

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Introduction

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has released detailed results from the 2021 Census for England and Wales. This includes information about the gender identity and sexual orientation of East Sussex residents.

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 15 of this briefing for further details).

Key Findings

- Around 1,640 (0.4%) of East Sussex residents aged 16 years and over indicated that their gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth. Of these, 330 (0.07% of all residents aged 16+) identified as a trans woman, 310 (0.07%) identified as a trans man, and 280 (0.06%) identified as non-binary; the remaining 720 (0.2%) either did not answer the follow-up question on gender identity, or wrote in a different gender identity.
- Residents aged 16 to 24 years were the most likely age group to specify their gender identity as being different from their sex registered at birth (450 residents / 1.0% of all 16 to 24 year olds).
- 15,200 residents (3.3% of residents aged 16 years and over) identified with an LGB+ sexual orientation. Within this group, 8,260 (1.8% of all residents aged 16 years and over) described themselves as gay or lesbian, 5,590 (1.2%) described themselves as bisexual, and 1,350 (0.3%) identified with a different sexual orientation.
- Around 1 in 14 (7.1%) of females between the ages of 16 and 44 identified as LGB+ in East Sussex in 2021, compared to around 1 in 25 men (4.1%). By contrast, only around 1 in 60 (1.7%) of females aged 45 and above identified as LGB+ in 2021, compared to 1 in 38 men (2.6%).

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 their sex registered at birth.

The question on gender identity was new for Census 2021. The data will help to provide better quality information for monitoring purposes and aid allocation for resources and policy development. It will also support anti-discrimination duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The question was voluntary and was only asked of people aged 16 years and over. People were asked "Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?" and had the option of selecting either "Yes" or "No" and writing in their gender identity.

430,050 people across East Sussex answered this question (94.4% of the population aged 16 years and over).

428,410 people (94.0%) stated that their gender identity was the same as their sex registered at birth. This is slightly higher than the English national average of 93.5%.

A total of 1,640 people (0.4%) indicated that their gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth (in this briefing we refer to people in this category as being trans). Within this group:

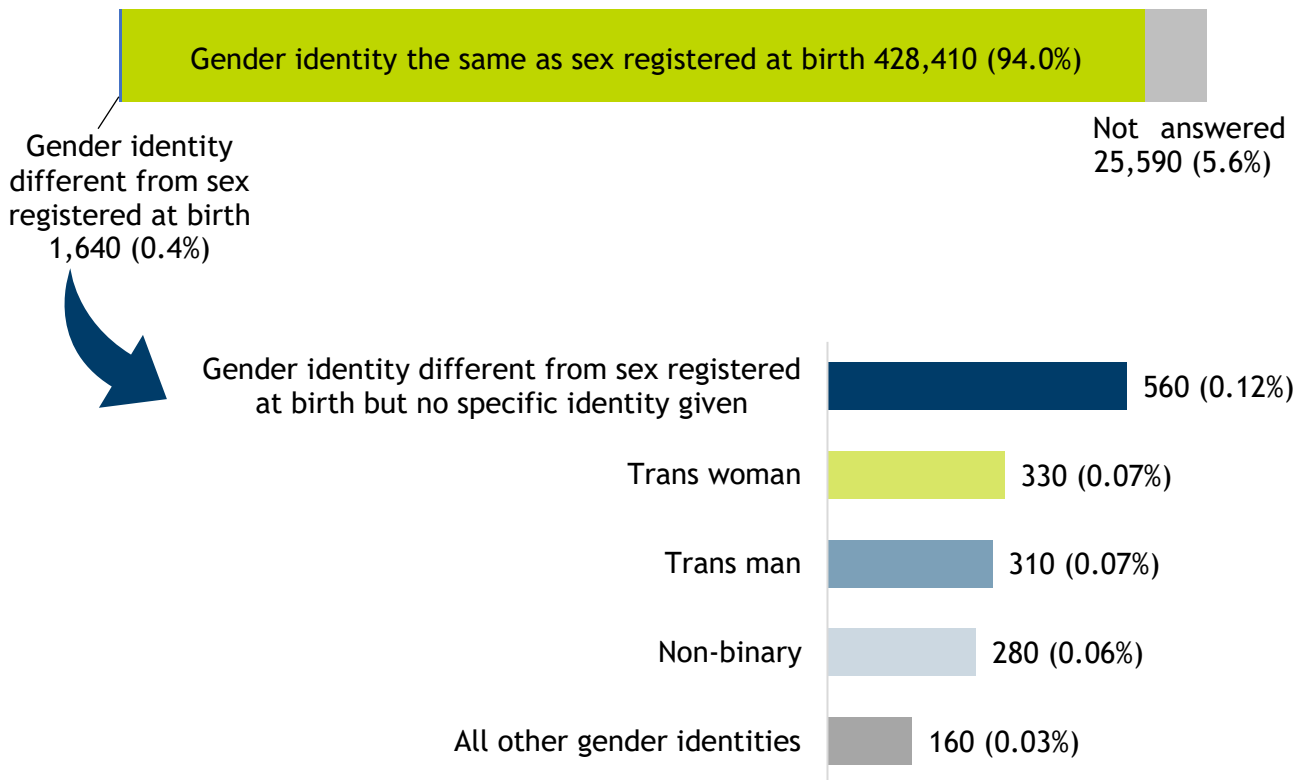
- 560 (0.12%) stated that they had a different gender identity but did not provide a write-in response.
- 330 (0.07%) identified as a trans woman
- 310 (0.07%) identified as a trans man
- 280 (0.06%) identified as non-binary
- 160 (0.03%) wrote in a different gender identity

