



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

STATISTICS, DOCUMENT

# Sexual orientation and gender identity differences in health, education and economic status (Census 2021)

Population estimates of people's sexual orientation and gender identity in Wales by age, sex, general health, disability, highest level of qualification, and economic activity status.

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# Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Main points](#)

[Age and sex](#)

[General health](#)

[Disability](#)

[Highest level of qualification](#)

[Economic activity status](#)

[Quality and methodology information](#)

[Contact details](#)

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# Introduction

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) published Census 2021 data on the sexual orientation and gender identity of people in England and Wales on Friday 6 January 2023 in two bulletins:

- [Sexual orientation, England and Wales: Census 2021 \(ONS\)](#)
- [Gender identity, England and Wales: Census 2021 \(ONS\)](#)

On the same day, we published our topic summary [Sexual orientation and gender identity in Wales \(Census 2021\)](#).

This statistical bulletin contains additional summary data on sexual orientation and gender identity by various socio-economic outcomes for individuals who were usual residents of Wales at the time of the Census, 21 March 2021. It tells us how these outcomes varied for different sexual orientations and gender identities across Wales. The bulletin also contains analysis by age and sex for context. All data used in the analysis in this release can be accessed on the ONS website by following the [Census 2021 sexual orientation and gender identity data combining multiple variables \(ONS\)](#) page, and the recent [ONS release Sexual orientation, further personal characteristics, England and Wales: Census 2021](#).

Census 2021 asked voluntary questions on sexual orientation and gender identity to all usual residents aged 16 years and over. This was the first time a question on either topic was asked in the census.

People were asked “Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?”. The different sexual orientations that people could choose from included:

- “Straight/Heterosexual”

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- “Gay or Lesbian”
- “Bisexual”
- “Other sexual orientation”

If respondents selected “Other sexual orientation”, they were asked to write in the sexual orientation with which they identified. However, for the sake of this release we have used the term “another sexual orientation” to describe the group “Other sexual orientation”. For more information see the [quality and methodology information section](#).

Respondents were also asked “Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?” and had the option of selecting either “Yes”, or selecting “No” and writing in their specific gender identity.

For more information on the Census 2021 questions and guidance on interpreting the data in this bulletin see the [quality and methodology information section](#).

In February 2023 the Welsh Government published its [LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales](#) which includes a glossary of terms for sexual orientation and gender identity. LGBTQ+ terminology continues to evolve in both English and Welsh and the Welsh Government welcomes any feedback on terminology used on this subject. See the [action plan](#) for information on how to provide feedback on terminology. This bulletin uses terminology that aligns with the sexual orientation and gender identity questions asked on Census 2021.

## Main points

### Sexual orientation

- A higher proportion of younger people than older people identified as “Gay or

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Lesbian”, “Bisexual” or another minority sexual orientation (LGB+).

- Females were more likely to have identified as LGB+ (3.3%) than males (2.7%).
- People who identified as “Gay or Lesbian” were the least likely to be in bad or very bad general health (7.6%), and those who identified with another sexual orientation were the most likely (12.6%).
- One third (33.8%) of people who identified as LGB+ report being disabled (as defined by the Equality Act 2010), compared to a quarter (24.0%) of people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual”.
- People who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual” were the most likely to have no formal qualifications (19.5%), while people who identified as “Bisexual” were the least likely (7.4%)
- People who identified as “Bisexual” were the most likely to be unemployed (8.5%), and people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual” were the least likely (3.9%).

## Gender identity

- The percentage of people who reported that their gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth decreased with age.
- Trans women were the most likely to report being in bad or very bad general health (14.5%)
- People whose gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth were more likely to be disabled (38.9%) than those whose gender identity was the same as their sex registered at birth (24.4%).
- People in the another gender identity group were the most likely (39.0%) to report holding a Level 4+ qualification (which includes degree level)
- 51.4% of people aged 16 and over whose gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth reported being economically inactive, compared to 42.4% of people whose gender identity was the same as their sex registered at birth.

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## Age and sex

The population of the various sexual orientation and gender identity groups have differing age structures, and the impact of this should be considered when interpreting the findings presented in this release. As such, where possible, we have broken the characteristics down by age to provide this contextual insight.

## Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation is an umbrella term covering sexual identity, attraction, relationships, and behaviour. For an individual respondent, these may not be the same.

In total, 2.4 million usual residents in Wales (92.4% of usual residents aged 16 years and over) answered the question on sexual orientation, whilst 193,900 (7.6%) did not answer the question. Analysis of the group who did not answer the question is not included in this release.

Of usual residents aged 16 and over, 3.0% identified with an LGB+ sexual orientation. Within this group, 1.5% described themselves as “Gay or Lesbian” and 1.2% described themselves as “Bisexual”. Another 0.3% wrote in their specific sexual orientation. Of these, the most common responses included:

- “Pansexual” (0.1%)
- “Asexual” (0.1%)
- “Queer” (0.02%)

Another 0.1% indicated that they had a different sexual orientation aside from those listed above.

Therefore, 89.4% described themselves as “Straight/Heterosexual”.

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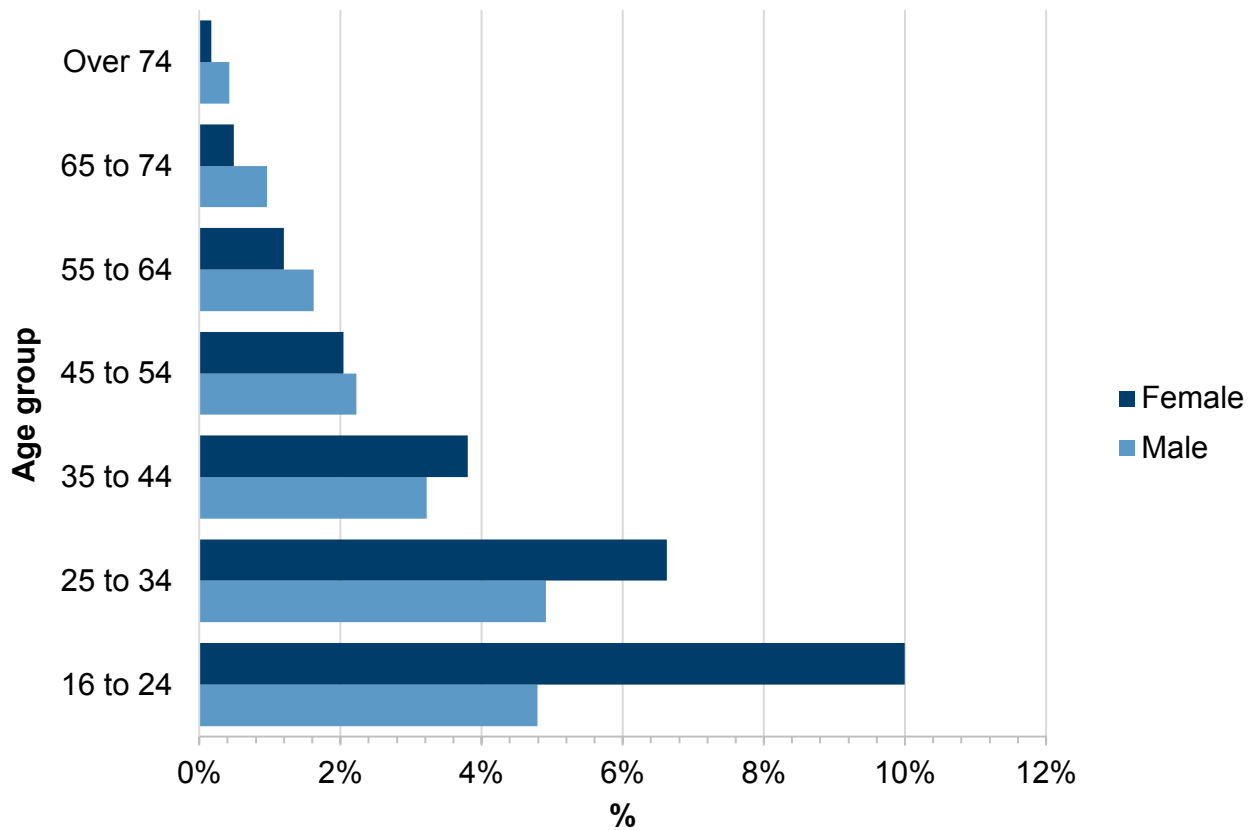
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There was a higher proportion of people who identified as LGB+ in younger age groups. For people aged 16 to 44, the proportion who identified as LGB+ was higher (5.5%) than the Welsh population average (3.0%). For those aged 45 and over the proportion was lower than average (1.2%).

Females were more likely to have identified as LGB+ (3.3%) than males (2.7%). This was particularly true for younger age groups, with females aged 16 to 24 being more than twice as likely to have identified as LGB+ (10.0%) compared to males (4.8%). The trend is reversed for age groups over 45 where males were more likely to have identified as LGB+.

**Figure 1: Percentage of usual residents aged 16 and over who identified as LGB+, in each age group, by sex Wales, 2021**



Description of Figure 1: The clustered bar chart shows that younger age groups were more likely to have identified as an LGB+ orientation. It also shows that females aged 16 to 24 were the group most likely to have identified as LGB+ at 10.0%.

Source: Census 2021



## Gender identity

Gender identity refers to a person's sense of their own gender, whether someone is a man, woman or another identity such as non-binary. This may or may not be the same as their sex registered at birth.

