

The LGBTQ+ population in Brent

2021 Census - topic briefing

Report updated 16.11.23



BUILDING A
BETTER BRENT

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Summary

census 2021

LGBTQ+ population in Brent



Number of LGB+ residents in Brent
8,804

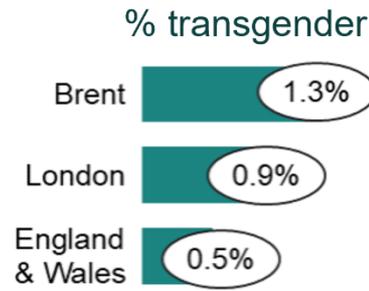
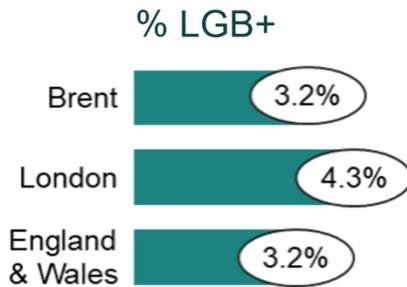
3.2%
of adults in Brent identified as LGB+



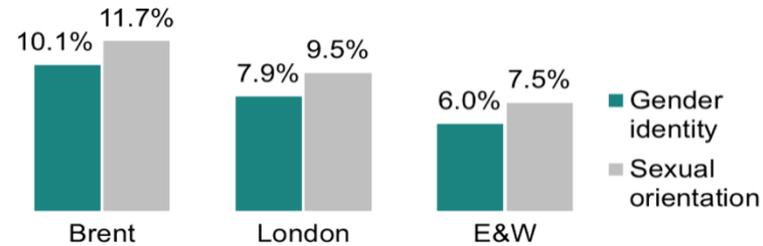
3,611
Number of transgender residents in Brent



1.3%
of adults in Brent identified as transgender
the 2nd highest rate in England & Wales



% who chose not to answer the gender identity and sexual orientation questions



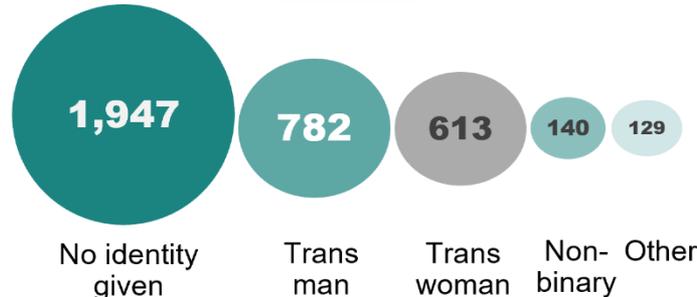
LGB+ population breakdown

8,804



Transgender population breakdown

3,611



! Data quality

An ONS quality review has raised some issues about the quality of census gender identity statistics. The review implies that the figures may overstate the size of transgender population in areas like Brent. These issues are discussed on page 16 and should be borne in mind when interpreting statistics presented here.

Headlines - 1

This briefing summarises census data about sexual orientation and gender identity in Brent. The 2021 census was the first to ask questions about these topics, providing important new intelligence about the borough's LGBTQ+ population. All figures relate to the adult population aged 16 and over. Key findings include:

- **Sexual orientation:** In Brent, 85.1% of adults identified as straight or heterosexual and 3.2% identified with a LGB+ orientation. The remaining 11.7% chose not to answer the sexual orientation question. Of all those who did answer the question, 96.4% identified as straight or heterosexual and 3.6% identified as LGB+.
- **The LGB+ population:** In numbers, 8,804 respondents identified as LGB+. Within the population: 3,604 identified as gay or lesbian (1.3% of Brent adults); 3,561 identified as bisexual (1.3% of adults); 1,246 identified as pansexual (0.5% of adults); and 393 (0.1%) identified with another sexual orientation. Note: As some chose not to answer the question, these statistics are likely to provide minimum estimates of groups within Brent's LGB+ population.
- **Age and sex profile:** Brent's LGB+ population has a younger age profile when compared to the population generally: 4.6% of the residents aged 16-24 identified as LGB+ compared with 0.6% of those aged 75 and over. By sex, men were more likely than women to identify as LGB+ (3.6% vs. 2.8%).
- **Area comparisons:** The percentage of residents who identified as LGB+ in Brent was the same as the average across England & Wales (3.2%), though lower than the London average (4.3%). Brent had a relatively high non-response rate to the sexual orientation question (11.7% vs. 7.5% nationally) – the 4th highest non-response rate in England & Wales. For this reason, area comparisons need interpreted with some caution.
- **LGB+ population by MSOA*:** Small area data about the LGB+ population are available for Brent's 35 middle layer super output areas (MSOAs). The size of the LGB+ population ranges from 105 residents in the Welsh Harp MSOA up to 461 in the Willesden Green MSOA. As a percentage of the population, those who identified as LGB+ ranged from 1.6% in the St Raphael's MSOA up to 6.7% of adults in the Wembley Park MSOA.

Headlines – 2

- **Gender identity:** In response to the census question: 'Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?', 88.6% of Brent adults answered 'yes', 1.3% answered 'no', and the remaining 10.1% chose not to answer. Of those who answered the question, 98.5% answered 'yes' and 1.5% answered 'no'.
- **Transgender population:** In numbers, a total of 3,611 adults in Brent, answered 'no', indicating they were transgender. Of this group: more than half provided no further detail about their gender identity (1,947 residents); 782 identified as a trans man; 613 identified as a trans woman; 140 identified as non-binary; and the remaining 129 identified with another gender identity.
- **Age and sex:** The transgender population has a slightly younger age profile when compared to the population generally. The percentage who were transgender was highest among the 35-44 age group (1.7%) and lowest among those aged 75 and over (0.6%). By sex, men were more likely to identify as transgender than women (1.5% of males vs. 1.1% of females).
- **Area comparisons:** Relative to other areas, Brent has a large transgender population: 1.3% of residents in Brent identified as transgender, compared with 0.9% across London and 0.5% across England & Wales. Brent had the second highest rate in England & Wales, after Newham (1.5%). Brent also had the highest non-response rate in England & Wales: 10.1% of Brent respondents chose not to answer compared with 7.9% across London, and 6.0% nationally. Across Brent's 35 MSOAs*, the size of the transgender population ranges from 38 residents in Brondesbury Park MSOA up to 199 in Alperton West MSOA. As a percentage of the population, those who identified as transgender ranged from 0.6% in Brondesbury Park MSOA up to 2.1% in St Raphael's MSOA.
- **! Quality of census data on gender identity:** The Office for National Statistics has undertaken a [quality review](#) of census data on gender identity. The review suggests that some respondents, particularly those with poor language proficiency, may have not understood the question as intended, leading to a potential overcount of the trans population in areas like Brent. The review findings are tentative and the size of this impact is unknown. Given this, caution is advised when interpreting census data on gender identity.