The remaining 35,590 (5.6%) did not answer the question on gender identity.

Area	Total Population aged 16 and over	Percentage of residents identifying with a gender identity different to their sex registered at birth
East Sussex	455,639	0.36%
Eastbourne	84,576	0.46%
Hastings	74,707	0.51%
Lewes	83,221	0.39%
Rother	79,489	0.28%
Wealden	133,650	0.25%
South East	7,554,580	0.46%
Brighton and Hove	235,366	0.99%
Kent	1,276,566	0.44%
Surrey	972,512	0.37%
West Sussex	727,120	0.38%
ENGLAND	46,006,957	0.55%

Source: ONS

Gender identity of East Sussex residents aged 16 and over

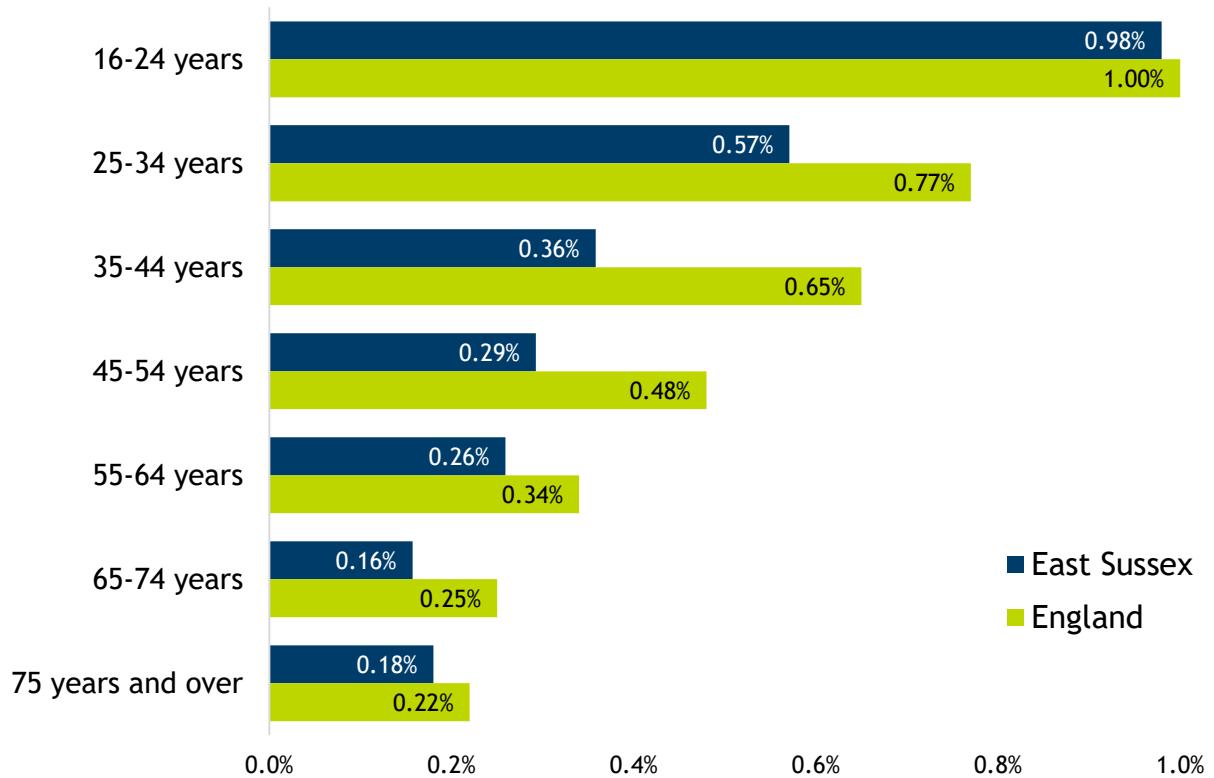


Source: ONS

People aged 16 to 24 years were the most likely age group to have said that their gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth, with 0.98% (450 residents) identifying as such. This compares with 1.00% of 16 to 24 year olds in England as a whole who identified as trans. With the exception of the over-75s, which registered a slightly higher proportion of people identifying as trans than the 65-74 age group (0.18% and 0.16%, respectively), the proportion of people who identified as trans decreased with each successive age group.

Overall, the proportion of people who identified as trans was slightly higher among those who answered female to the sex question (55.2% or 905 residents) than to male (44.8% or 735 residents).

Percentage of usual residents aged 16 years and over who identified as trans by age in 2021



Percentage of usual residents aged 16 years and over by sex and gender identity

■ People who answered female to the sex question ■ People who answered male to the sex question



Source: ONS