The census question and estimates for gender identity are subject to a higher level of uncertainty than some other topics. There are some patterns in the data that are consistent with, but do not conclusively demonstrate, some respondents not interpreting the question as intended. This is indicated by some patterns in the data which may be considered unexpected. For example the percentage of people reporting that their gender identity was different from their registered sex at birth was higher for those whose main language was not English or Welsh than the general population. It was higher still among those who did not speak English or Welsh at all. As such, extra consideration needs to be taken when interpreting the data. See the [Quality of Census 2021 gender identity data \(ONS\)](#) report for more information.

In Wales, there were responses to the question on gender identity from 2.4 million people (93.7% of the population aged 16 years and over). Analysis of the group who did not answer the question is not included in this release.

Of the population of Wales aged 16 and over, 93.3% reported that their gender identity was the same as their sex registered at birth and 0.4% responded "No", indicating that their gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth. Within those that responded "No", 0.08% indicated that they identified as a trans man, 0.07% identified as a trans woman, and 0.06% reported being non-binary, whilst 0.2% reported that their gender identity differed from their sex registered at birth but gave no specific identity in the write in prompt.

The percentage of people who reported that their gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth decreased with age. For people aged 16 to 24,

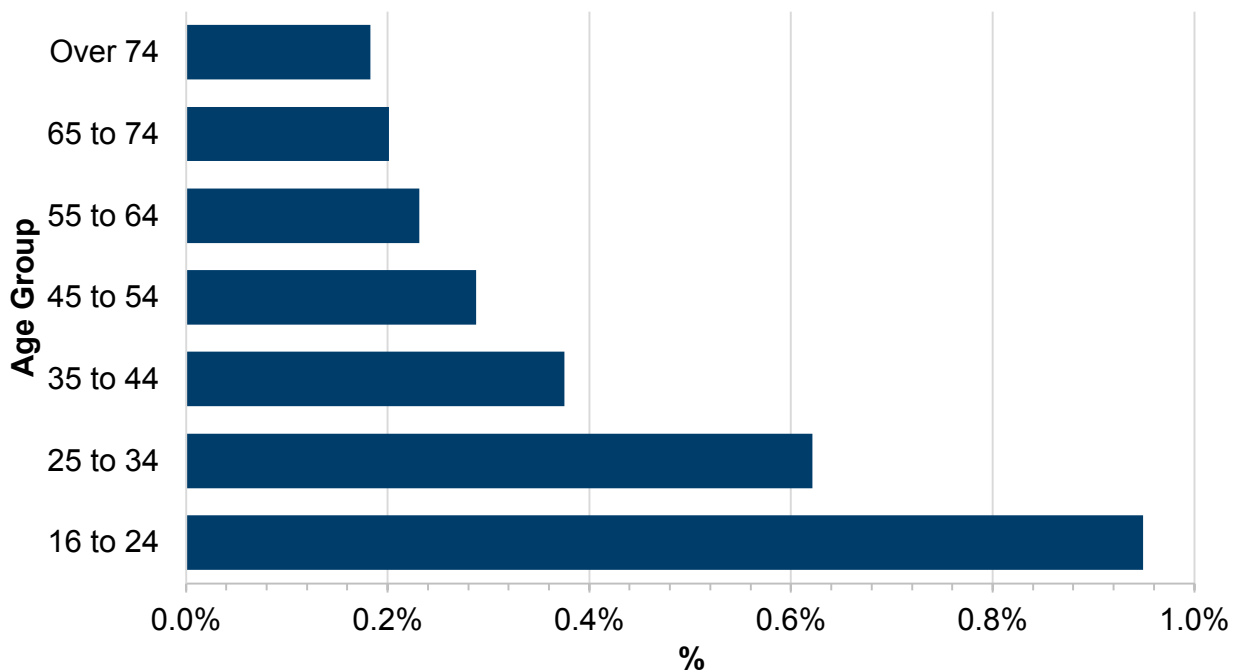
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0.9% reported that their gender identity was different from their registered sex, compared to 0.2% of people aged 65 and over. In the older age brackets this decrease was less pronounced.

**Figure 2: Percentage of usual residents aged 16 and over whose gender identity differed from their sex registered at birth, by age group, Wales, 2021**



Description of Figure 2: The bar chart shows people in younger age groups were much more likely to report that their gender was different from their sex at birth.

Source: Census 2021

## General health

General health is a self-assessment of a person's general state of health. People were asked to assess whether their health was "Very good", "Good", "Fair", "Bad", or "Very bad". This assessment is not based on a person's health over any specified period of time. Further information can be found in the [Government Statistical Service \(GSS\) harmonised standard](#). For the purpose of this release we have aggregated the categories into "very good or good", "fair", and "bad or very bad".

## Sexual orientation

For much of the remainder of this release we split the LGB+ group to match the census codes. However, here we have used the term "Another sexual orientation" to describe the "Other sexual orientation" group. For more information see the [quality and methodology information section](#).

Of people aged 16 and over, those who identified as LGB+ were slightly more likely to report being in bad or very bad general health (8.3%) than people who identified as "Straight/ Heterosexual" (8.0%). This is despite those who identified as LGB+ tending to be younger than average and [younger people being more likely to report very good or good health \(ONS\)](#).

People who identified with another sexual orientation were the most likely to report being in bad or very bad general health (12.6%), followed by those who identified as "Bisexual" (8.3%) and "Straight/Heterosexual (8.0%). People who identified as "Gay or Lesbian" were the least likely to be in bad or very bad general health (7.6%).

People who identified as "Gay or Lesbian" were the most likely to be in good or very good health (77.6%), while people who identified with another sexual

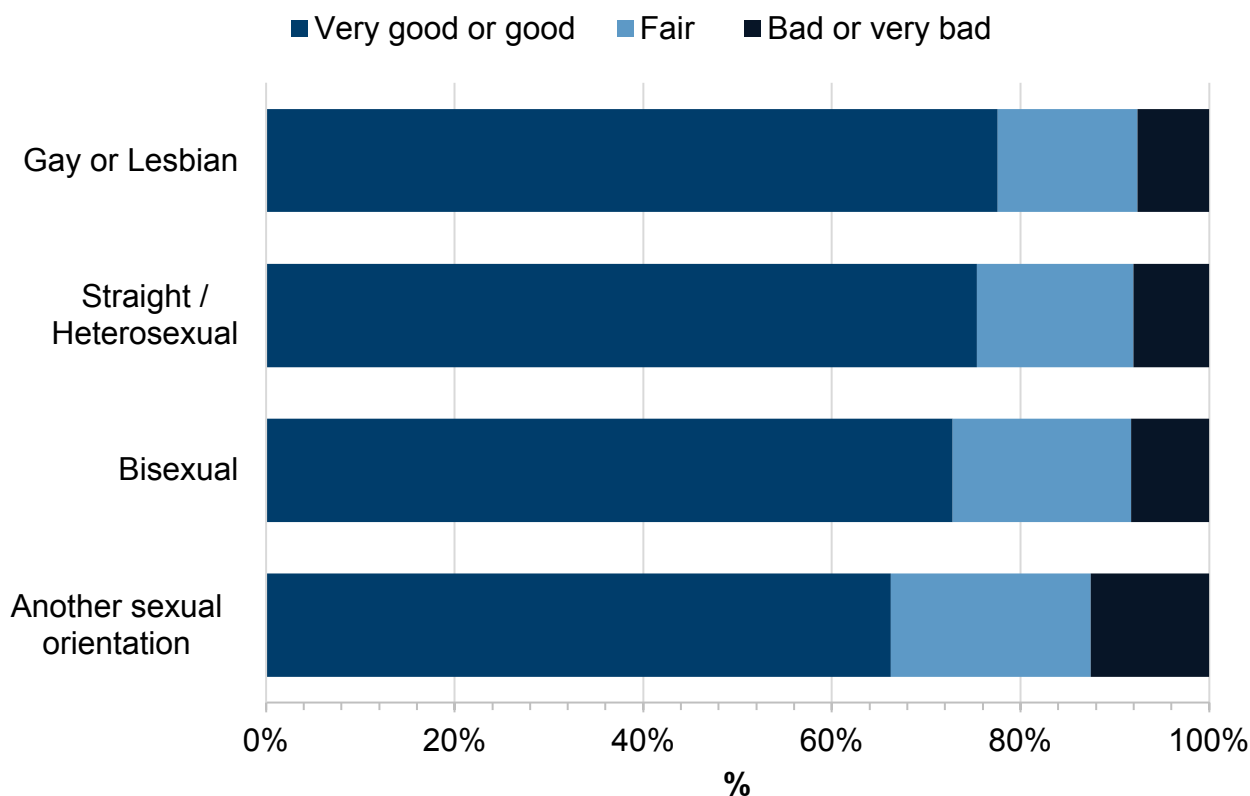
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orientation were the least likely (66.2%).

**Figure 3: Proportion of usual residents aged 16 and over by sexual orientation and general health, Wales, 2021**



Description of Figure 3: It shows that people who identified as “Gay or Lesbian” were the most likely to report being in good or very good general health and people who identified with another sexual orientation were the least likely.

