



**WIRRAL  
INTELLIGENCE  
SERVICE**

# Census 2021: Unpaid Carers Briefing

**Wirral Intelligence  
Service**

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## Census 2021: Carers Briefing

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## Introduction

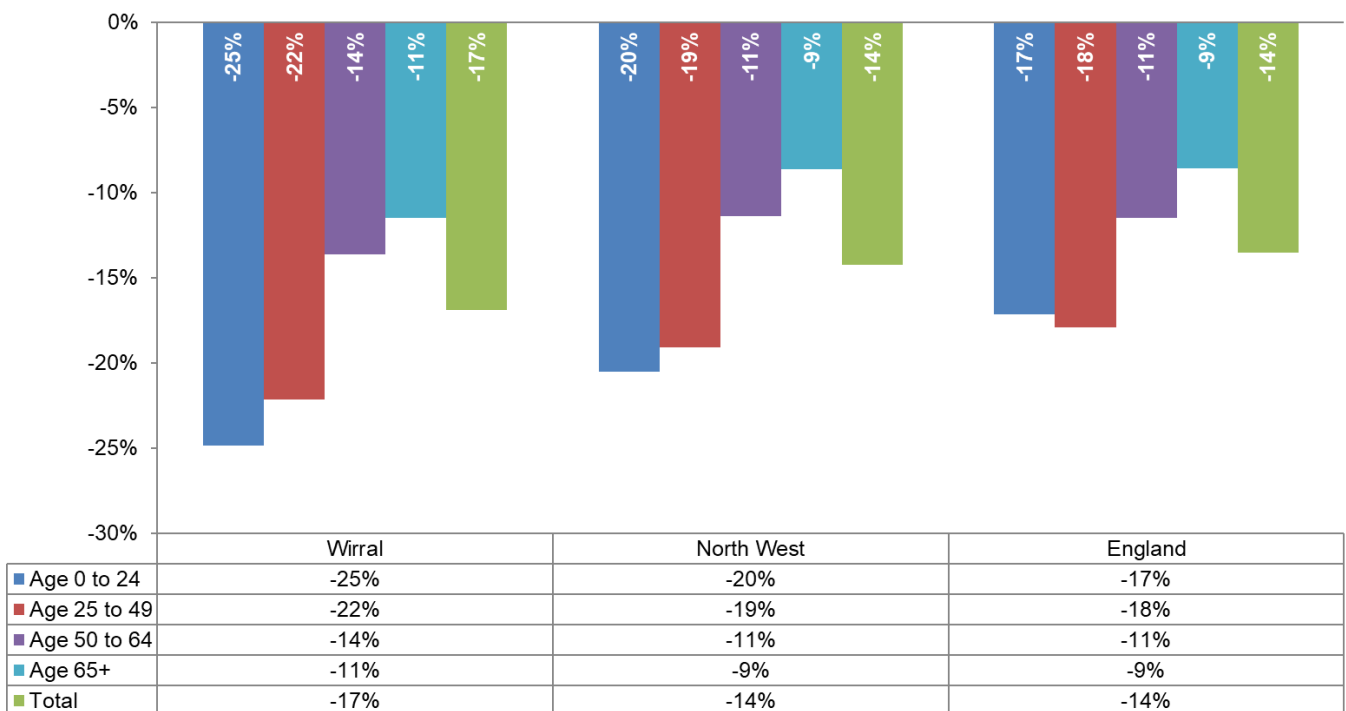
The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published the next phase of the Census 2021 topic summaries for [unpaid care](#) for England and Wales. This includes univariate data (one variable only) down to Output Area (OA) level, where possible. Multivariate data (in other words, combining Carers data with other variables from the Census) is also available on the ONS's [‘Create a custom dataset’](#) site.

Please note that Census 2021 was undertaken during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which may have influenced how people perceived and undertook their provision of unpaid care and may therefore, have affected how people chose to respond.