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is an umbrella term referring to who someone feels physically and emotionally attracted to. This can be romantic or emotional attraction, or both. There are lots of different types of sexuality or sexual orientation, and people may use different terms to describe how they feel. 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 relationships.

The question on sexual orientation was new for Census 2021. The data will meet the needs for better quality information on the LGB+ population (“gay or lesbian”, “bisexual” or “other sexual orientation”) for monitoring and supporting anti-discrimination duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The question was voluntary and was only asked of people aged 16 years and over. People were asked “Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?”. The different sexual orientations that people could choose from included:

- straight or heterosexual
- gay or lesbian
- bisexual
- other sexual orientation

If they selected “Other sexual orientation”, they were asked to write in the sexual orientation with which they identified.

No definition of individual terms was provided, and respondents were free to select whichever they identified with the most.

In total, 421,520 people answered the question about sexual orientation (92.5% of the East Sussex population aged 16 years and over).

- 406,320 people (89.2% of the population aged 16 years and over) identified as straight or heterosexual, in-line with the national average of 89.4%.

- 8,260 people (1.8%) described themselves as gay or lesbian, slightly higher than the national average of 1.5%
- 5,590 (1.2%) described themselves as bisexual, compared to a national average of 1.3%
- 1,350 (0.3%) selected “Other sexual orientation”