Source: Census 2021

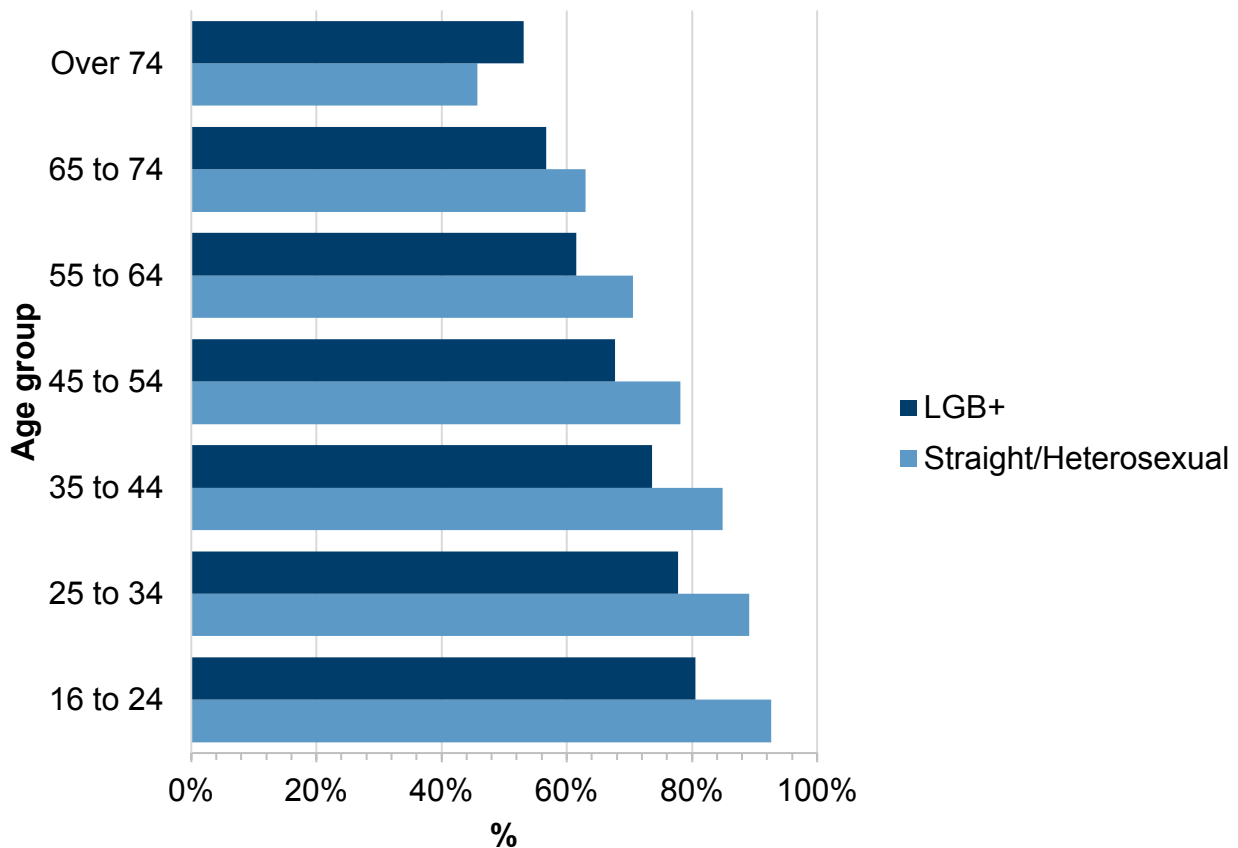
The proportion of people in good or very good general health decreased with age for all sexual orientations, however the decrease was less pronounced for people who identified as being LGB+ compared to the “Straight/Heterosexual”

group.

For people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual”, the percentage who reported being in good or very good general health decreased by almost 47 percentage points from 92.6% for ages 16 to 24, to 45.7% for people aged over 74, compared to a decrease of just over 27 percentage points from 80.5% for people aged 16 to 24 to 53.2% for over 74 for those who identified as LGB+.

However, the percentage of people reporting good or very good general health was lower for people who identified as LGB+ in all age brackets, except for ages over 74.

**Figure 4: Percentage of usual residents aged 16 and over who reported good or very good general health by sexual orientation and age group, Wales, 2021 [Note 1]**



Description of Figure 4: The clustered bar chart shows that self-reported good health decreases with age and that people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual” were more likely to report being in good health than those who identified as LGB+ in all age brackets apart from people aged 75 and over.

[Note 1]: The underlying data for the LGB+ groups in the age bracket 74 and over includes some suppressed values. Therefore, the percentages for this age bracket may not be completely representative of the whole population it describes.

Source: Census 2021

## Gender identity

For much of the remainder of this release, the gender identity codes for those whose gender identity is different from their registered sex at birth is split into high level groups:

- Gender identity the same as registered sex
- Gender identity different from registered sex,
  - No specific identity given
  - Trans man
  - Trans woman
  - Another gender identity (including “Non-binary”)

It should be noted that the gender related areas of this release focus on the gender identity question specifically. As such, data on sex is not included in the analysis.

People whose gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth were more likely to report being in bad or very bad general health (12.8%) than those whose gender identity was the same (8.0%). This is despite those whose gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth tending to be younger than average and younger people being less likely to be in bad or very bad general health.

Trans women were the most likely to report being in bad or very bad general health (14.5%), followed by people who identified with another gender identity (14.0%).

People whose gender was the same as their sex registered at birth were the most likely to report being in good or very good health (75.3%), and those who

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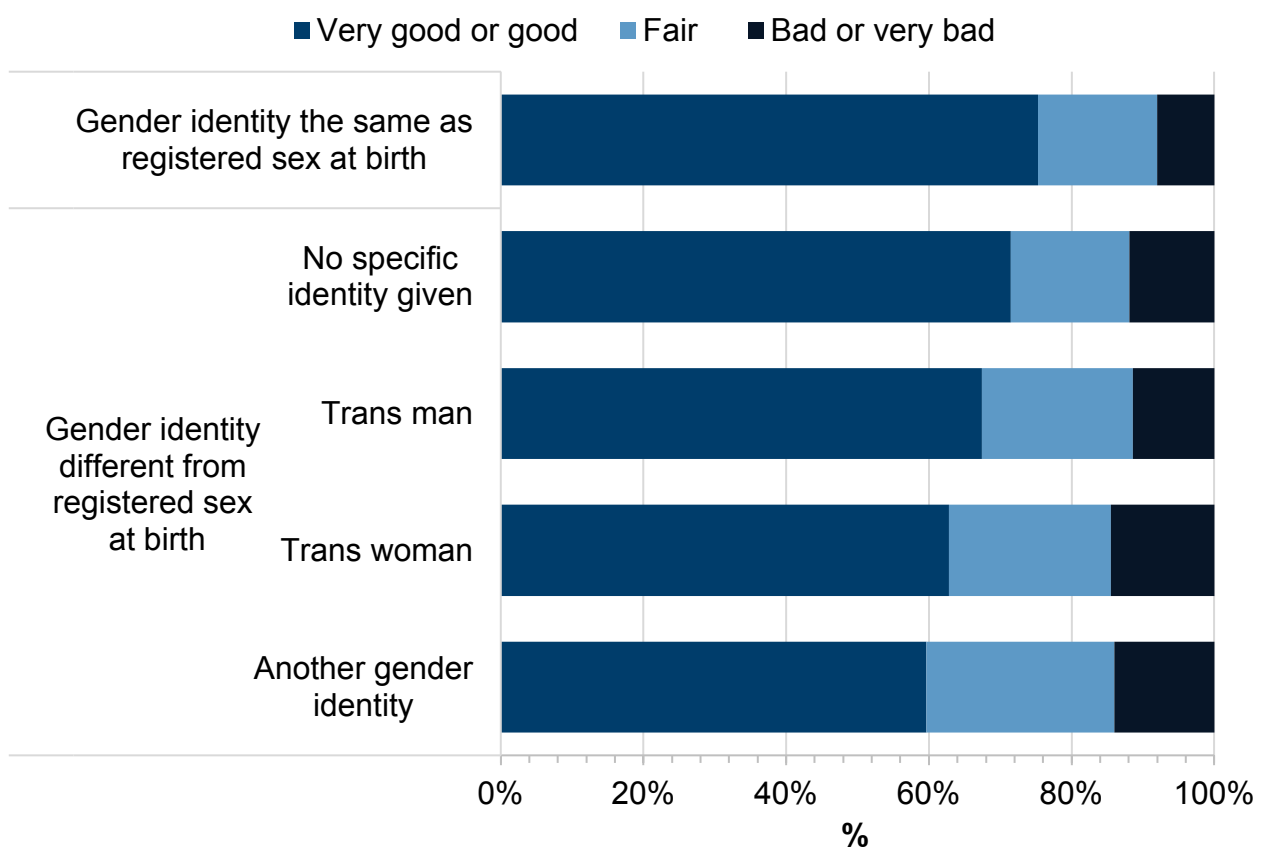
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identified with another gender identity were the least likely (59.7%).

Trans men were more likely to report being in very good or good general health (67.4%) than trans women (62.9%).

**Figure 5: Proportion of usual residents aged 16 and over by gender identity and general health, Wales, 2021**



Description of Figure 5: The proportional stacked bar chart shows that people whose gender identity was the same as their registered sex were the most likely to be in good or very good health, and trans women were the most likely to be in bad or very bad health.

Source: Census 2021

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# Disability

Usual residents were asked to report if they had a long-term physical or mental health condition or illness (lasting or expecting to last 12 months or more), and the extent to which this limited their day-to-day activities. Respondents who reported a long-term physical or mental health condition and whose day-to-day activities were limited ‘a little’ or ‘a lot’ have been defined as disabled.

The approach used in Census 2021 aims to collect data that closely aligns with the definition of disability in the [Equality Act \(2010\) \(Gov.UK\)](#). This is informed by the medical model of disability which defines people as disabled by their impairment. In 2002 the Welsh Government adopted the [social model of disability \(Disability Wales\)](#). This model sets out a different way to view disability – rather than defining people as disabled by their impairment (as in the medical model of disability), people with impairments are disabled by physical, attitudinal and organisational barriers created by society.

The data included in this section uses the Equality Act (2010) definition of disability, and therefore reflects the medical model of disability. However, where possible, we have used language that aligns with the social model of disability.