Introduction

Census questions

This briefing summarises 2021 census data about sexual orientation and gender identity in Brent. The 2021 census was the first to ask questions about these topics; both questions were directed at adults aged 16 and over and were voluntary.

Terms used in this report

The term 'LGB+' used in this report refers to the population who identified under one of the following three census categories: 'Gay or Lesbian', 'Bisexual' or 'other sexual orientation'. The census sexual orientation question is about how people identify. This isn't always the same as who they are attracted to, or who they have had relationships with.

The term 'transgender' used in this report refers to those who answered 'No' to the census gender identity question: 'Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?'. [Appendix 1](#) provides further information about all definitions used in this report.

Data quality

While the 2021 census figures provide important new intelligence about Brent's LGBTQ+ population, the data do have a number of quality issues that should be considered when interpreting the data. These issues are discussed in more detail on [page 16](#).

2021 census questions on sexual orientation and gender identity

25 If you are aged 16 or over → **GO TO 26**
If you are aged 15 or under → **GO TO 51**

26 Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

26 This question is **voluntary**

- Straight/Heterosexual
- Gay or Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Other sexual orientation, write in

27 Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

27 This question is **voluntary**

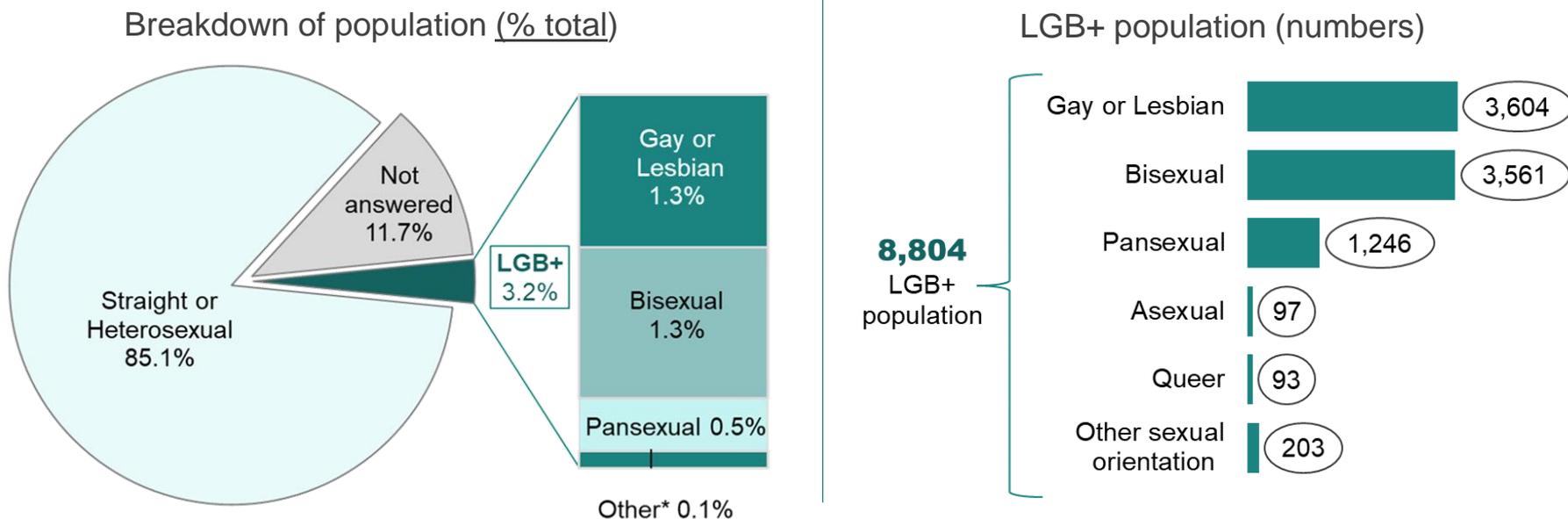
- Yes
- No, write in gender identity

Copyright: The report is based on datasets relating to sexual orientation and gender identity, released by the ONS during January 2023. Census statistics are licenced under the Open Government Licence v.3.0 © Crown Copyright.

Sexual orientation, Brent, 2021

- In Brent, 85.1% identified as straight or heterosexual and 3.2% identified with a LGB+ orientation. The remaining 11.7% of residents chose not to answer the question, which was voluntary. Of those who answered the question, 96.4% of respondents identified as straight or heterosexual and 3.6% identified as LGB+.
- The LGB+ population in Brent numbered 8,804 in total. Of this group:
 - 3,604 identified as gay or lesbian (1.3% of Brent adults)
 - 3,561 identified as bisexual (1.3% of adults)
 - 1,246 identified as pansexual (0.5% of adults)
 - 393 (0.1%) identified with another orientation, including 97 identifying as asexual and 93 identifying as queer.
- ! Due to the fact some chose not to answer the question, the census LGB+ counts above are likely to provide a minimum estimate of the size of the borough's LGB+ population and its different groups.

Population by sexual orientation, Brent, 2021 (residents aged 16 and over)