## Comparison in Carer Numbers with Previous Census's

As can be seen from **Figure 1**, the number of Carers in Wirral decreased in all age groups between the 2011 and 2021 Census. This was also reflected at North West and England level, although to not as great an extent. The largest percentage decrease by age group in Wirral was in the 0-24 age group (-25%, n=705). The greatest decrease by age group in Wirral in terms of numbers was in the 25-49 age group (-22%, n=3,076). The remaining two age groups had the following decrease in numbers: 50-64 age group (-14%, n=1,984) and 65+ age group (-11%, n=1,039). Overall, there was a 17% reduction in the number of self-reported Carers (n=6,804) compared to the previous Census in 2011.

**Figure 1:** Percentage change in the number of Carers providing at least 1 hour of unpaid care per week, Wirral, North West & England 2011 to 2021



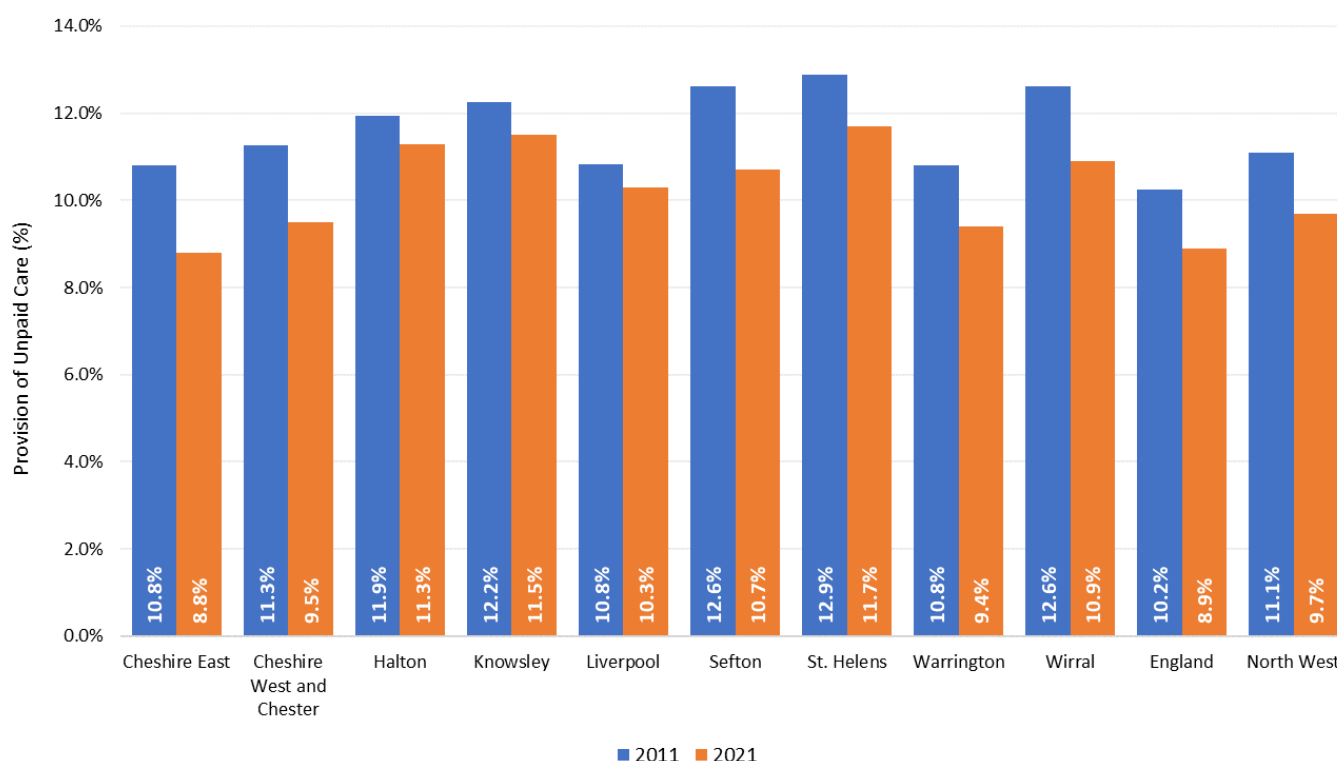
Source: [Census 2021, via Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)

Potential explanations for changes in the provision in unpaid care could include:

- Coronavirus guidance on reducing travel and limiting visits to people from other households.
- Unpaid Carers who previously shared caring responsibility may have taken on all aspects of unpaid care because of rules on household mixing during the coronavirus pandemic.
- There were a higher number of deaths than expected in the older population at the beginning of 2021 due to coronavirus (COVID-19) and other causes; this could have led to a reduction in the need for unpaid care.
- Changes in the question wording between 2011 and 2021 may have had an impact on the number of people who self-reported as unpaid Carers. Census 2021 asked "Do you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone *because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age?*" (See appendix), whilst Census 2011 asked, "Do you look after, or give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others". This is a key change of emphasis which could account for a considerable proportion of the difference between 2011 and 2021.

**Figure 2** shows that a reduction in the proportion of self-reported Carers was also the case for every local authority in Cheshire and Merseyside (C&M), with the greatest decreases in Cheshire East (10.8% to 8.8% - a reduction of 2.0%) and Sefton (12.6% to 10.7% - a reduction of 1.9%). The proportion of Carers decreased in Wirral from 12.6% to 10.9% - a reduction of 1.7%. This is a larger reduction than observed in England (-1.3%) and the North West (-1.4%).

**Figure 2:** Change in the proportion of Carers, by Cheshire and Merseyside (C&M) Local Authority, 2011 and 2021



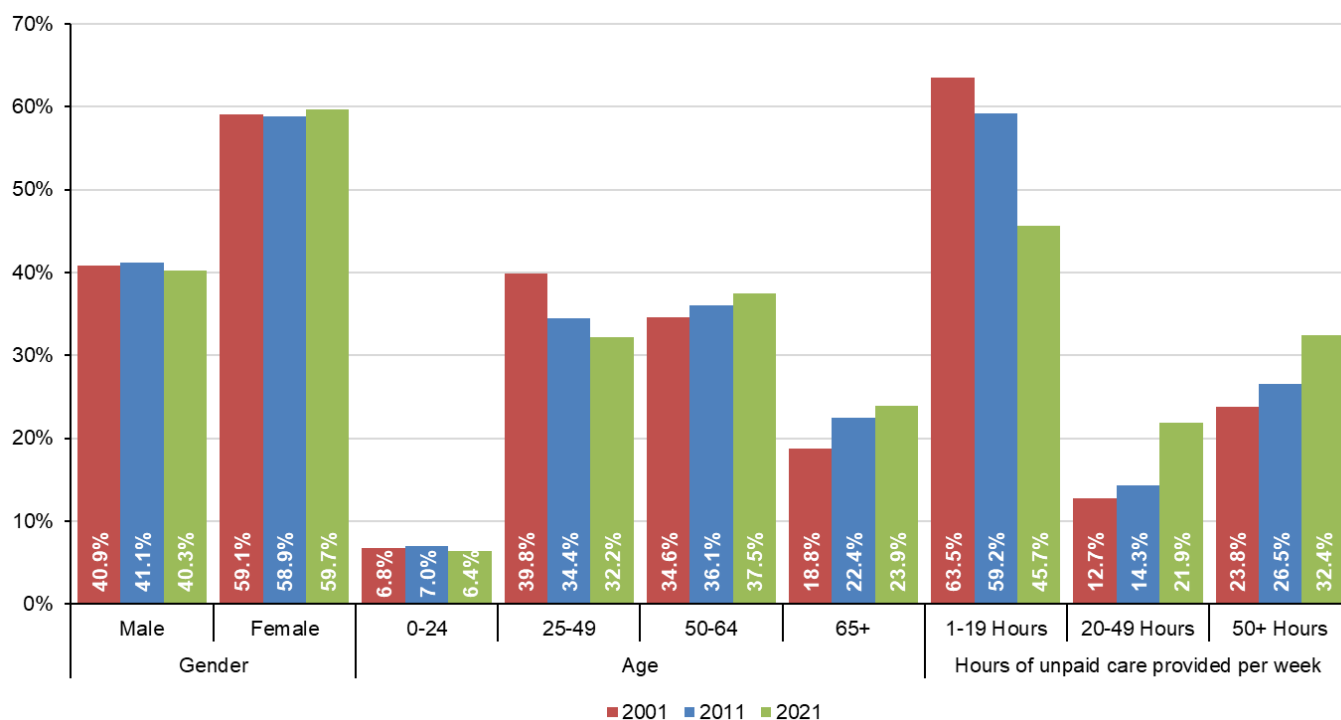
Source: [Census 2021, via Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#) and [Census 2011 via NOMIS](#)