## Sexual orientation

One third (33.8%) of people who identified as LGB+ were disabled, compared to a quarter (24.0%) of people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual”. This difference is mainly due to a larger proportion of disabled people whose day-to-day activities are limited a little amongst people who identified as LGB+ (21.3%) compared to people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual” (12.5%).

Again, this is despite the fact that those who identified as LGB+ tended to be younger and disabled people were more likely to report being older than

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average. The link between disability and age is well documented. More information can be found in our [census release on disabled people in Wales](#).

People who identified with another sexual orientation were the most likely to report being disabled (46.4%), followed by “Bisexual” (39.2%), “Gay or Lesbian” (26.9%), and finally “Straight/Heterosexual” (24.0%).

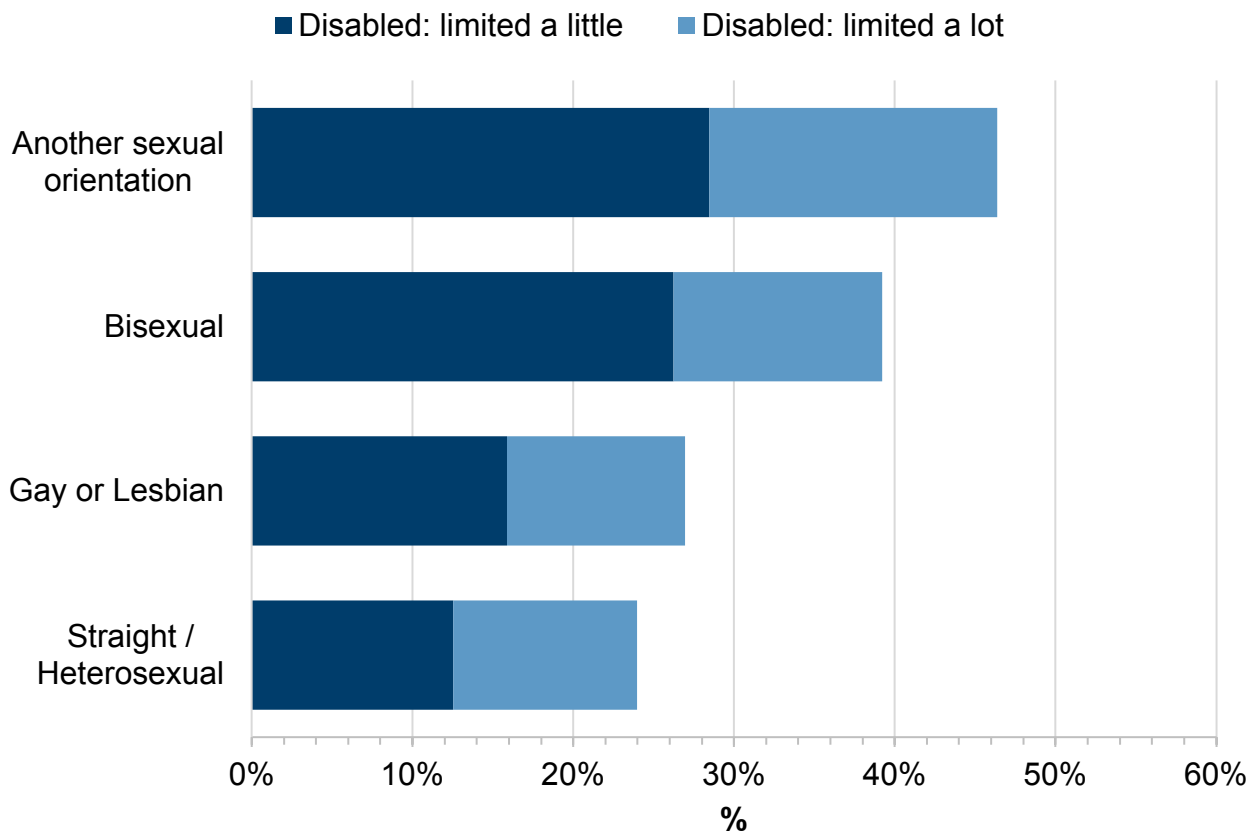
While more likely to be disabled overall, people who identified as “Gay or Lesbian” were less likely to report that their day-to-day activities were limited a lot (11.1%) than people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual” (11.4%).

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**Figure 6: Percentage of disabled people aged 16 and over by sexual orientation, Wales, 2021**



Description of Figure 6: This stacked bar chart shows that “Straight/Heterosexual” people and those who identified as “Gay or Lesbian” are less likely to be disabled, while “Bisexual” people, and people who identified with another LGB+ sexual orientation are more likely to be disabled.

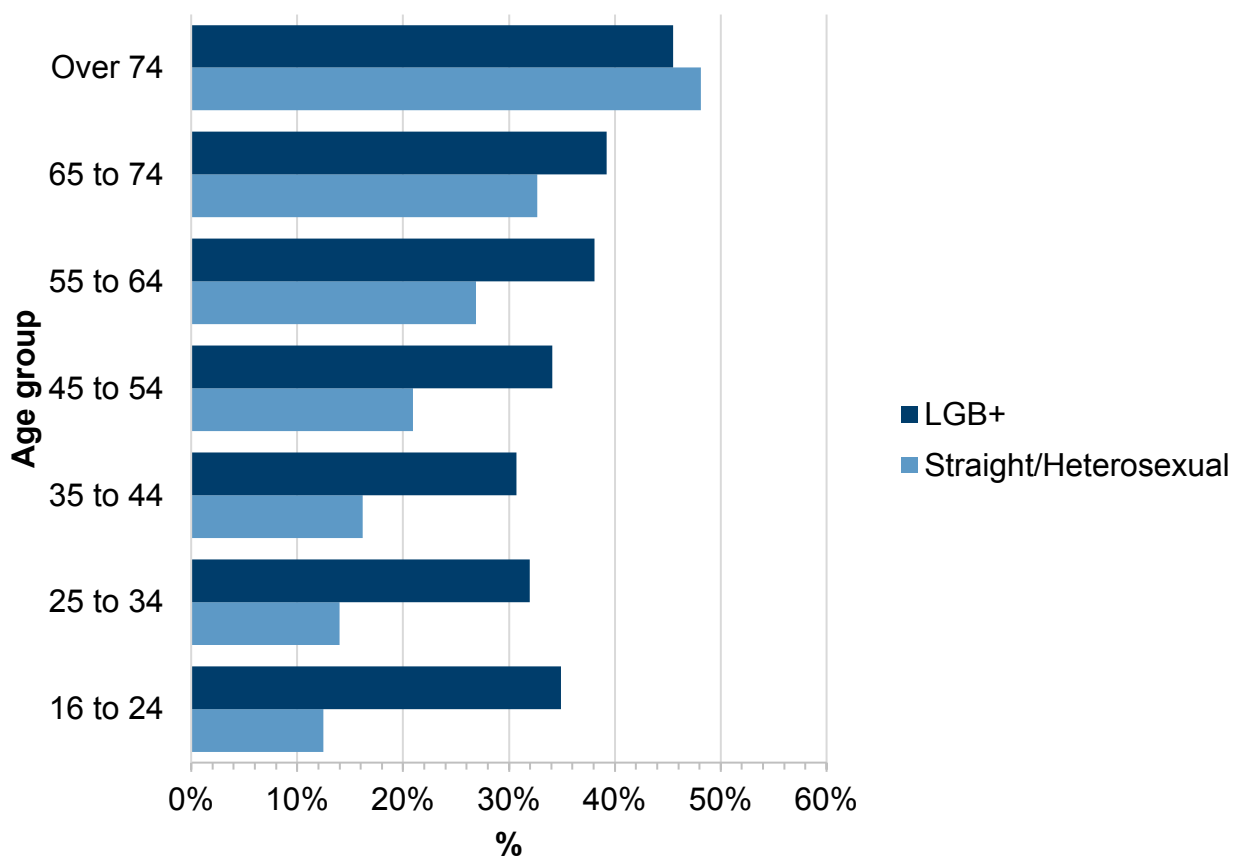
Source: Census 2021

For people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual” the proportion of those who are disabled increased with age, from 12.5% for ages 16 to 24, up to 48.1% for people aged over 74. This change is less pronounced for LGB+ people, where

there was a much higher proportion of disabled people in the younger age brackets. The percentage for LGB+ initially decreases from 34.9% for 16 to 24, down to 30.7% for ages 35 to 44 before increasing up to 45.5% for people over 74.

People who identified with an LGB+ sexual orientation were more likely to be disabled than people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual” in all age groups except for ages over 74.

**Figure 7: Percentage of disabled people aged 16 and over by sexual orientation and age, Wales, 2021**



Description of Figure 7: This clustered bar chart shows that disability increases

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sharply with age for people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual”, but is more gradual for people who identified as LGB+, where there is a higher proportion of disabled people in the younger age brackets.

Source: Census 2021

## Gender identity

People whose gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth were more likely to be disabled (38.9%) than those whose gender identity was the same as their registered sex at birth (24.4%).

