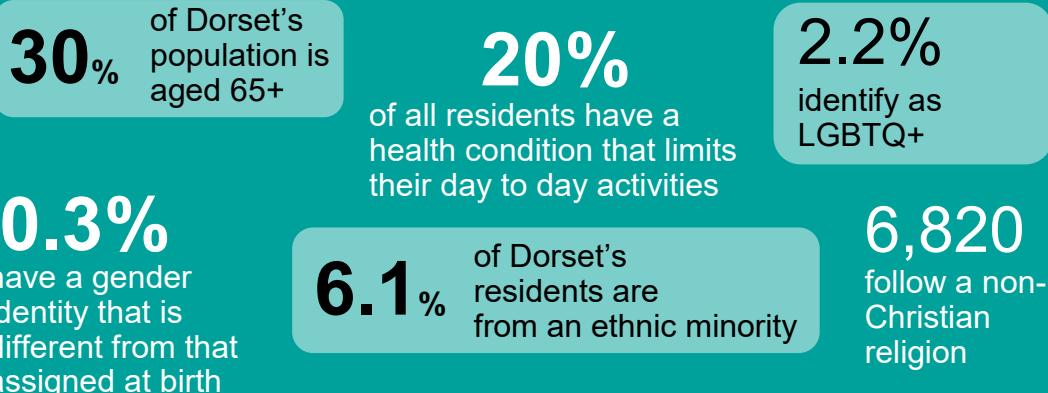


There are many definitions available for the term 'diversity' but they all cover the same fundamental issues. These include the recognition of differences, respecting those differences and appreciating the fact that different perspectives are valuable and can bring real benefits to society in general. There are nine protected characteristics to which the General public sector equality duty apply.

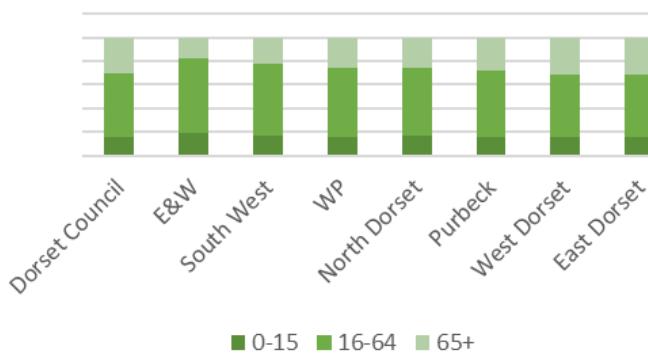
- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Religion & Belief
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual Orientation
- Marriage & Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy & Maternity
- Ethnicity

Big Numbers Box



Box 1: Age & religion

Age Structure in the former District Council areas, 2023



- Dorset has a much greater proportion (**30%**) of the population aged 65 and over than England and Wales (**18%**)¹.
- West and East former districts have almost one in three residents aged 65 and over¹.
- The five major non-Christian world religions Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism and Sikhism constitute **1%** of Dorset's residents' religious beliefs².

- Dorset's main non-Christian religious groups are concentrated in Dorset's towns. 0.5% of Weymouth's residents are of Muslim faith. There are also concentrations around military establishments such as Blandford Camp where the Gurkhas and their families live who are predominantly Buddhist or Hindu in their religious belief².

Sources

- 1 Mid-year population estimates (2023), ONS
- 2 Census 2021, ONS

Box 2: Ethnic Minorities

Breakdown by % of Dorset's ethnic minority residents

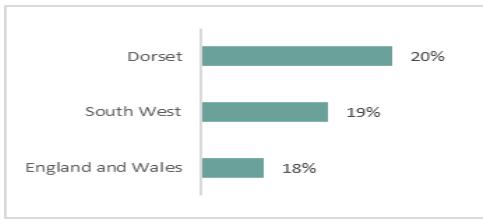
| | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Other White, 40% | Mixed Multiple ethnic groups, 19% | Asian, Asian British, 18% | Irish, 8% | Other ethnic groups, 6% |
| | | | Black British/African/Caribbean, 5% | Gypsy/Irish Traveller, 3% |

- (6.1%) of Dorset residents are from an ethnic minority, much lower than the country as a whole
- The highest proportion (40%) of Dorset's ethnic minority population are classified as 'White Other'. This includes people who identify as white but who do not have a British national identity (English, Welsh Scottish, Northern Irish). An example would be Polish or Bulgarian. The next highest are Mixed Multiple ethnic groups which make up 19% of ethnic minorities followed by Asian, Asian British that make up 18% of the ethnic minority groups in Dorset Council area.

Box 3: Disability

- 20% of Dorset's population are classified as disabled under the Equality Act 2010 definition².
- Another method for looking at the number of residents with a disability is to consider those claiming either Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments or Attendance Allowance³.

% of Dorset residents with long-term health problem or disability



% of Dorset residents claiming a disability benefit



Box 4: Gender, sexual and relationship diversity

- The Census 2021 asked new questions about sexual orientation and whether an individual's gender identity differed from how they were assigned at birth⁴.
- The new Census questions reflects how our understanding of different experiences and the language that goes with these changes over time. In recent years there has been an increase in the terminology surrounding gender identity and expression.
- In Dorset, 2.2% of our population shared they were gay, lesbian, bisexual or had another, non-heterosexual, sexual orientation, approximately 7,000 residents. This compared to 3.1% in both England and Wales and the South West⁵.
- 0.2-0.4% of residents in Dorset, the South West and England and Wales shared their gender identity differed from how they were assigned at birth. Dorset residents identifying as gender diverse were lowest at 0.2%. Both questions on sexual orientation and gender identity were voluntary, for those aged 16 and over only.

Sources

3 Stat-Xplore, Department of Work and Pensions, May and July 2023 & 2021 Census, ONS

4 Preparing for the 2021 census (England and Wales), UK Parliament

5 Census 2021, ONS