sussex overall.

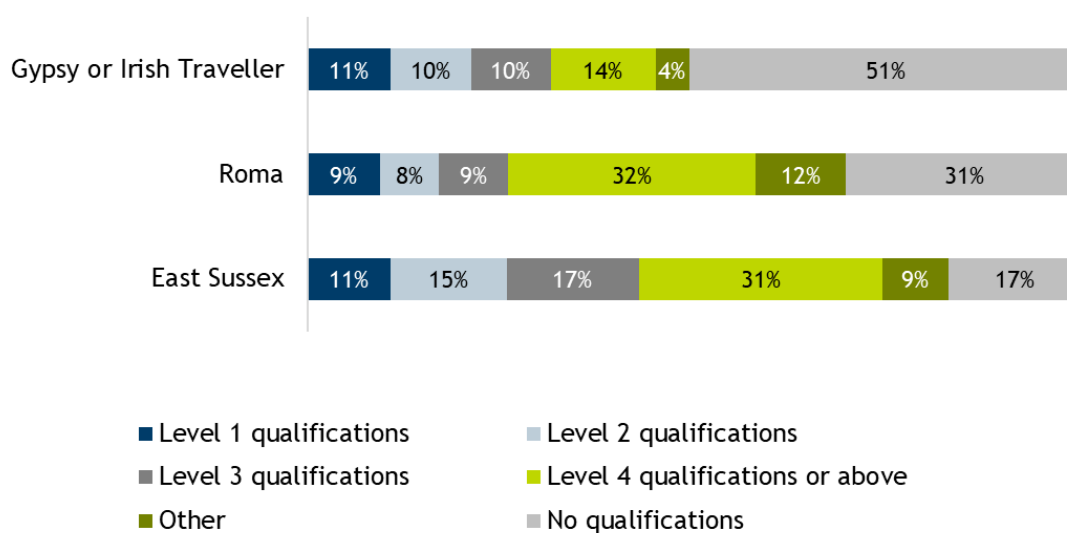
Further, over a third (34%) of the Gypsy or Irish Traveller population aged 16 and above stated that they had never worked, compared to 9% for the county as a whole. 51% of Gypsy or Irish Travellers also reported having no qualifications, compared to 17% county-wide.



Source: ONS

The Roma community also registered slightly higher proportions of economic activity due to their being long-term sick or disabled (5%), and “looking after home or family” (5%) compared to the county overall, as well as a slightly higher proportion of those who had never worked (11%). However, the difference was much smaller than was exhibited within the Gypsy or Irish Traveller community. It is also interesting to note that while a higher proportion of Roma reported having no qualifications (31%) than in the county overall (17%), the proportion of the East Sussex Roma population with Level 4 (degree-level) qualifications (32%) was slightly higher than the county average (31%).

Highest Level of Qualifications



Qualification	Definition
Level 1	1 to 4 GCSEs grade A* to C, Any GCSEs at other grades, O levels or CSEs (any grades), 1 AS level, NVQ level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic or Essential Skills
Level 2	5 or more GCSEs (A* to C or 9 to 4), O levels (passes), CSEs (grade 1), School Certification, 1 A level, 2 to 3 AS levels, VCEs, Intermediate or Higher Diploma, Welsh Baccalaureate Intermediate Diploma, NVQ level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First or General Diploma, RSA Diploma
Level 3	2 or more A levels or VCEs, 4 or more AS levels, Higher School Certificate, Progression or Advanced Diploma, Welsh Baccalaureate Advance Diploma, NVQ level 3; Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma
Level 4	Degree (BA, BSc), higher degree (MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ level 4 to 5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher level, professional qualifications (for example, teaching, nursing, accountancy)
Other	Apprenticeships, vocational or work-related qualifications, other qualifications achieved in England or Wales, qualifications achieved outside England or Wales (equivalent not stated or unknown)

Source: ONS

Limitations and mitigations

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produces census data for a range of different output geographies. This includes census statistics for small areas/neighbourhoods right up to statistics for large administrative units. When added together, detailed census results for smaller areas may not exactly match the same data for larger areas. This is because the ONS uses statistical disclosure control methods which swap very small numbers between areas, and/or add small changes to some counts (cell key perturbation). For example, they might change a count of four to a three or a five, to make sure that it is impossible to identify specific individuals. This means that data for small areas may not sum to the totals for higher geographical levels.

For this reason, in any discussion of the census results, we have chosen to round numbers to the nearest 10. Where percentages have been provided, these are based on unrounded numbers. Tables published in this report and on East Sussex in Figures website contain unrounded data as supplied by the ONS, but come with the caveat that individual numbers and totals may vary slightly between tables depending on the selected output geography, as detailed above.

Census statistics are estimates rather than counts, and therefore have measures of uncertainty associated with them. As with all self-completion questionnaires, some forms will have contained incorrect, incomplete, or missing information about a person or household. While the ONS takes numerous steps to correct and minimise possible sources of error, as described in their [Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\) Report](#), no census is perfect.

Further Information

For more information about the census data visit the [ONS website](#). For queries specifically relating to East Sussex, please contact the Research and Intelligence Team via email at esif@eastsussex.gov.uk.

The Research and Intelligence Team, Governance Services, provides demographic and socio-economic data, intelligence and insight to support East Sussex County Council and other East Sussex Partners. The Team also manages East Sussex in Figures (ESiF), the Local Information System for East Sussex. ESiF is a web-based information system that contains detailed, up-to-date and reliable information on a very wide range of topics. Visit www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk for more information.