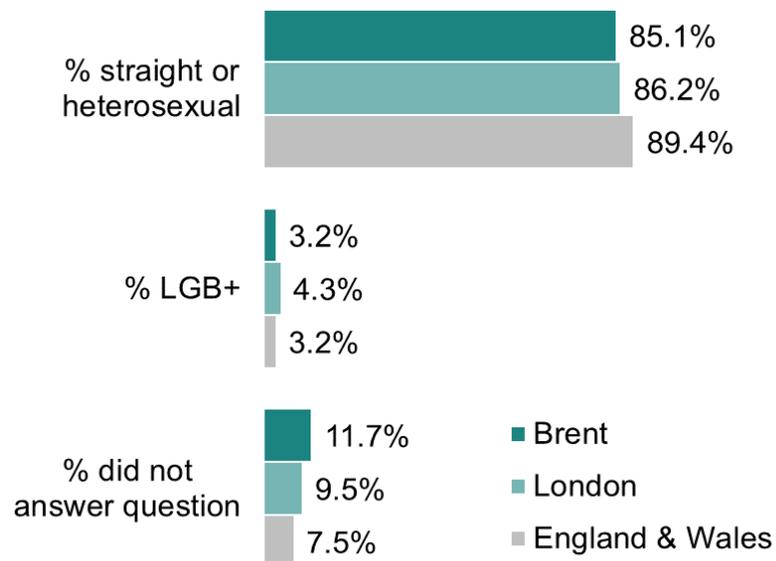


Sexual orientation, areas compared, 2021

- The percentage of adult residents who identified as LGB+ in Brent was the same as the average across England & Wales (3.2%), though lower than the London average (4.3%). Nationally, the LGB+ percentage ranged from 1.6% in Castle Point in Essex up to 10.7% in Brighton & Hove.
- However, some caution is required when interpreting comparisons between areas due to the fact not everyone answered the question. Response rates varied across the country: in Brent, 11.7% of residents chose not to answer compared with 9.5% across London, and 7.5% nationally. Brent had the 4th highest non-response rate in England & Wales.
- Of those who answered the question, 3.6% of Brent residents identified as LGB+ compared with 4.7% across London, and 3.4% across England & Wales.

Sexual orientation, areas compared, 2021

Residents aged 16+ (% total)



Population by sexual orientation, 2021

	Brent	London	England & Wales	Brent rank*
% totals				
Population aged 16+	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Straight or heterosexual	85.1%	86.2%	89.4%	312
All LGB+	3.2%	4.3%	3.2%	71
- Gay or Lesbian	1.3%	2.2%	1.5%	140
- Bisexual	1.3%	1.5%	1.3%	75
- Pansexual	0.5%	0.4%	0.2%	12
- Asexual	<0.1%	<0.1%	0.1%	284
- Queer	<0.1%	0.1%	<0.1%	57
- Other orientations	0.1%	<0.1%	<0.1%	2
Not answered	11.7%	9.5%	7.5%	4
% totals (base: those who answered the question only)				
Straight or Heterosexual	96.4%	95.3%	96.6%	270
All LGB+	3.6%	4.7%	3.4%	62

Source: 2021 census (Table TS079)

LGB+ population, London context, 2021

- Within London, the percentage who identified as LGB+ was typically higher across Inner London boroughs: 6.4% of residents in Inner London were LGB+, more than double the rate across Outer London (2.9%).
- At borough level, the rate ranged from 2.0% in Havering up to 10.4% in the City of London. However, as the City has a relatively small population, it had the smallest LGB+ population in terms of numbers (829 residents), while Lambeth had the largest (22,198).
- Brent was ranked 21st highest out of 33 areas in London on its LGB+ rate (3.2%), which was just above the average for Outer London (2.9%).
- Across boroughs, the percentage who chose not to answer the question ranged from 12.6% in Hackney down to 7.0% in Bexley. Brent had the second highest non-response rate in London (11.7%) after Hackney.

LGB+ population (%), London boroughs & City, 2021

	LGB+ (% of population)	LGB+ (number)
City of London	10.4%	829
Lambeth	8.3%	22,198
Southwark	8.1%	20,698
Islington	8.0%	14,712
Hackney	7.8%	16,388
Tower Hamlets	7.2%	18,127
Camden	6.9%	12,347
Lewisham	6.1%	14,873
Haringey	5.6%	12,167
Westminster	5.5%	9,729
Hammersmith & Fulham	5.3%	8,220
Wandsworth	5.2%	14,184
Waltham Forest	4.5%	10,046
Greenwich	4.5%	10,306
Kensington & Chelsea	4.3%	5,341
Newham	4.0%	11,086
Kingston upon Thames	3.4%	4,643
Richmond upon Thames	3.4%	5,234
Merton	3.4%	5,788
Ealing	3.3%	9,857
BRENT	3.2%	8,804
Croydon	3.1%	9,530
Hounslow	3.0%	6,888
Barnet	2.8%	8,633
Bromley	2.7%	7,232
Sutton	2.4%	3,967
Barking & Dagenham	2.3%	3,690
Redbridge	2.2%	5,396
Hillingdon	2.2%	5,378
Enfield	2.2%	5,619
Bexley	2.1%	4,136
Harrow	2.0%	4,239
Havering	2.0%	4,092

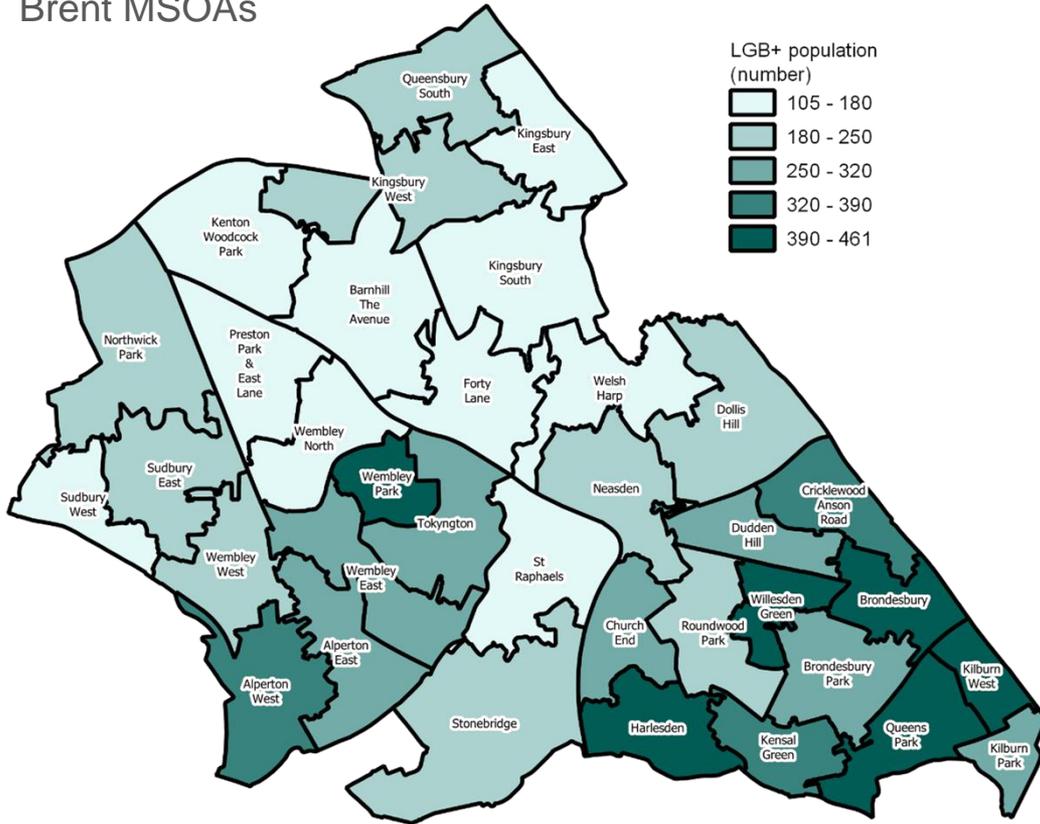
	% LGB	
Greater London	4.3%	5,619
- Inner London	6.4%	4,136
- Outer London	2.9%	4,239