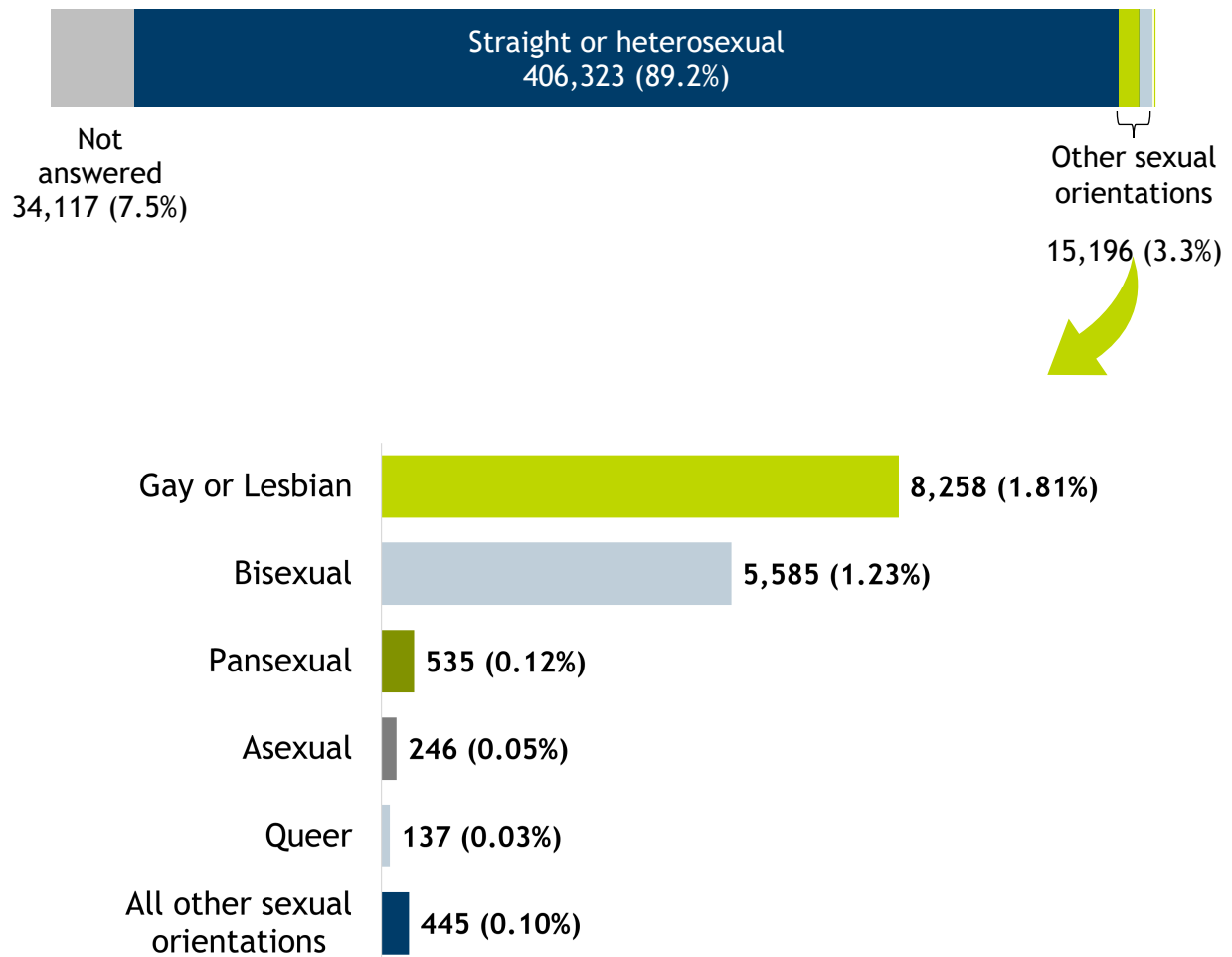
The overall number of people in East Sussex who identified with an LGB+ orientation was therefore 15,200 (3.3% of the population aged 16 years and over).

Of those who selected “Other sexual orientation”, the most common write-in responses included:

- Pansexual (530, 0.12%)
- Asexual (250, 0.05%)
- Queer (140, 0.03%)
- A further 450 (0.10%) wrote in a different sexual orientation.

The remaining 34,120 people aged 16 years and over (7.5%) did not answer the question on sexual orientation.