**Figure 3** compares a range of demographic aspects of unpaid between the 2001, 2011 and 2021 Census's.

- The proportion of male and female Carers has remained very similar, with just 0.6% change between 2001 and 2021.

- There has been a change in the proportion of Carers by age over the periods shown; dropping from 6.8% to 6.4% for the 0-25s, in a decrease in those aged 25-49 between 2001 and 2021 (a -7.6% decrease), with increases in the 50-64 (+2.9%) and 65+ (+5.1%) age groups.
- While the overall number of Carers decreased by 20% between 2011 and 2021 (see **Figure 1**), the number of self-recorded hours has increased with less people providing 1 – 19 hours (63.5% to 45.7%) and more providing 20-49 (12.7% to 21.9%) and 50+ hours of caring (23.8% to 32.4%). In other words, it appears that there are fewer Carers, but these are doing more hours of caring.

**Figure 3:** Proportional demographics of all persons providing unpaid care, Wirral, 2001, 2011 and 2021



Source: [Census 2021, via Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#) and [Census 2001 and 2011 via NOMIS](#)

## 2021 Census

### Carers: Local, National and Regional

**Table 1** below shows that the proportion of self-reported Carers (aged 5+) in Wirral compared to overall population is 11.0% (n=33,499), which is higher than North West areas at 9.5% (n=668,280) and England at 8.8% (n=4,678,265).

**Table 1:** Number and proportion of Carers, by Area, 2021

Indicators	Wirral	North West	England
Population	303,883	7,009,744	53,413,098
Number of self-reported carers	33,499	668,280	4,678,265
Carers as a proportion of population	11.0%	9.5%	8.8%

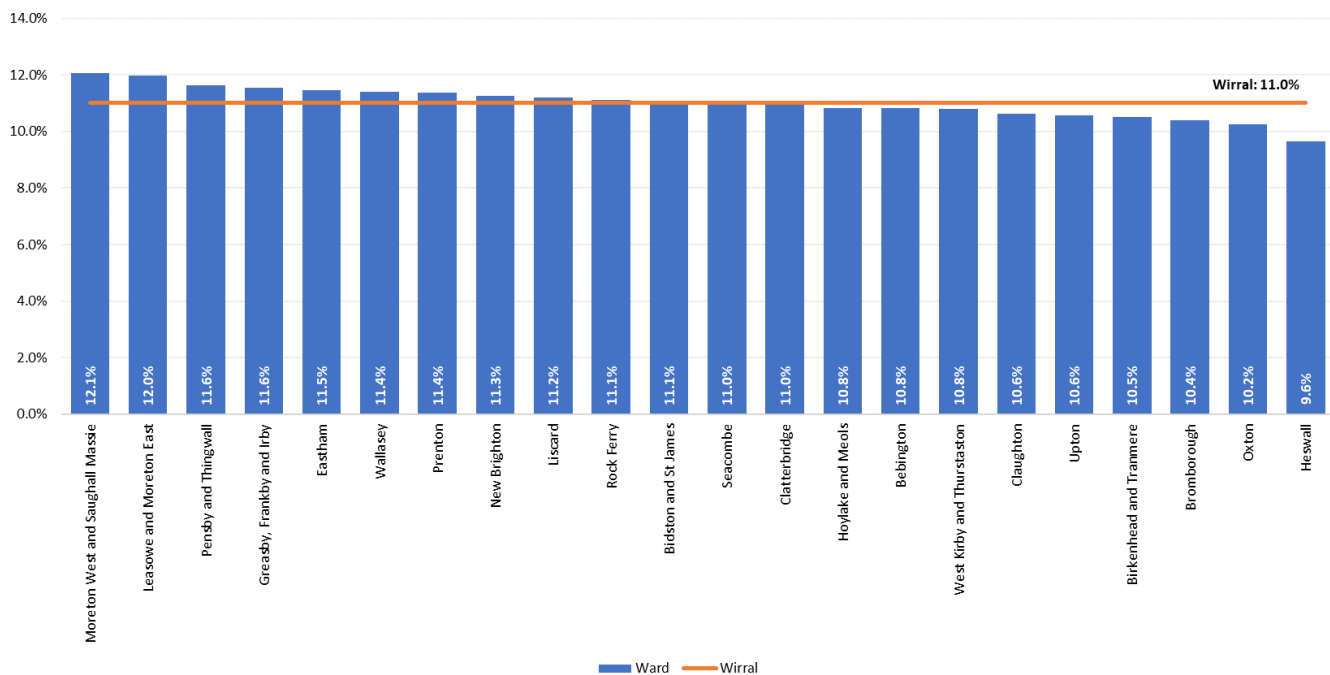
Source: [Census 2021, via Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)