LGB+ population by MSOA in Brent

The map below shows how the size of the LGB+ population varies across Brent by MSOA (middle layer super output area*). By number, the population ranges from 105 residents in the Welsh Harp MSOA up to 461 in the Willesden Green MSOA. As a percentage of the population, those who identified as LGB+ ranged from 1.6% in the St Raphael's MSOA up to 6.7% of adults in the Wembley Park MSOA.

Number of residents identifying as LGB+, 2021

Brent MSOAs



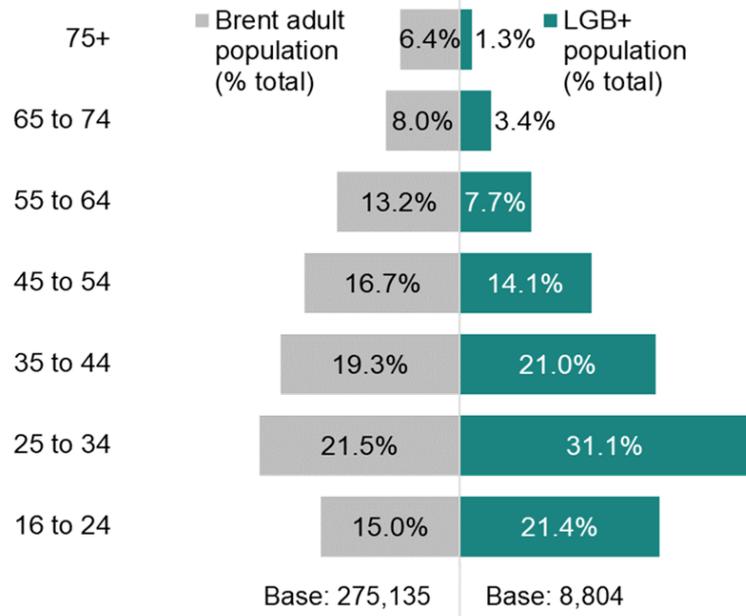
	LGB+ population (number)	% of population
Willesden Green	461	6.1%
Kilburn West	459	6.0%
Wembley Park	431	6.7%
Harlesden	429	4.0%
Brondesbury	411	5.6%
Queens Park	403	5.0%
Cricklewood Anson Road	362	4.0%
Alperton West	353	3.6%
Kensal Green	327	4.1%
Dudden Hill	308	4.6%
Wembley East	296	3.0%
Church End	270	2.8%
Alperton East	263	2.8%
Tokyngton	262	3.5%
Kilburn Park	256	3.9%
Brondesbury Park	253	3.8%
Queensbury South	237	2.4%
Stonebridge	230	2.8%
Roundwood Park	229	3.4%
Wembley West	219	2.4%
Kingsbury West	213	2.5%
Neasden	213	2.6%
Dollis Hill	200	2.5%
Northwick Park	193	2.7%
Sudbury East	184	2.3%
Kingsbury East	168	2.0%
Kingsbury South	154	2.0%
Forty Lane	152	1.9%
Wembley North	147	2.3%
Preston Park & East Lane	141	1.9%
Barnhill The Avenue	129	1.8%
Sudbury West	122	2.1%
St Raphaels	116	1.6%
Kenton Woodcock Park	109	1.7%
Welsh Harp	105	1.7%

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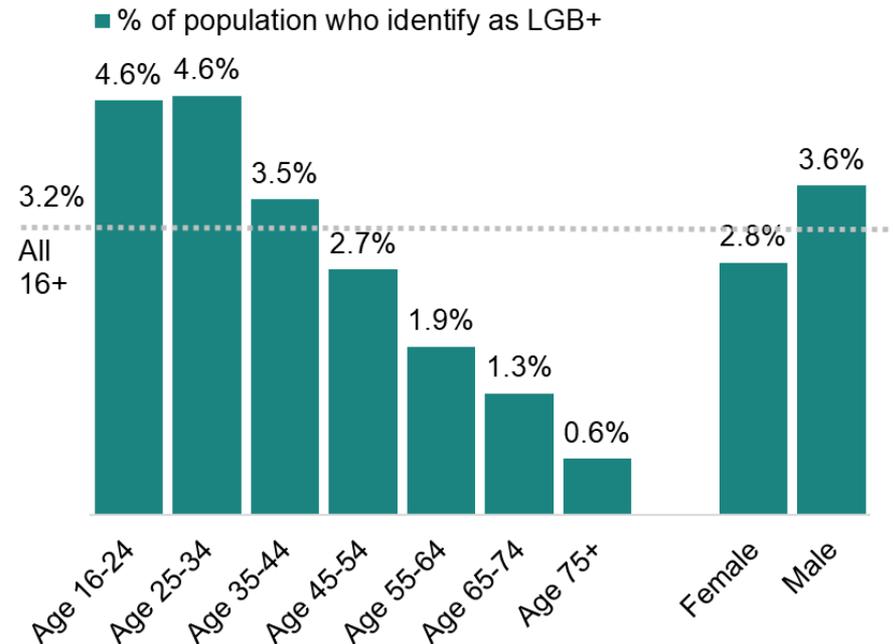
Sexual orientation by age and sex

- While those identifying as LGB+ are represented in all age groups, the LGB+ population has a younger age profile when compared to the population generally: just over half (53%) of Brent's adult LGB+ population are aged 16-34 compared with 36% of the Brent population generally. The percentage of residents identifying as LGB+ declines sharply with age: in Brent, 4.6% of the population aged 16-24 identified as LGB+ compared with just 0.6% of those aged 75 and over. Similar trends are evident nationally¹.
- By sex, men are a bit more likely than women to identify as LGB+ (3.6% vs. 2.8%). Brent's LGB+ population comprises 55% men and 45% women. Nationally, the opposite is true with women making up a larger percentage of LGB+ population in England & Wales (54% women vs. 46% men).