Sexual orientation of East Sussex residents aged 16 and over



Source: ONS

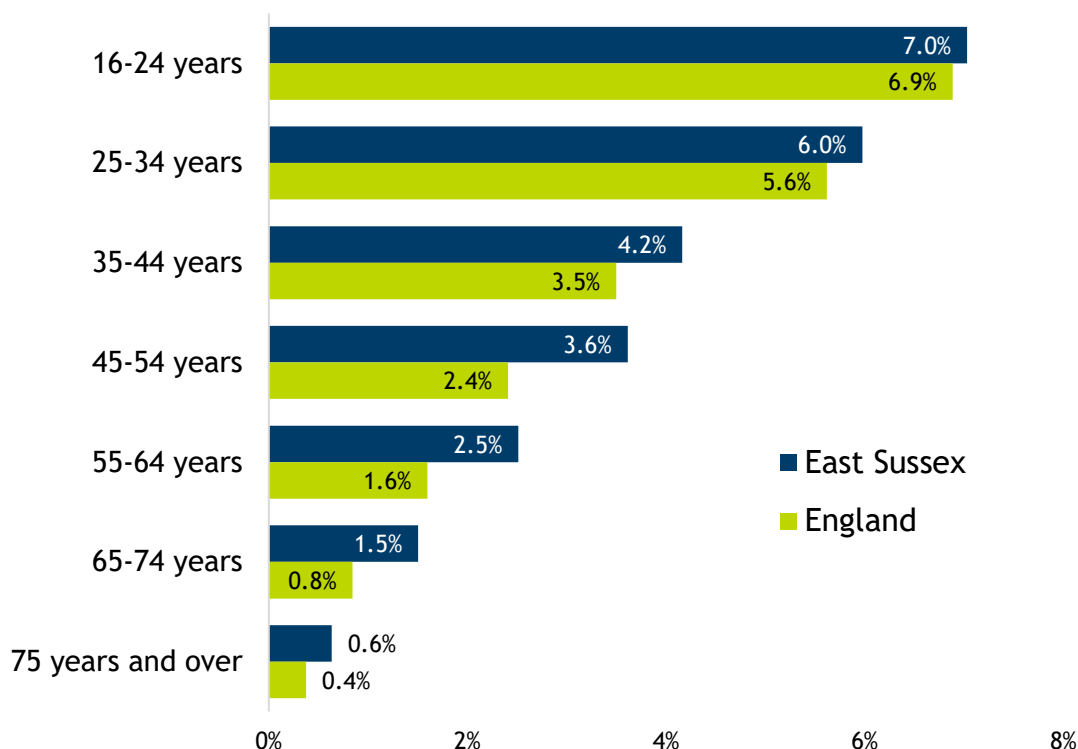
Area	Total population aged 16 and over	Percentage of residents identifying with a LGB+ orientation
East Sussex	455,639	3.3%
Eastbourne	84,576	3.9%
Hastings	74,707	4.6%
Lewes	83,221	4.0%
Rother	79,489	2.6%
Wealden	133,650	2.3%
South East	7,554,579	3.1%
Brighton and Hove	235,370	10.7%
Kent	1,276,568	2.7%
Surrey	972,515	2.5%
West Sussex	727,121	2.9%
ENGLAND	46,006,957	3.2%

Source: ONS

The age most likely to have identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or another minority sexual orientation (collectively referred to as LGB+ in this briefing) were those aged 16 to 24 years (7.0% or 45,950). People in this age group were more than twice as likely to have identified as LGB+ than the East Sussex population as a whole (3.3% or 455,640). The proportion of people who identified as LGB+ was highest among the younger age groups (16 to 25 years, then 25 to 34 years). This proportion then decreased with each successive age group.

The proportion of people identifying as LGB+ surpassed the English national average in all age groups, with the largest gap being seen in the proportion of 45 to 54 year olds; 3.6% of people aged 45 to 54 years of age identified as LGB+ in East Sussex, compared to a national average of 2.4%.