Notes: All populations are aged 5 and over

In **Figure 4**, the proportion of self-reported Carers in Census 2021 is shown at Ward level and suggests that:

- Moreton West and Saughall Massie had the most self-reported Carers in 2021 at 12.1% (n=1,581), much higher than the Wirral average of 11.0%
- Wards also significantly above the Wirral average were Leasowe and Moreton East (12.0%, n=1,713) and Pensby & Thingwall (11.6%, n=1,435)
- Heswall had the lowest rate of self-reported Carers at 9.6% (n=1,226) compared to Wirral average of 11.0% with Oxton (10.2%, n=1,346), Bromborough (10.4%, n=1,609) and Birkenhead and Tranmere (10.5%, n=1,595) also lower than Wirral average

**Figure 4:** Proportion of self-reported Carers, by Wirral Ward, 2021

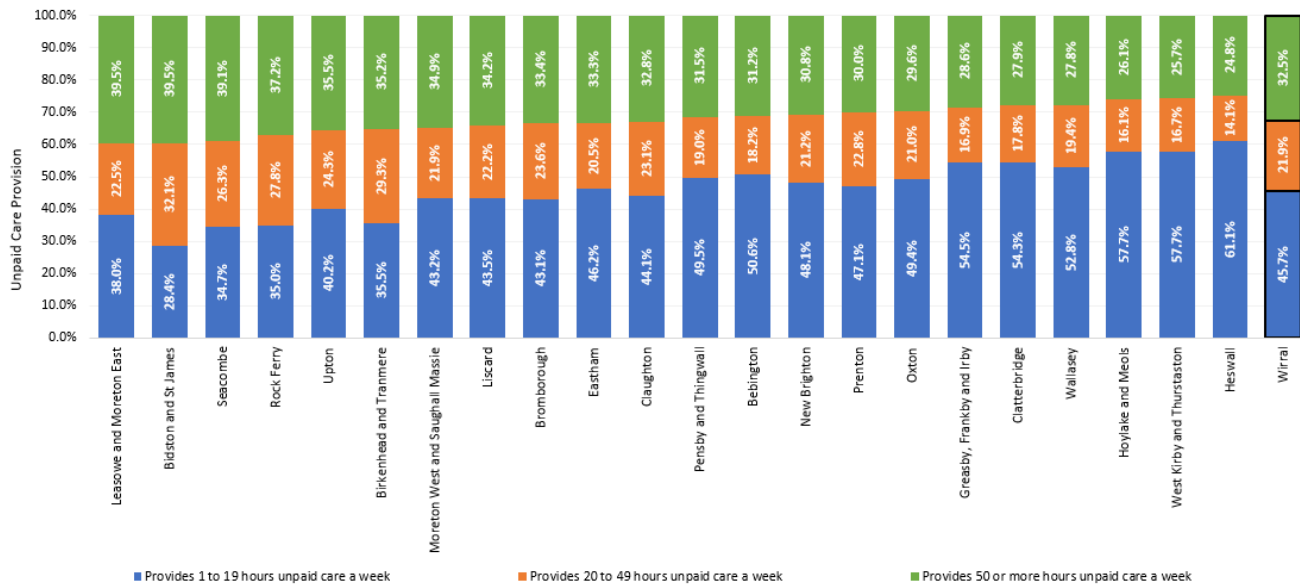


Source: [Census 2021, via Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)