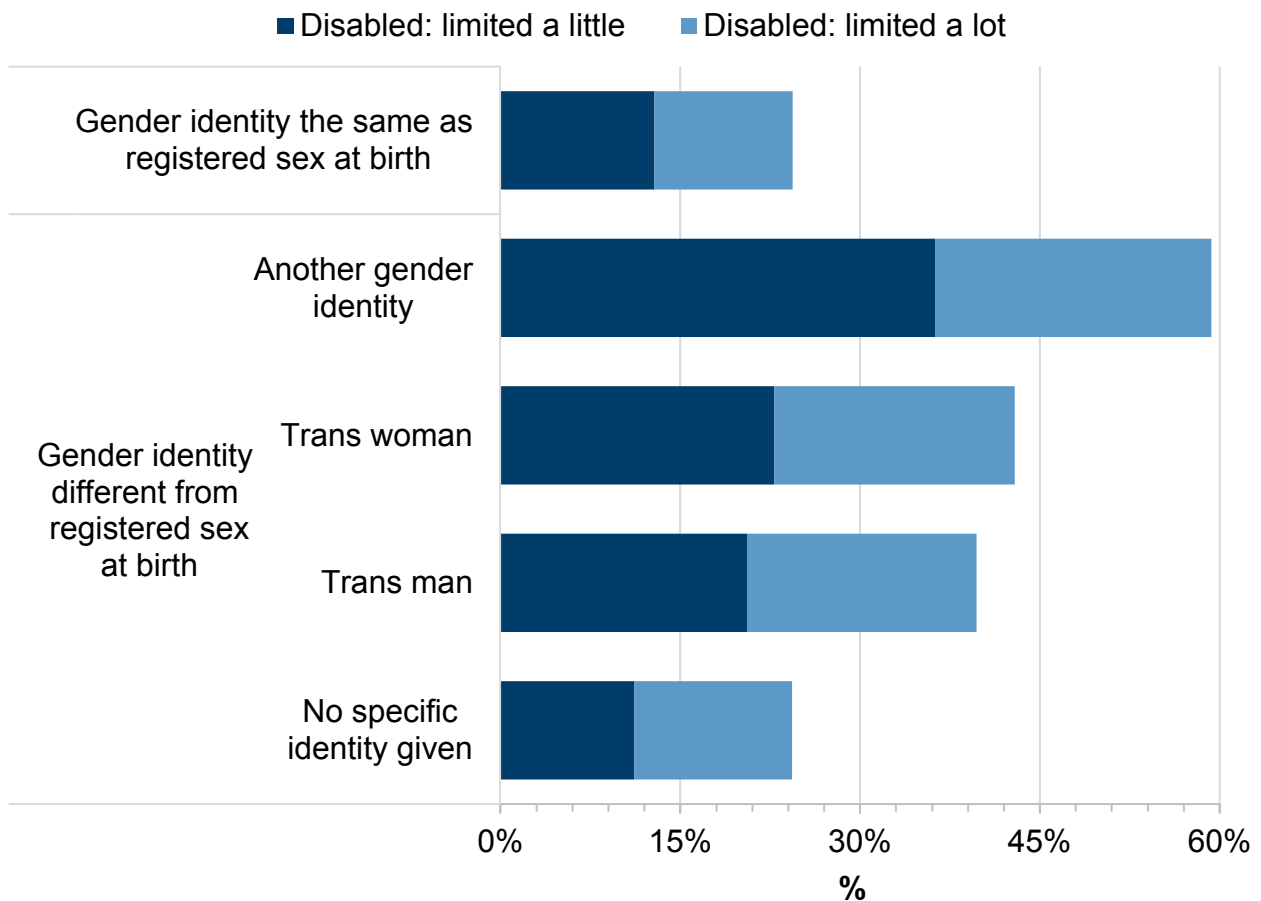
Within the group of people whose gender identity was different than their registered sex at birth, those who identified with another gender identity were the most likely to be disabled (59.3%), followed by trans women (42.9%), trans men (39.7%) and those who didn't write in a specific gender identity were the least likely to be disabled (24.3%).

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**Figure 8: Percentage of disabled people aged 16 and over by gender identity, Wales, 2021**



Description of Figure 8: This stacked bar chart shows that people who identified with another gender identity were the most likely to be disabled, and those whose gender identity was different from their registered sex but did not write in any specific identity were the least likely.

Source: Census 2021

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## Highest level of qualification

Usual residents in Wales aged 16 and over were asked to record any qualifications they had ever achieved in Wales or elsewhere, even if they were not using them now. This was used to calculate the highest level of qualification using the following categories:

- No qualifications: No formal qualifications
- Level 1: 1 to 4 GCSE passes (i.e. grade A\* to C or grade 4 and above) and any other GCSEs at other grades, Foundation Welsh BaccaLaureate, or equivalent qualifications.
- Level 2: 5 or more GCSE passes (i.e. grade A\* to C or grade 4 and above), Intermediate Welsh BaccaLaureate, or equivalent qualifications.
- Level 3: 2 or more A Levels, Advanced Welsh BaccaLaureate, or equivalent qualifications.
- Level 4 or above: Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma, Bachelor's degree, or post-graduate qualifications.
- Apprenticeships
- Other: Other qualifications, of unknown level.

Levels 1 to 3 have been combined into a single group and apprenticeships have been included in the "Other" category for the purpose of this bulletin.

## Sexual orientation

Just under a tenth (8.4%) of LGB+ people reported having no formal qualifications, compared to a fifth (19.5%) of people who identified as "Straight/Heterosexual".

People who identified as "Straight/Heterosexual" were the most likely to have no formal qualifications (19.5%), followed by people who identified with another

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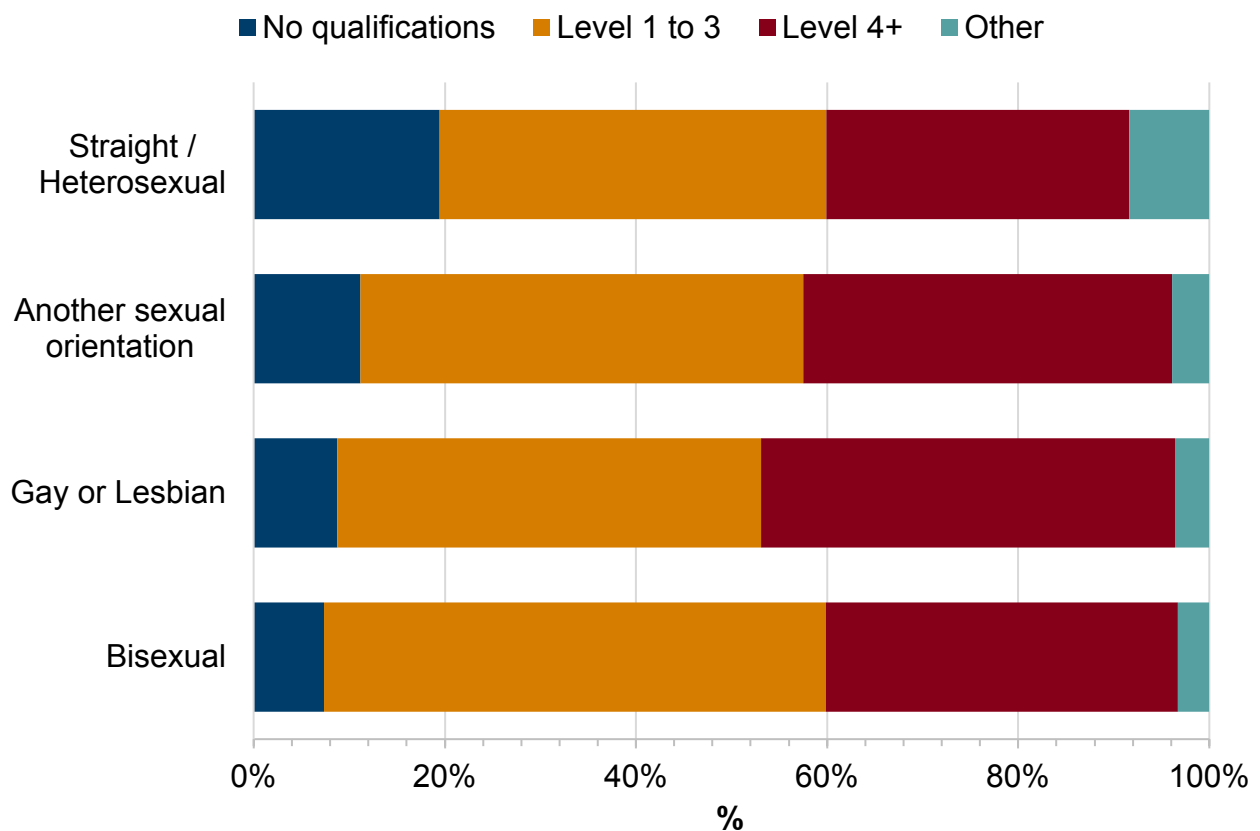
sexual orientation (11.2%), “Gay or Lesbian” (8.7%) and finally those who identified as “Bisexual” (7.4%).

People who identified as “Gay or Lesbian” were the most likely (43.3%) to hold a qualification at Level 4 or above (which includes degree level), followed by those who identified with another sexual orientation (38.6%), “Bisexual” (36.8%) and finally “Straight/Heterosexual” (31.7%).

People who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual” were the most likely (8.3%) to hold a qualification in the “Other” category (which includes apprenticeships), while those who identified as “Bisexual” were the least likely (3.3%).



**Figure 9: Proportion of usual residents aged 16 and over by sexual orientation and highest level of qualification, Wales, 2021 [Note 1]**



Description of Figure 9: This proportional stacked bar chart shows that people who identified as LGB+ were less likely to have no formal qualifications, and more likely to have degree level or higher qualifications than those in the straight/heterosexual group.

[Note 1]: Apprenticeships are included in the “Other” category.