Age profiles compared: LGB+ compared with adult population, Brent, 2021



Percentage of residents who are LGB+ by age and sex, Brent, 2021

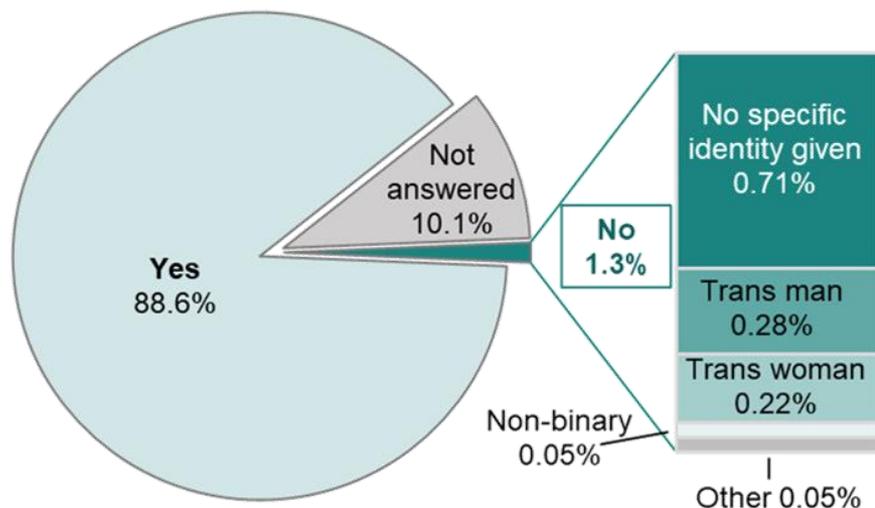


Gender identity, Brent, 2021

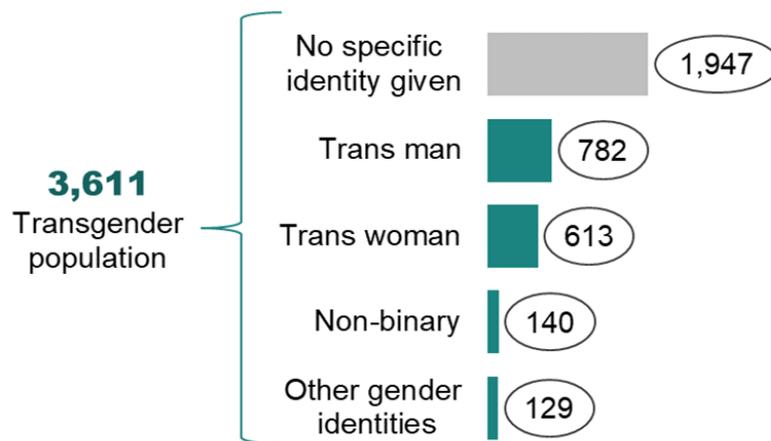
- When asked: 'Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?', 88.6% of Brent adults answered 'yes', 1.3% answered 'no' and the remaining 10.1% chose not to answer the question. Of those who answered the question, 98.5% answered 'yes' and 1.5% answered 'no'.
- In numbers, a total of 3,611 adults in Brent answered 'no', indicating they were transgender. Of this group:
 - More than half provided no further detail about their gender identity (1,947 residents)
 - 782 identified as a trans man (0.28% of the adult population)
 - 613 identified as a trans woman (0.22%)
 - 140 identified as non-binary and the remaining 129 identified with another gender identity (both 0.05%).

Population by gender identity, Brent, 2021 (residents aged 16 and over)

Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (% total)



Transgender adult population by gender identity (numbers)



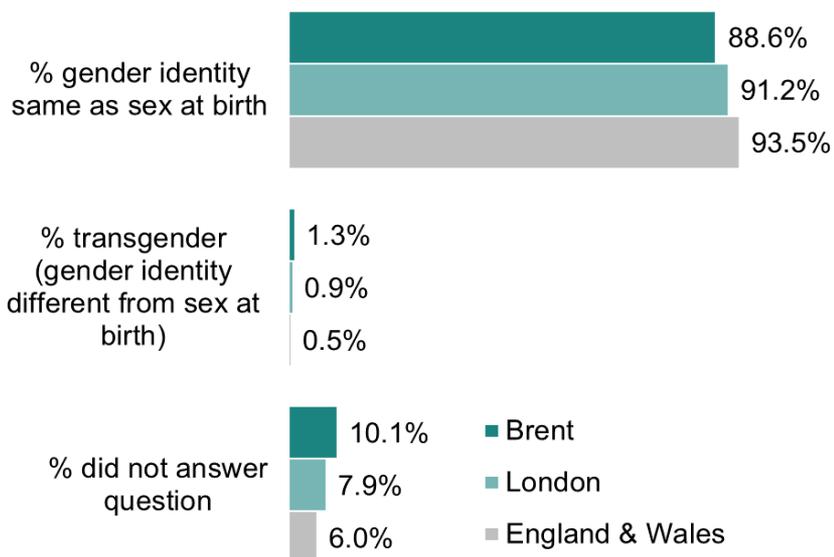
Gender identity, areas compared, 2021

Relative to other areas, Brent has a large transgender population: 1.3% of residents in Brent identified as transgender, compared with 0.9% across London and 0.5% across England & Wales. Brent had the second highest rate in England & Wales, after Newham (1.5%). However, some caution is required when interpreting differences between areas:

- A recent ONS quality review of census statistics on gender identity suggests some respondents, particularly those with poor language proficiency, may have not understood the question as intended, leading to a potential overcount of the trans population in areas like Brent. For this reason, some caution is advised when interpreting the area comparisons below.
- Also, some chose not to answer the question and response rates varied by area. In Brent, 10.1% of respondents chose not to answer compared with 6.0% nationally. Brent had the highest non-response rate in England & Wales. More information on data quality issues is provided on page 16.