As **Figure 4** and **5** (below) show, the ward with the largest proportion of Carers was Moreton West & Saughall Massie (12.1%); with 34.9% of Carers providing 50+ hours of unpaid care. Heswall had the lowest proportion of self-reported Carers (9.6%), however, 1 in 4 Carers (24.8%) in this ward provided 50+ hours of unpaid care.

Leasowe & Moreton East ward had the largest proportion of Carers providing 50+ hours of unpaid care at 39.5%, with Bidston and St. James (39.5%) and Seacombe (39.1%) following. The proportion of Wirral residents that provided unpaid care was 11.0% with 32.5% of these (or around 1 in 3) providing at least 50 hours of unpaid care.

**Figure 5: Wirral Carers, by ward and hours of care provided, 2021.**

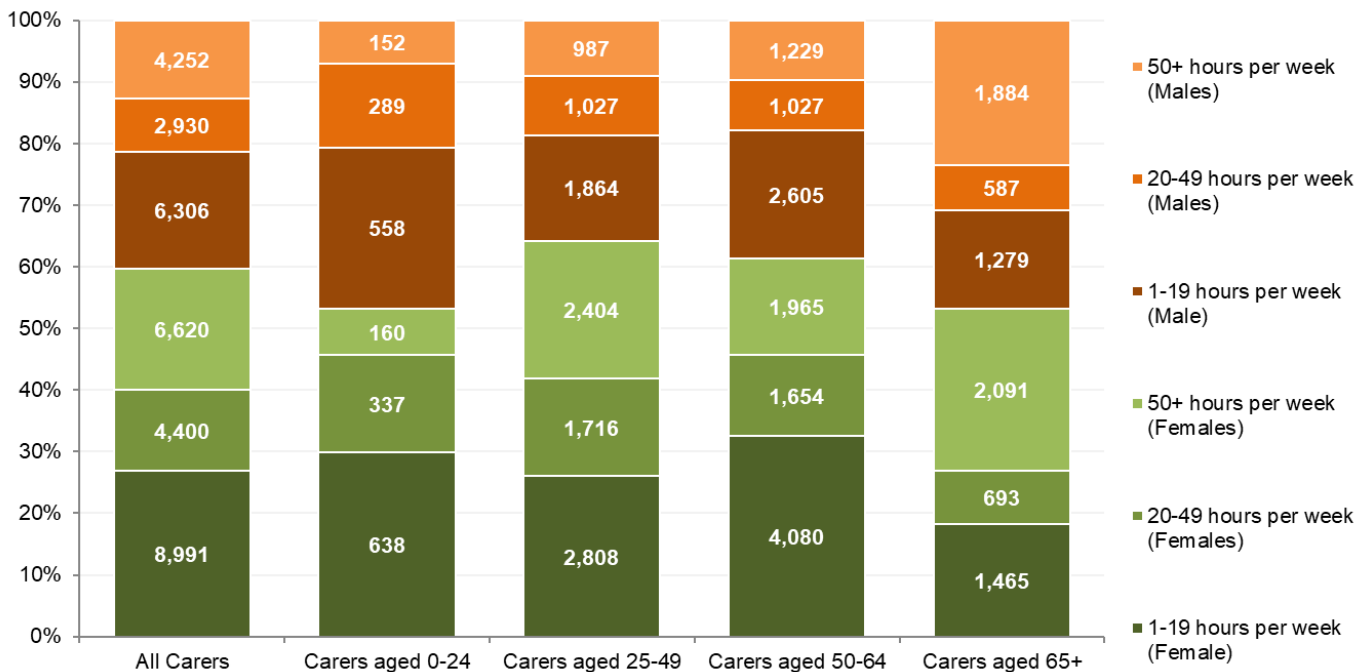


Source: [Census 2021, via Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)

## Carers: Hours of Care Provided

**Figure 6** shows that Wirral had a total of 33,499 Carers, of which 20,011 (59.7%) were females and 13,488 (40.3%) were male. There were 15,297 Carers providing between 1 and 19 hours of unpaid care a week, with similar proportions of hours when considered by age band. Over 3,975 residents, aged 65+, self-reported providing 50+ hours of care every week. Those males (1,884) and females (2,091) aged 65+, provided a disproportionate amount of care (above 50+ hours) when compared to other age groups, as do females aged 50-64 (1,465).