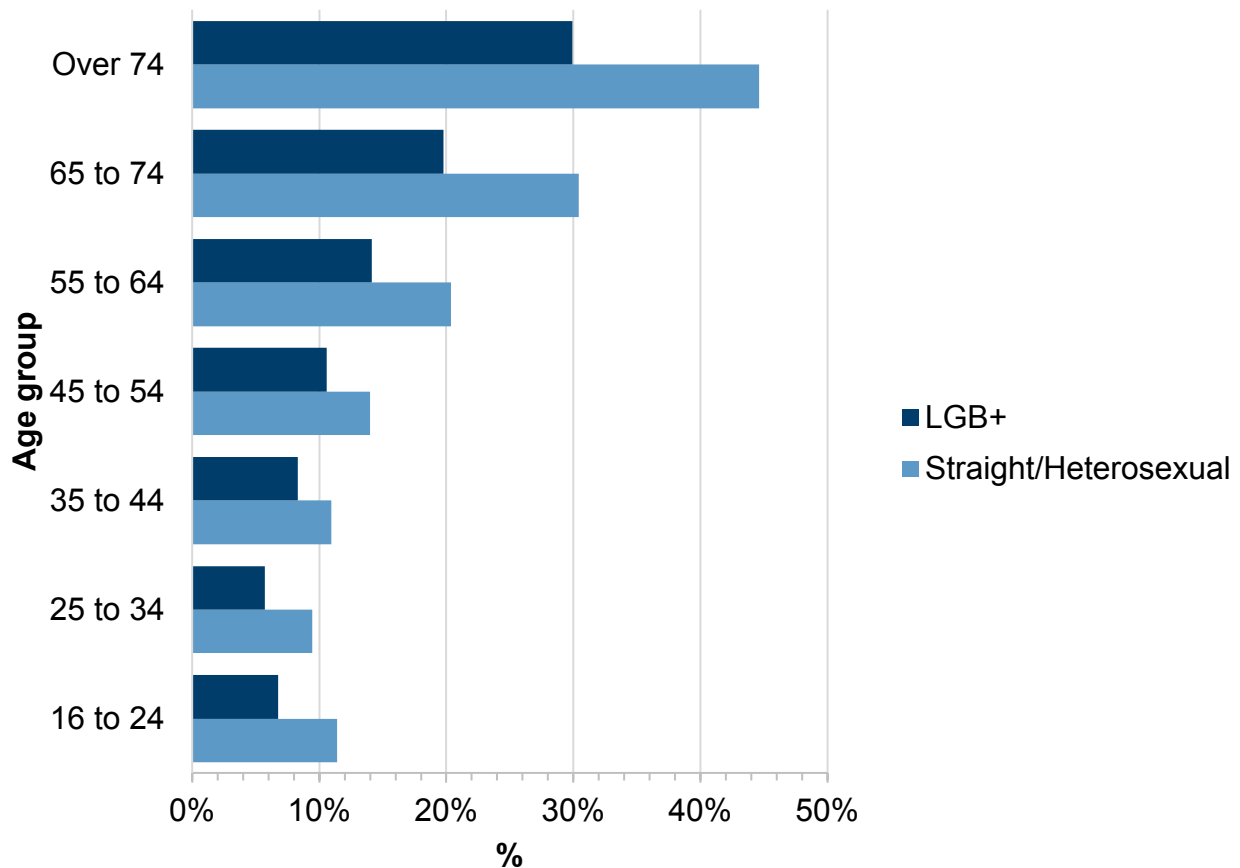
Source: Census 2021

The percentage of people with no formal qualifications increased with age for

people who identified as LGB+ and “Straight/Heterosexual”. The percentage of people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual” with no formal qualifications generally increased from 11.4% for ages 16 to 24, up to 44.6% for people aged over 74. For those who identified as LGB+, the percentage of people with no formal qualifications increased from 6.8% for ages 16 to 24, to 29.9% for people aged over 74.

The percentage of people with no formal qualifications was higher for those who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual” in all age groups compared to people who identified as LGB+.

**Figure 10: Percentage of usual residents aged 16 and over with no formal qualifications by sexual orientation and age, Wales, 2021 [Note 1]**



Description of Figure 10: This clustered bar chart shows that the distribution of the data by age is similar for both sexual orientation groups, but the percentage of people with no qualifications is lower for LGB+ people across all age groups.

[Note 1]: The underlying data for the LGB+ groups in age brackets 65 to 74 and 74 and over include some suppressed values. Therefore, the percentages for these age brackets may not be completely representative of the whole population they describe.

Source: Census 2021

## Gender identity

A quarter (24.6%) of people whose gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth reported having no formal qualifications, compared to a fifth (19.2%) of people whose gender identity was the same as their registered sex.

People whose gender identity was different from their registered sex but wrote in no specific identity were the most likely to have no formal qualifications (39.2%), followed by trans men (21.8%), trans women (20.6%) and people whose gender identity was the same as their registered sex (19.2%). Those who identified with another gender identity were the least likely to have no formal qualifications (5.8%).

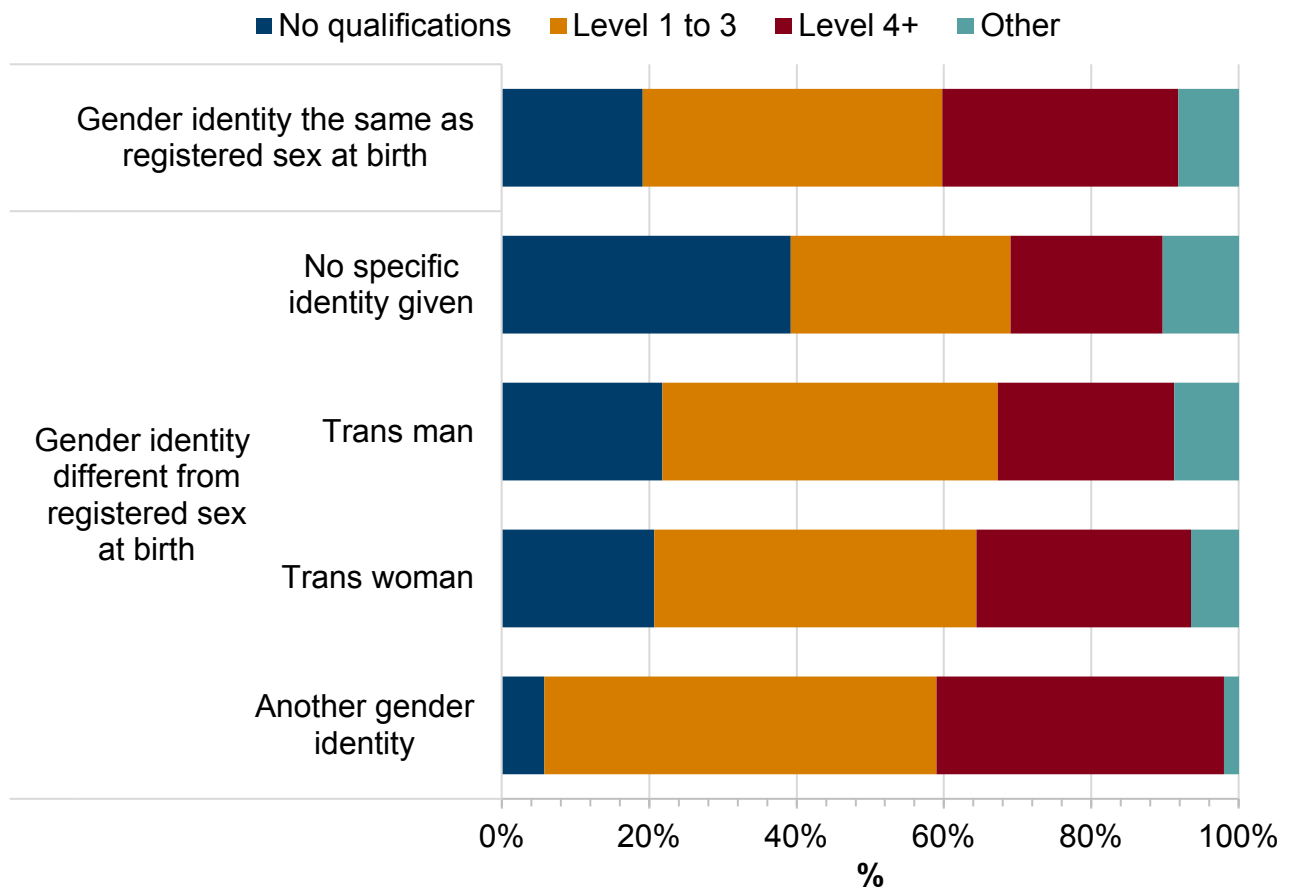
The proportion of people with a qualification at Level 4 or above (including degree level) follows the reverse of the trend for people with no qualifications, with those in the another gender identity group being the most likely to hold a Level 4+ qualification (39.0%), and people whose gender identity was different from their registered sex but wrote in no specific gender identity were the least likely (20.7%).

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**Figure 11: Proportion of usual residents aged 16 and over by gender identity and highest level of qualification, Wales, 2021**



Description of Figure 11: This proportional stacked bar chart shows that people who identified with another gender identity were the least likely to have no qualifications, and the most likely to have level 4 or above qualifications.

Source: Census 2021

# Economic activity status

Usual residents aged 16 and over were asked about their economic activity status. The questions asked whether a person was working or looking for work in the week before Census 2021. In this analysis there are three main types of economic activity status we look at:

- Economically active: Employed (either as an employee or self-employed)
- Economically active: Unemployed (people who are looking to start work within two weeks, or waiting to start a job that had been offered and accepted)
- Economically inactive (people who did not have a job between 15 March to 21 March 2021 and had not looked for work between 22 February to 21 March 2021, or could not start work within two weeks)

There was no separate category for students, who fell into one of these categories depending on their economic activity outside of their studies.