Percentage of residents aged 16 years and over who identified as LGB+ by age



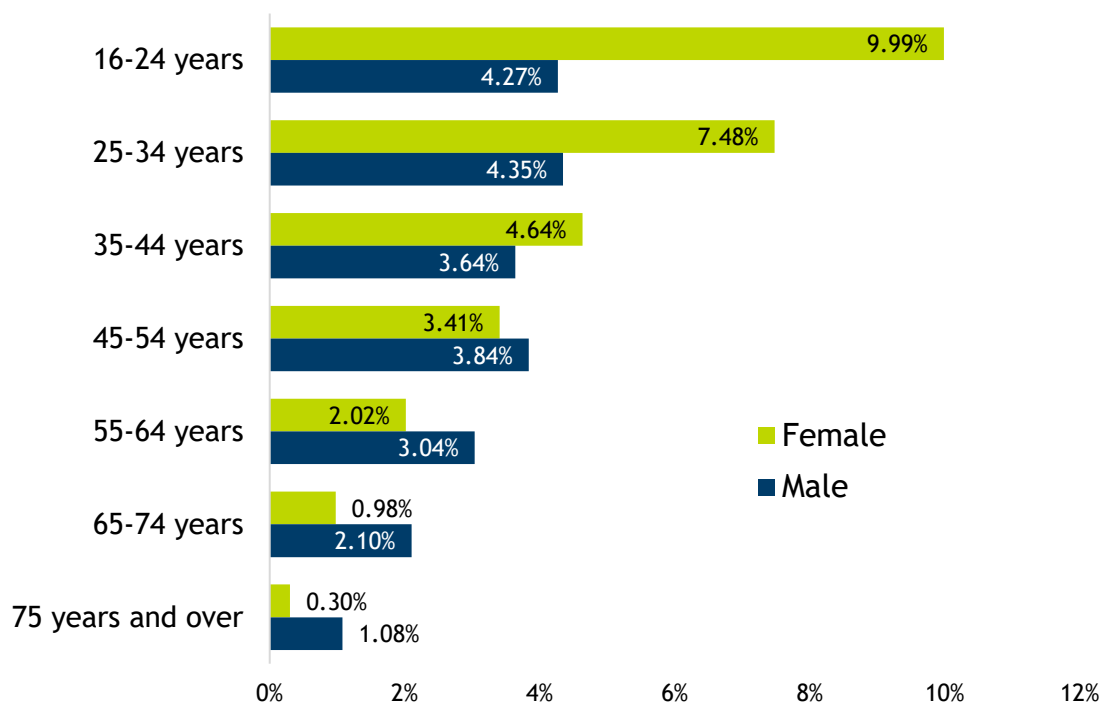
Source: ONS

Females (3.5% or 8,460) were more likely to have identified as LGB+ than males (3.1% or 6,750). Females aged 16 to 24 years were the most likely to have identified as LGB+ (10.0% or 2,220 residents). The proportion of LGB+ females decreased with each successive age group.

Among those identifying their sex as male, those aged 25 to 34 years were the most likely to have identified as LGB+ (4.4% or 1,170 residents), followed by 16 to 24 year olds (4.3% or 1,020 residents).

Overall, females in the age groups aged up to 44 years were more likely to have identified as LGB+ than males in the same age groups. Among those aged 16 to 24 years, females (10.0% or 2,220) were more than twice as likely to have identified as LGB+ than males (4.3% or 1,020). Among those aged 45 and over, males were more likely to have identified as LGB+.

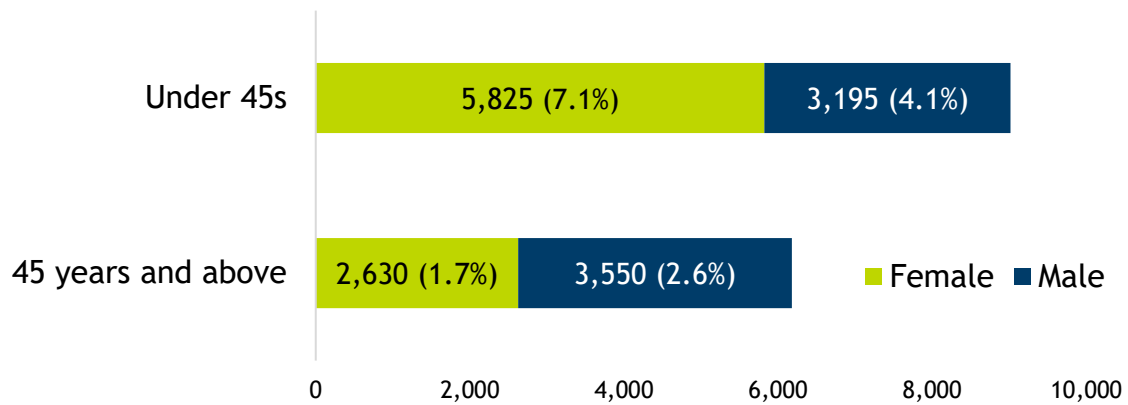
Percentage of usual residents aged 16 years and over who identified as LGB+ by age and sex



Source: ONS

Around 1 in 14 (7.1%) of females between the ages of 16 and 44 identified as LGB+ in East Sussex in 2021, compared to around 1 in 25 men (4.1%). By contrast, only around 1 in 60 (1.7%) of females aged 45 and above identified as LGB+ in 2021, compared to 1 in 38 men (2.6%).