**Figure 6: Number of Carers by age, gender and number of care hours provided, Wirral, 2021**



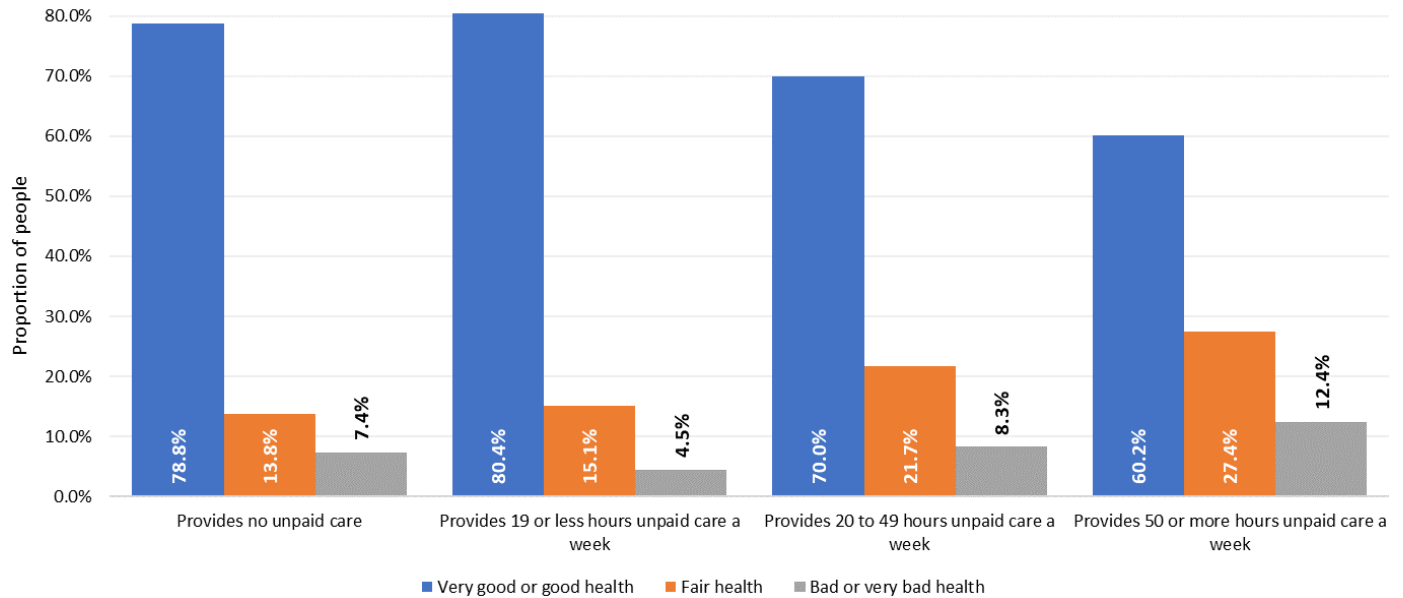
Source: [Census 2021, via Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)

**Note:** The Census was completed in 2021 but remains the most comprehensive reporting of caring roles yet it is likely to be an under estimation and have increased since that time

## Carers: General Health

**Figure 7** shows that the level of general health reported by a Carer decreases with the increasing amount of care hours provided, i.e., 80.4% of Carers who provide 1-19 hours of support reported “very good or good health” compared to 60.2% of Carers who provide 50+ hours of support.