Gender identity, areas compared, 2021

Residents aged 16+ (% total)



Adult population by gender identity, 2021

	Brent	London	England & Wales	Brent rank*
% total				
Population aged 16+	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Gender identity the same as sex at birth	88.6%	91.2%	93.5%	330
Gender identity different from sex at birth	1.3%	0.9%	0.5%	2
- No specific identity given	0.7%	0.5%	0.2%	2
- Trans woman	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	3
- Trans man	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	1
- Non-binary	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	114
- Other identities	<0.1%	<0.1%	<0.1%	49
Not answered	10.1%	7.9%	6.0%	1
% totals (base: those who answered the question only)				
Gender identity the same as sex at birth	98.5%	99.0%	99.4%	330
Gender identity different from sex at birth	1.5%	1.0%	0.6%	2

Source: 2021 census (Table TS070)

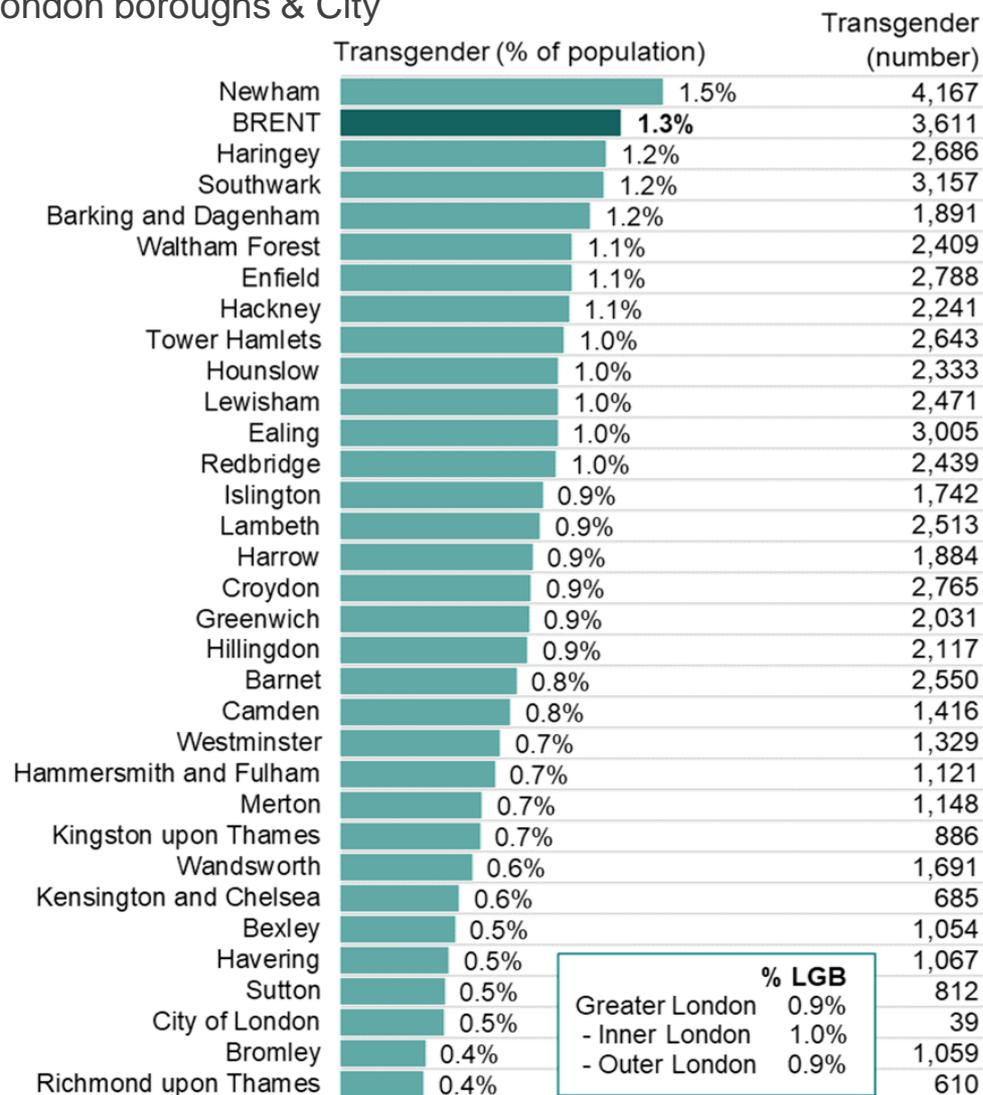
Gender identity, London context, 2021

- At borough level, the percentage of the population identifying as transgender ranged from 0.4% in Richmond upon Thames and Bromley up to 1.5% in Newham.
- The percentage of the population who were transgender was similar across Inner and Outer London (1.0% vs. 0.9%).
- Brent ranked 2nd highest out of 33 areas in London (1.3%), and 2nd highest nationally.
- By population size, Brent was also ranked 2nd largest in London on the size of its transgender population (3,611), after Newham (4,167).

Note: Please see page 16 for more information about data quality of gender identity data by area.