Census 2021 was conducted during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and it is possible that this affected the way people responded. See the [Comparing Census 2021 and Labour Force Survey estimates of the labour market article by ONS](#) for further information about interpreting census labour market data.

## Sexual orientation

For this analysis, we looked at usual residents aged between 16 and 64 years. People older than this age group were much more likely to be economically inactive.

A third (32.4%) of people aged 16 to 64 who identified as LGB+ reported being

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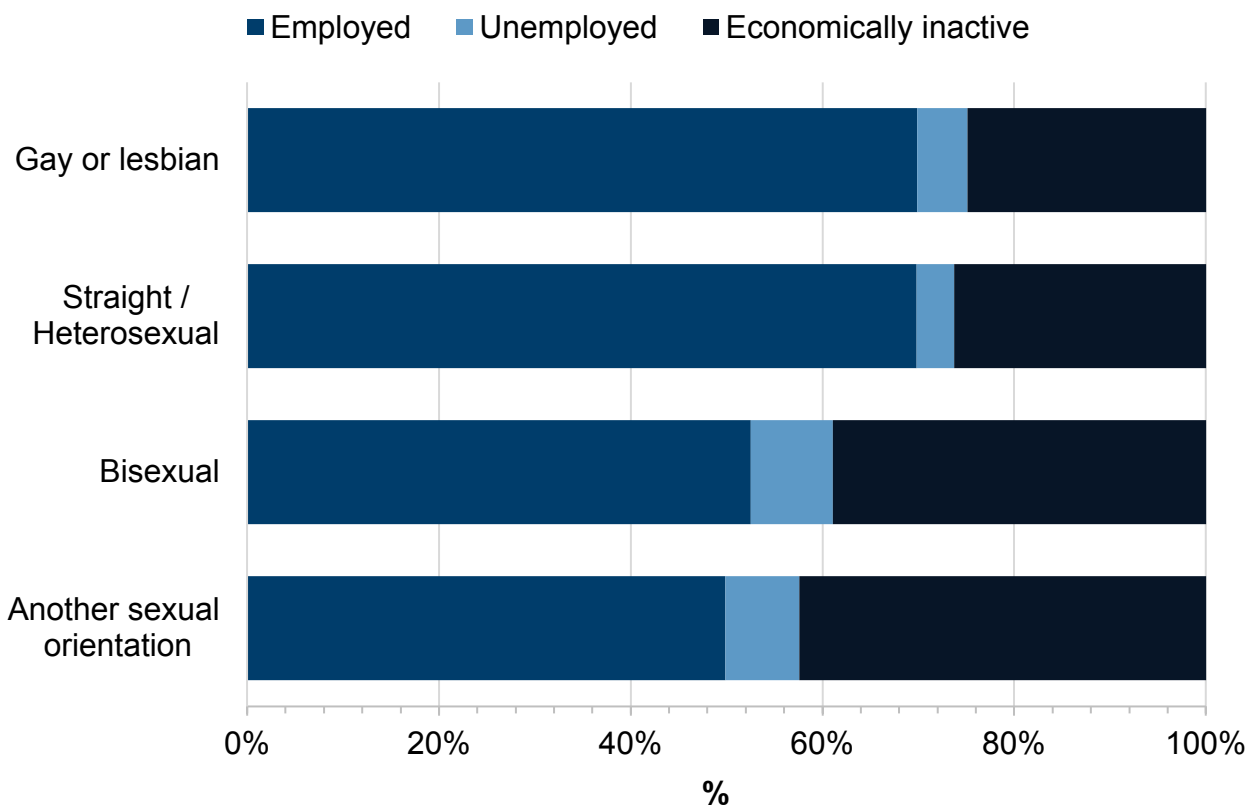
economically inactive compared to just over a quarter (26.2%) of people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual”. This difference may in part be due to the differing age structures of the two groups. Younger people were more likely to be economically inactive and those who identified as LGB+ were more likely to be younger than average.

People who identified as “Gay or Lesbian”, and people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual” were the most likely to be employed (69.9% and 69.8% respectively). People who identified as “Bisexual” and people who identified with another sexual orientation were less likely (52.5% and 49.9% respectively).

Those who identified with another sexual orientation were the most likely to be economically inactive (42.4%), followed by people who identified as “Bisexual” (38.9%). “Straight/Heterosexual” people and people who identified as “Gay or Lesbian” were the least likely to be economically inactive (26.2% and 24.9% respectively).

People who identified as “Bisexual” were the most likely to be unemployed (8.5%), and people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual” were the least likely (3.9%). Overall, people with an LGB+ sexual orientation had a much higher unemployment rate (6.9%) compared to people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual” (3.9%).

**Figure 12: Proportion of usual residents aged 16 to 64 by sexual orientation and economic activity, Wales, 2021**



Description of Figure 12: This proportional stacked bar chart shows that people who identified as “Gay or Lesbian” were slightly more likely to be economically active than people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual”. Those who identified with another sexual orientation were the most likely to be economically inactive.

Source: Census 2021

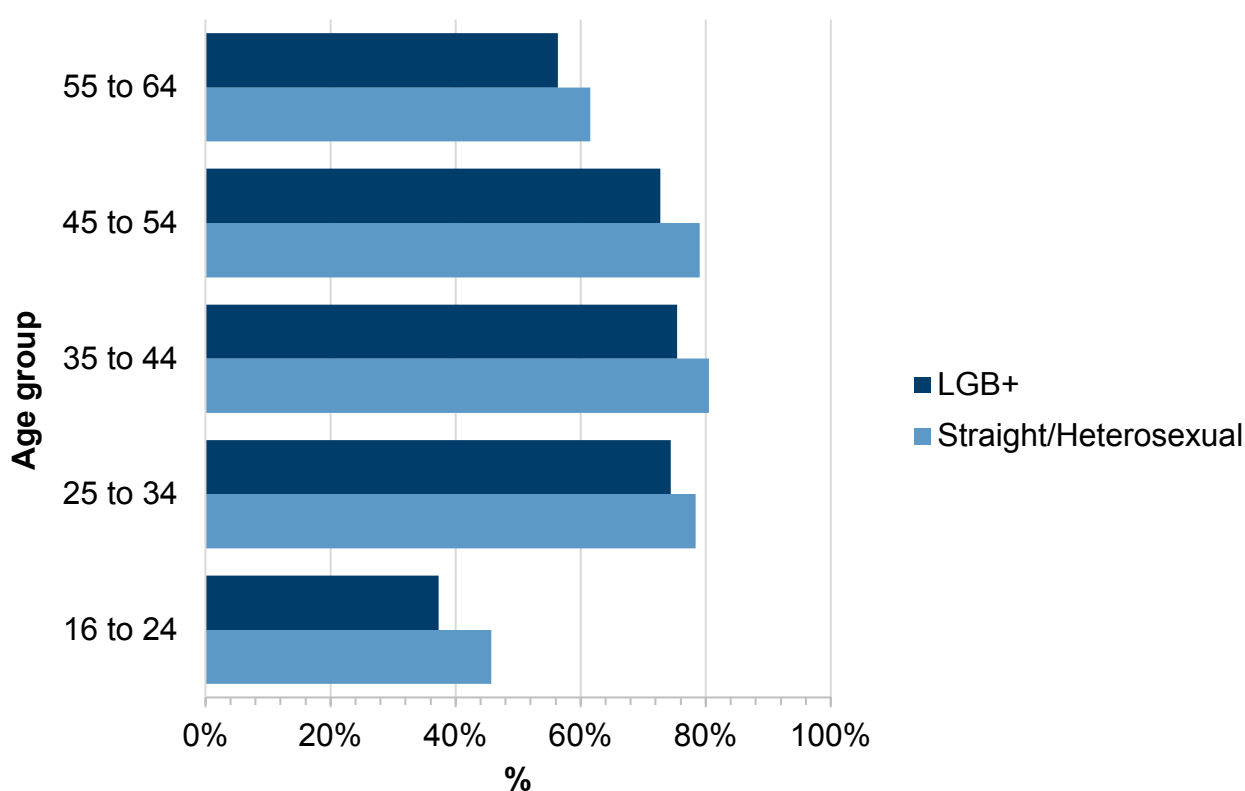
The distribution by age of people in employment is similar for both people who identified as LGB+ and those who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual”, however across all age categories, people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual” were



more likely to be employed.

The largest difference is in the age group 16 to 24, where 37.3% of LGB+ people were in employment, 8.4 percentage points lower than people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual” (45.7%).

**Figure 13: Percentage of usual residents aged 16 to 64 in employment by sexual orientation, and age, Wales, 2021**



Description of Figure 13: This clustered bar chart shows that people who identified as “Straight/Heterosexual” are slightly more likely to be in employment than LGB+ people in all age groups.

Source: Census 2021

## Gender identity

For this analysis, we are unable to limit the age range to 16 to 64 due to small sample sizes. As such this data covers all usual residents aged 16 and over in Wales. This differs to the analysis on sexual orientation by economic activity where the age range of 16 to 64 was used.

Similarly, due to small sample sizes we were unable to break down into specific gender identities. Therefore, this analysis includes the two umbrella groups of those who answered “Yes” to the gender identity question, indicating that their gender identity was the same as their sex registered at birth, and those who answered “No”, indicating their gender identity was different.

51.4% of people whose gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth reported being economically inactive, compared to 42.4% of people whose gender identity was the same.

People whose gender identity was the same as their registered sex are more likely to be in employment (54.5%) than people whose gender identity was different (41.2%). They are also less likely to be unemployed (3.1%) than people whose gender identity was different to their registered sex (7.3%).