Number of residents identifying as LGB+ by sex



Source: ONS

This broadly mirrors national trends. In England overall, females accounted for 58.5% of all residents under the age of 45 who identified as LGB+, but only 39.7% of those aged 45 and over who identified as LGB+, whereas in East Sussex, females made up 64.6% of under-45s identifying as LGB+, and 42.6% of those aged 45 and over.

A more detailed breakdown of sexual orientations by sex is only available at national level, which is provided in Appendix A. As noted previously, 3.2% of residents aged 16 years and over identified as LGB+ in England overall, compared to 3.3% in East Sussex. Differences in the ratio of males to females notwithstanding, the national data presented in Appendix A may provide some help to readers looking to understand the prevalence of different sexual orientations within the county.

Appendix A: Detailed Sexual Orientation by Sex in England, 2021

Sexual Orientation	Proportion of population in England aged 16 years and over identifying with specified orientation	Female to Male split
Straight or heterosexual	89.37%	51:49
Gay or lesbian	1.54%	39:61
Bisexual	1.28%	71:29
Pansexual	0.10%	72:28
Asexual	0.06%	69:31
Queer	0.03%	76:24
All other sexual orientations	0.15%	51:49

Source: ONS

Glossary of terms used

The following glossary contains definitions for terms published in the latest census release. This is provided for information purposes only. Census respondents may use terminology differently to these definitions. No offence or omission is intended.

<u>Gender identity:</u>	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 their sex registered at birth.
Non-binary:	Someone who does not identify with the binary categories of man and woman.
Trans man	Someone who was registered female at birth, but now identifies as a man.
Trans woman	Someone who was registered male at birth, but now identifies as a woman.
<u>Sexual orientation:</u>	Describes who a person is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to
Asexual:	Someone who does not experience sexual attraction
Bisexual:	Attraction towards more than one gender or sex
Gay or Lesbian:	Used to describe someone who has an emotional, romantic or sexual orientation towards someone of the same sex or gender
LGB+	Used to refer to people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other sexual orientations, where the + symbol represents a spectrum of sexual and gender identities
Pansexual:	Attraction towards people regardless of gender or sex
Queer:	A term used mainly by people who identify with a minority sexual orientation or gender identity
Straight or Heterosexual:	Someone who is attracted to members of the opposite sex

Source: Equality Hub, UK Government; ONS

Note: Equality Hub glossary was published 29 October 2021, and accessed 9 January 2022

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.

Corrections

In November 2023, ONS “...identified and corrected a production error relating to the estimate of those identifying in the “pansexual” category”, which also affected the estimate for those in the “All other sexual orientations” category. Read more in their [Sexual orientation and gender identity quality information for Census 2021](#).

A processing error in the original census data meant that the "Pansexual" category included responses where "Other sexual orientation" had been ticked but no write-in information had been provided. Across England and Wales as a whole, this had caused approximately 64,000 people who should have been in "All other sexual orientations" to be classed as pansexual. In East Sussex, the correction means that there are now 525 people in the Pansexual category rather than 924 in the first release. This briefing has been adjusted to reflect this.

In addition to this, on 5 September 2024, Emma Rourke, Deputy National Statistician, wrote to the Head of the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR), to request that the gender identity estimates from Census 2021 are **no longer accredited official statistics** and are classified as official statistics in development. The change in designation was confirmed by the OSR on 12 September 2024.

This change in designation reflects the innovative nature of the gender identity estimates and the evolving understanding of measuring gender identity, along with the uncertainty associated with these estimates.

All other Census 2021 estimates, including those on sexual orientation, are still designated as accredited official statistics.

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.

Data can be found on East Sussex in Figures.

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.