Transgender population (%), 2021

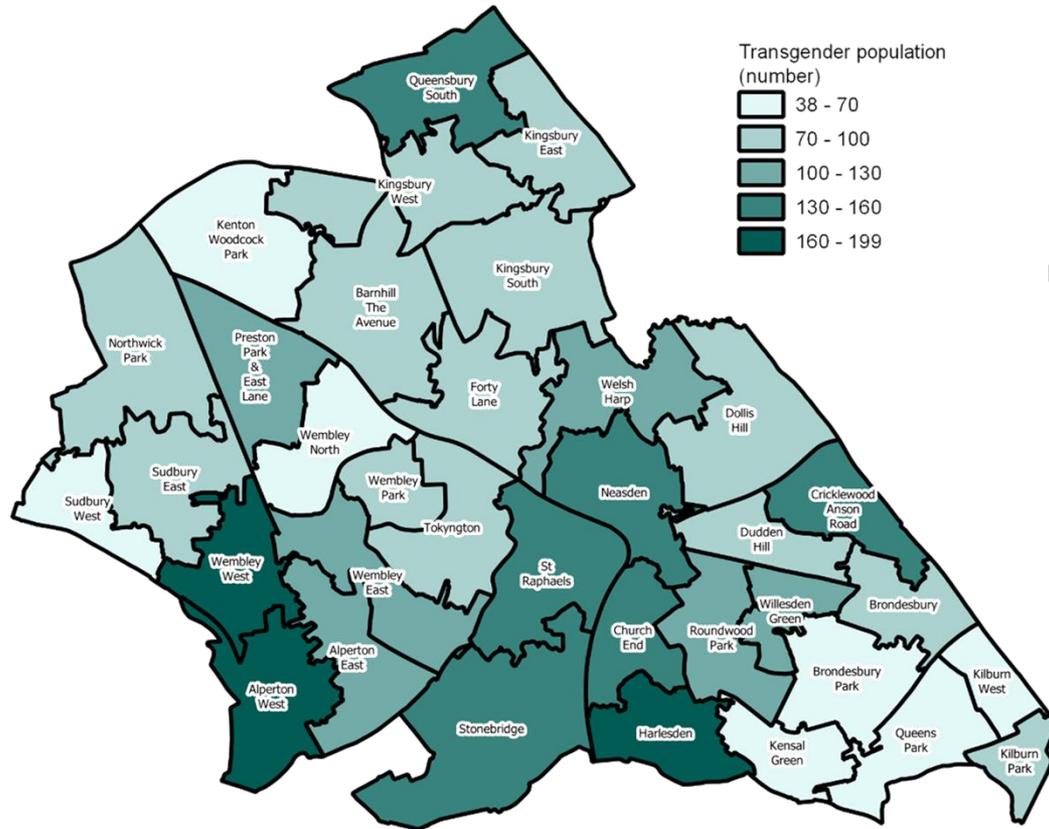
London boroughs & City



Transgender population by MSOA in Brent

The map shows how the size of the transgender population varies across Brent's MSOAs*. By number, the population ranges from 38 residents in the Brondesbury Park MSOA up to 199 in the Alperton West MSOA. As a percentage of the population, the rate ranged from 0.6% in Brondesbury Park up to 2.1% in St Raphael's.

Number of residents identifying as transgender, 2021 Brent MSOAs



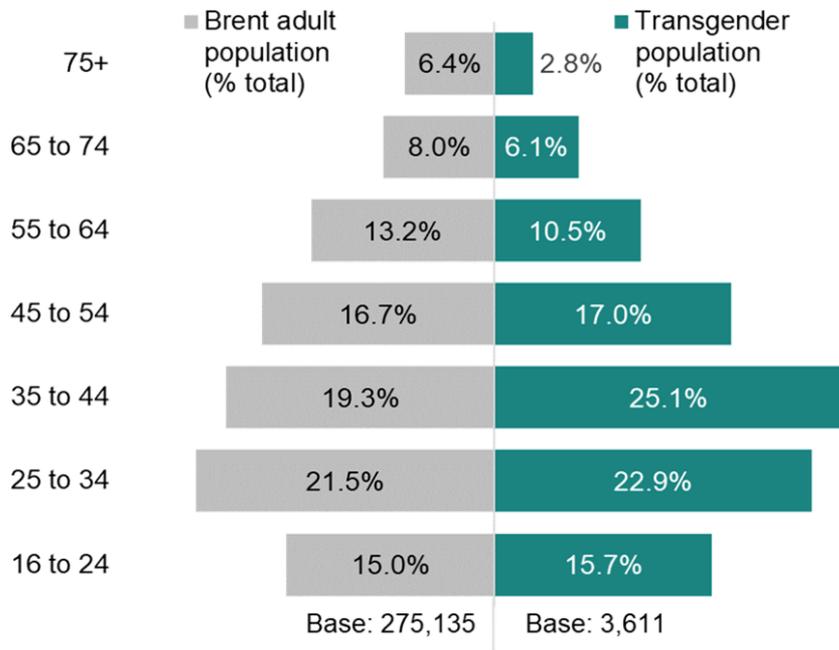
MSOA	Transgender population (number)	% of population
Alperton West	199	2.0%
Harlesden	184	1.7%
Wembley West	167	1.8%
St Raphaels	155	2.1%
Stonebridge	150	1.8%
Cricklewood Anson Road	149	1.6%
Queensbury South	143	1.5%
Church End	137	1.4%
Neasden	134	1.6%
Willesden Green	126	1.7%
Preston Park & East Lane	123	1.6%
Welsh Harp	122	2.0%
Alperton East	118	1.3%
Wembley East	118	1.2%
Roundwood Park	102	1.5%
Kingsbury East	94	1.1%
Sudbury East	94	1.2%
Forty Lane	93	1.2%
Kilburn Park	93	1.4%
Kingsbury South	92	1.2%
Brondesbury	89	1.2%
Tokington	89	1.2%
Kingsbury West	87	1.0%
Dollis Hill	75	1.0%
Dudden Hill	74	1.1%
Northwick Park	74	1.0%
Barnhill The Avenue	71	1.0%
Wembley Park	71	1.1%
Kensal Green	68	0.8%
Sudbury West	66	1.1%
Kilburn West	65	0.9%
Queens Park	56	0.7%
Wembley North	52	0.8%
Kenton Woodcock Park	43	0.7%
Brondesbury Park	38	0.6%

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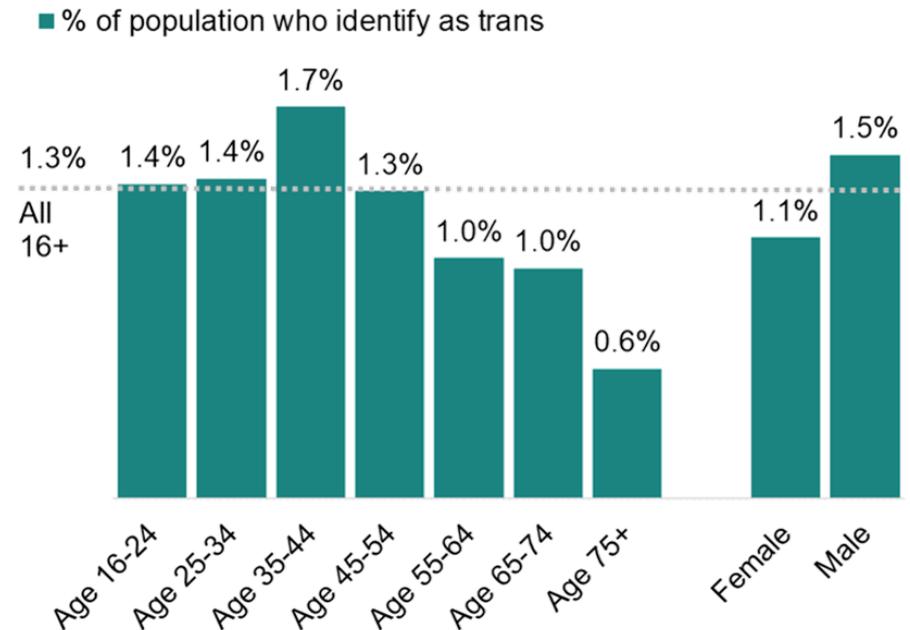
Transgender population by age and sex