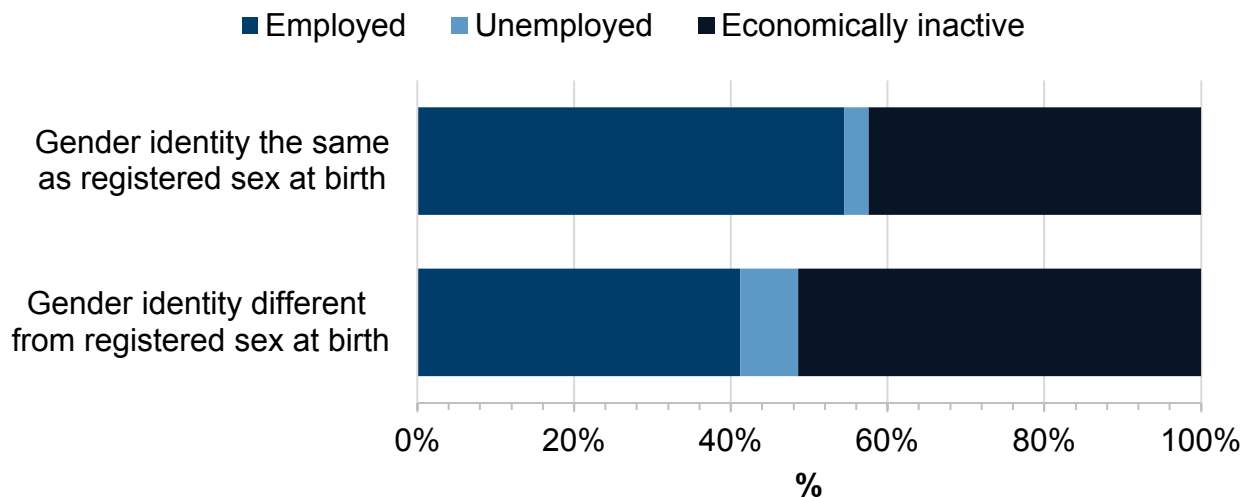
It’s important to consider the impact of the differing age structures of these two groups. For example, those whose gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth were more likely to report being younger and within the working age population, younger people were more likely to be economically inactive. Also, this section includes data for all ages over 15, including older people who have retired, and are therefore economically inactive.

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**Figure 14: Proportion of usual residents aged 16 and over by gender identity and economic activity, Wales, 2021**



Description of Figure 14: This proportional stacked bar chart shows that people whose gender identity was different from their registered sex at birth are less likely to be in employment, and more likely to be economically inactive than people whose gender identity was the same.

Source: Census 2021

## Quality and methodology information

### Reliability of gender identity estimates

The ONS has said that the census estimates for gender identity are subject to a higher level of uncertainty than some other topics. There are some patterns in the data that are consistent with some respondents not interpreting the question as intended. For example, the percentage of people reporting that their gender

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identity was different to their sex registered at birth was higher for people whose main language was not English or Welsh than the general population. It was higher still among people who did not speak English or Welsh well at all.

As such extra consideration needs to be taken when interpreting the data. Smaller geographic breakdowns should not be used as a precise estimate of the trans population and comparisons between areas or groups should be considered with caution, particularly where there are different levels of English language proficiency.

For further information and to support appropriate use, please refer to the [Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Quality Information page on the ONS website](#) before using these estimates.

## **Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic**

Census 2021 was conducted during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This may have influenced how people perceive and rate their health and therefore may have affected how people chose to respond. Population change in certain areas may reflect how the pandemic affected people's choice of usual residence on Census Day. These changes might have been temporary for some and more long-lasting for others.

As a result of the pandemic, the UK government had introduced furlough measures to ensure those who could not work were able to remain in employment. When completing the Census 2021 form, people on furlough were advised to say that they were temporarily away from work, as were those who were quarantining or self-isolating because of the pandemic. The number of people who were economically inactive might be higher than anticipated as it is possible that some people on furlough may have identified as economically inactive, instead of temporarily away from work. There are some differences between Census 2021 data on employment and data based on the Labour

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Force Survey. These differences are explained in the article [Comparing Census 2021 and Labour Force Survey estimates of the labour market, England and Wales, produced by the ONS](#).

## Glossary

For a full glossary of terms, please see the [ONS' Census 2021 variable dictionary](#). For information on how ONS developed the Census 2021 questions, see the [questions development page \(ONS\)](#).

### Usual residents

A "usual resident" is anyone who on Census Day, 21 March 2021, was in the UK and had stayed or intended to stay in the UK for a period of 12 months or more, or had a permanent UK address and was outside the UK and intended to be outside the UK for less than 12 months.

### Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation is an umbrella term covering sexual identity, attraction, and behaviour. 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 relationships.

### LGB+

An abbreviation used to refer to people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or

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other minority sexual orientations (for example, asexual).

## **Other sexual orientation**

One of the options on the Census 2021 questionnaire for the sexual orientation question was “Other sexual orientation”. Respondents who selected this option could write in their sexual orientation.

Based on feedback from Wales-based Equality communities, including the LGB+ communities, terms like “other” tend to centre a specific group. For example, in terms of sexual orientation, the term “other” would centre heterosexuality as the ‘norm’ which contributes to othering for people who are LGB+.

In this release we have used the term “Another sexual orientation” to describe “Other sexual orientation” group.

## **Gender identity**

Gender identity refers to a person’s sense of their own gender, whether someone is a man, woman or another category such as non-binary. This may or may not be the same as their sex registered at birth.

## **Trans man**

A trans man is usually someone who was registered female at birth, but now identifies as a man.

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## **Trans woman**

A trans woman is usually someone who was registered male at birth, but now identifies as a woman.

## **Non-binary**

Someone who is non-binary may not identify with the binary categories of man and woman. In these results the category includes people who identified with the specific term “non-binary” or variants of this. For the purpose of this release those who used other terms to describe an identity which was neither specifically man nor woman, as well as those identifying as non-binary, have been included in “Another gender identity”.

## **Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given**

These are people who answered “No” to the question “Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?” but did not write in a gender identity.

## **Disability classification categories**

The four disability categories analysed in this bulletin are listed below.

1. Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a lot
2. Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a little
3. Not disabled under the Equality Act: Has long-term physical or mental health condition but day-to-day activities are not limited

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4. Not disabled under the Equality Act: No long-term physical or mental health conditions

Note that in this bulletin, categories 3 and 4 were merged into one “Non-disabled” category.

## Economic activity status

Is a measure of whether or not a person was an active participant in the labour market during this period. Economically inactive are those aged 16 years and over who did not have a job between 15 March to 21 March 2021 and had not looked for work between 22 February to 21 March 2021 or could not start work within two weeks. Find the full list of 19 categories in the [Economic activity status variable dictionary entry \(ONS\)](#). In this release we limited the ages to 16 to 64 for the sexual orientation by economic activity. However for gender identity this variable covers all usual residents aged 16 and over.

## Age specific percentages

The sexual identity analysis in this release includes age-specific percentages and age standardisation has not been applied. This allows us to consider how different age structures amongst population groups may impact the outcomes explored. This is particularly interesting when exploring sexual identity whereby younger people are more likely to identify as LGB+, with progressively smaller proportions in older age groups.

Although the gender identity groups have differing age structures, which may similarly impact the outcomes explored, we are unable to break this data down by age due to small sample sizes.

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## Official Statistics status

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

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.

For further information and to support appropriate use, please refer to the **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Quality Information page on the ONS website** before using these estimates.

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

## Statement of compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

All of our statistics are produced and published in accordance with a number of statements and protocols to enhance trustworthiness, quality and value. These are set out in the Welsh Government's **Statement of Compliance**.

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These accredited official statistics demonstrate the standards expected around trustworthiness, quality and public value in the following ways.

## Trustworthiness

These statistics were compiled from Census 2021 data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Census 2021 has been accredited as National Statistics and underwent a rigorous **accreditation process** with the OSR. You can read more about the quality and methodology of census data by reading the **Quality and methodology information for Census 2021 report (ONS)**.

The team of analysts come from varied and diverse backgrounds, providing an impartial analysis of the data presented. Within this release we provide a quality and methodology statement in order to be clear and transparent with our drafting and publication process.

## Quality

The published figures provided are compiled by professional analysts using the latest available data and applying methods using their professional judgement and analytical skillset. This included careful and independent validation of all elements of the compiling and drafting process by Welsh Government statisticians, as well as a separate review from ONS colleagues.

Before publication, the release is signed off by senior statisticians and published in line with the statement on confidentiality and data access which is informed by the trustworthiness pillar contained in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Statistics published by Welsh Government adhere to the Statistical Quality Management Strategy which supplements the Quality pillar of the Code of Practice for Statistics and the European Statistical System principles of quality

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for statistical outputs.

## Value

In publishing this data, we aim to provide evidence for ministers, policy makers and external stakeholders on equalities policy, and to inform the wider public.

Census 2021 provides an accurate and complete source of population information. In the context of sexual orientation and gender identity data this allows us to explore trends at a more granular level than we would normally be able to with survey data. This supports organisations in Wales to target their resources more effectively in delivering their services.

The statistics and figures have been styled and published in an accessible format in line with accessibility legislation.

You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing [regulation@statistics.gov.uk](mailto:regulation@statistics.gov.uk) or via the OSR website.

## Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. Under section 10(8) of the Well-being of Future Generations

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Act, where the Welsh Ministers revise the national indicators, they must as soon as reasonably practicable (a) publish the indicators as revised and (b) lay a copy of them before the Senedd. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. The indicators laid on 14 December 2021 replace the set laid on 16 March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the [Wellbeing of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

## Contact details

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Media: 0300 025 8099

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