- Those identifying as transgender are represented in all age groups though in general, the transgender population has a slightly younger age profile when compared to the population generally. The percentage who were transgender was highest among the 35-44 age group (1.7%) and lowest among those aged 75 and over (0.6%). Nationally, the relationship between age and trans identity was more pronounced than in Brent, with the highest rates among the 16-24 year olds¹.
- By sex, those who identified as male were more likely to identify as transgender than those who answered female to the census sex question (1.5% of males vs. 1.1% of females). The Brent transgender population comprised 55.4% males and 44.6% females. Nationally, the ratio was around 50:50 (50.1% male and 49.9% female).

Age profiles compared: Transgender vs. general population, Brent, 2021



Percentage of residents who are transgender by age and sex, Brent, 2021



Data quality issues affecting these data

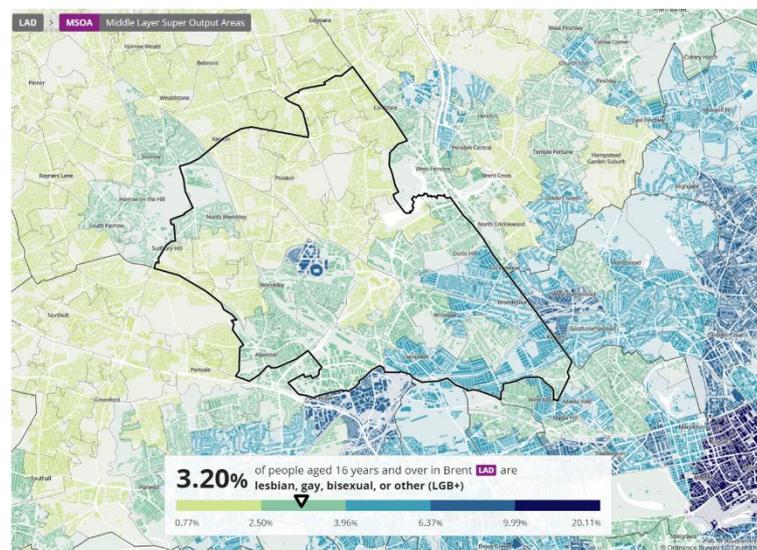
While the 2021 census figures provide important new intelligence about Brent's LGBTQ+ population, the data do have a number of quality issues that should be considered when interpreting the data. These include:

- **The high non-response rate:** The sexual orientation and gender questions were voluntary, and some residents chose not to provide details about their identity. In Brent, the levels of non-response were high. It is possible that some of those who didn't respond, would identify as LGBTQ+ in other contexts, but chose not to share information on the census.
- **Gender identity data quality:** In November 2023, ONS released a [quality review](#) of census gender identity data. The review acknowledges that some areas (like Brent) had a higher rate of trans responses than might have been expected and suggests that some respondents may have misunderstood the question (e.g. those with lower proficiency in English). The review states: *"There are patterns in the data that are consistent with some respondents not interpreting the question as we had intended. These patterns reflect those respondents with lower proficiency in English and characteristics likely associated with English language proficiency such as ethnicity and country of birth. However, for the reasons outlined in this report, we cannot say whether the census estimates are likely to be an overestimate or an underestimate of the true value, given other sources of uncertainty, not least the potential impact of question non-response. Therefore, the overall impact on the data of any misinterpretation of the question cannot be determined"*. While the review findings are inconclusive, they imply the Brent trans figures could be inflated by respondent error. This should be born in mind when interpreting the statistics.
- **Proxy responses:** Typically, the census form is completed by one household member on behalf of the entire household. While respondents had the option to submit a separate, individual census form, not all respondents will have chosen to do this. It is possible that some residents may have had inaccurate sexual orientation or gender identity information recorded for them.
- **Pandemic impacts:** The census took place in March 2021 when a range of pandemic lockdown restrictions were still in place. It is likely that some Brent residents were temporarily away at this time (e.g. students, furloughed workers). Research by the Greater London Authority¹, presents a range of evidence which shows that London's population was lower than usual when the census took place.

Further information

- **Data tables:** A set of data tables have been produced to accompany this report. These have been made available in spreadsheet format on the council's open data [site](#).
- **2021 Census data:** 2021 Census topic summary datasets can be found on the [NOMIS website](#).
- **ONS mapping tool:** ONS has produced an interactive [mapping tool](#) which allows exploration of the data across all local authority areas, and small areas (Middle Layer Super Output Areas), in England & Wales.
- **Future census data:** This 'topic summary' data is part of the phase 1 release of the 2021 Census datasets. More detailed results are expected during 2023. A timetable summarises the release timetable can be found on the [ONS website](#).
- **Brent insight:** For more census facts about Brent please see the [Census page](#) on the Council's '[Brent Open Data](#)' website. This report was produced by Brent Council's Data and Insight team. For more information please email the team at: open.data@brent.gov.uk

ONS mapping tool



<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/maps>

Appendix 1: Census definitions

This page summarises the definitions used by ONS in relation to census data about sexual orientation and gender identity.

- **Sexual orientation:** Sexual orientation as 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+:** In the context of census data, the term LGB+ used in this report refers to the population who identified under one of the following three census categories: 'Gay or Lesbian', 'Bisexual' or 'other sexual orientation'. The ONS advises that it has not provided definitions for individual sexual orientation categories (e.g. queer or pansexual) because individual respondents may have differing perspectives on the exact meaning.
- **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.
- **Transgender:** The term 'transgender' used in this report refers to those who answered 'No' to the census gender identity question: 'Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?'.
- **Non-binary:** Someone who is non-binary does not identify with the binary categories of man and woman. In census results the category includes people who identified with the specific term 'non-binary' or variants thereon. However, those who used other terms to describe an identity which was neither specifically man nor woman have been classed in 'All other gender identities'.
- **Trans man:** A trans man is someone who was registered female at birth, but now identifies as a man.
- **Trans woman:** A trans woman is someone who was registered male at birth, but now identifies as a woman.