**Figure 7:** Provision of unpaid care (hours) by general health, Wirral Carers, 2021



Source: [Census 2021, via Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)

## Carers: In the Workplace

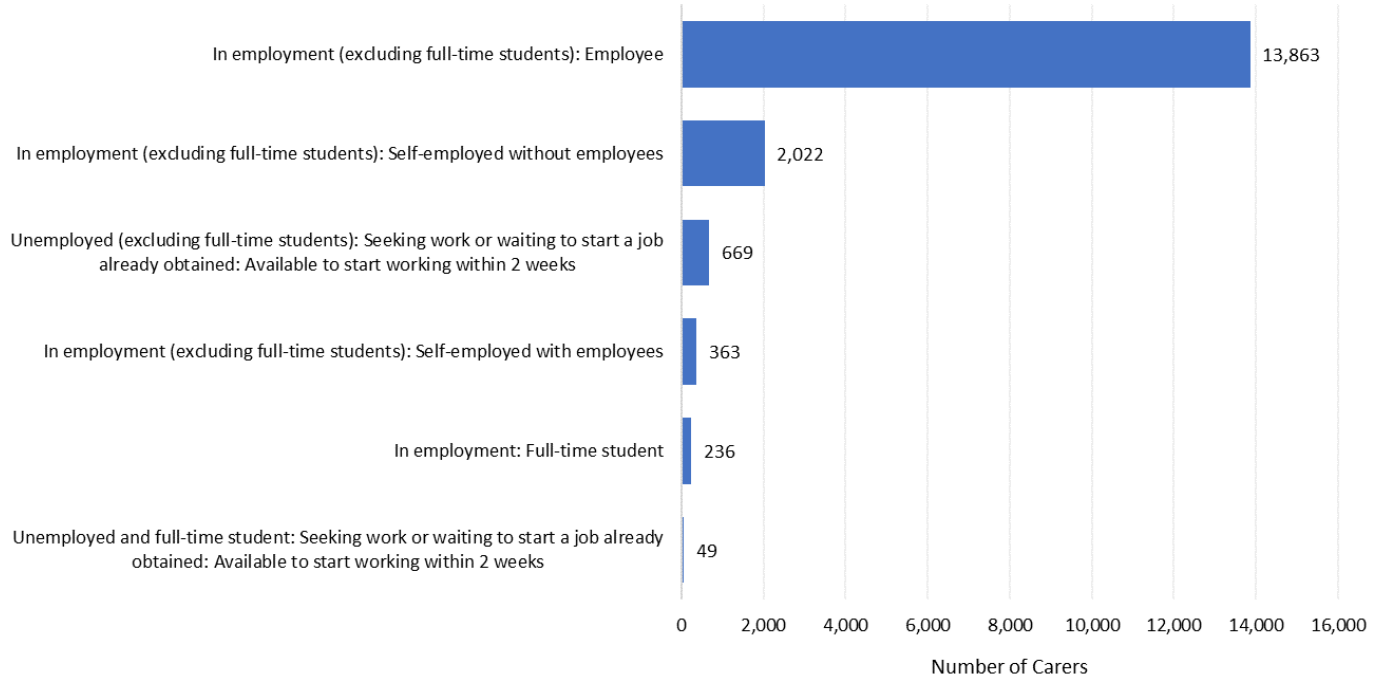
The 2021 Census captured data on Carers who were economically active (**Figure 8** below), which means that they are either working (even if only an hour or two per week) or unemployed, but actively seeking and available to start work. The economically inactive group (**Figure 9** below) are those that remain. Please note that categories are self-defined.

For Wirral, the 2021 Census found that there were 17,196 people in Wirral who combined work with unpaid caring responsibilities. Of those, 13,863 (80.6%) were in full-time employment (excluding full-time students) as employees. This was followed by those in full-time employment (excluding full-time students) but self-employed (n=2,022, 14.6%). The remaining economically active categories made up 1,317 people (4.8%).

For those economically inactive in Wirral, the 2021 Census found that there were 15,848 people economically inactive with unpaid caring responsibilities. Of those, 8,312 (52.4%) were retired. This was followed by those looking after home or family (n=4,275, 27.0%). The remaining economically inactive categories made up 3,261 people (20.6%).



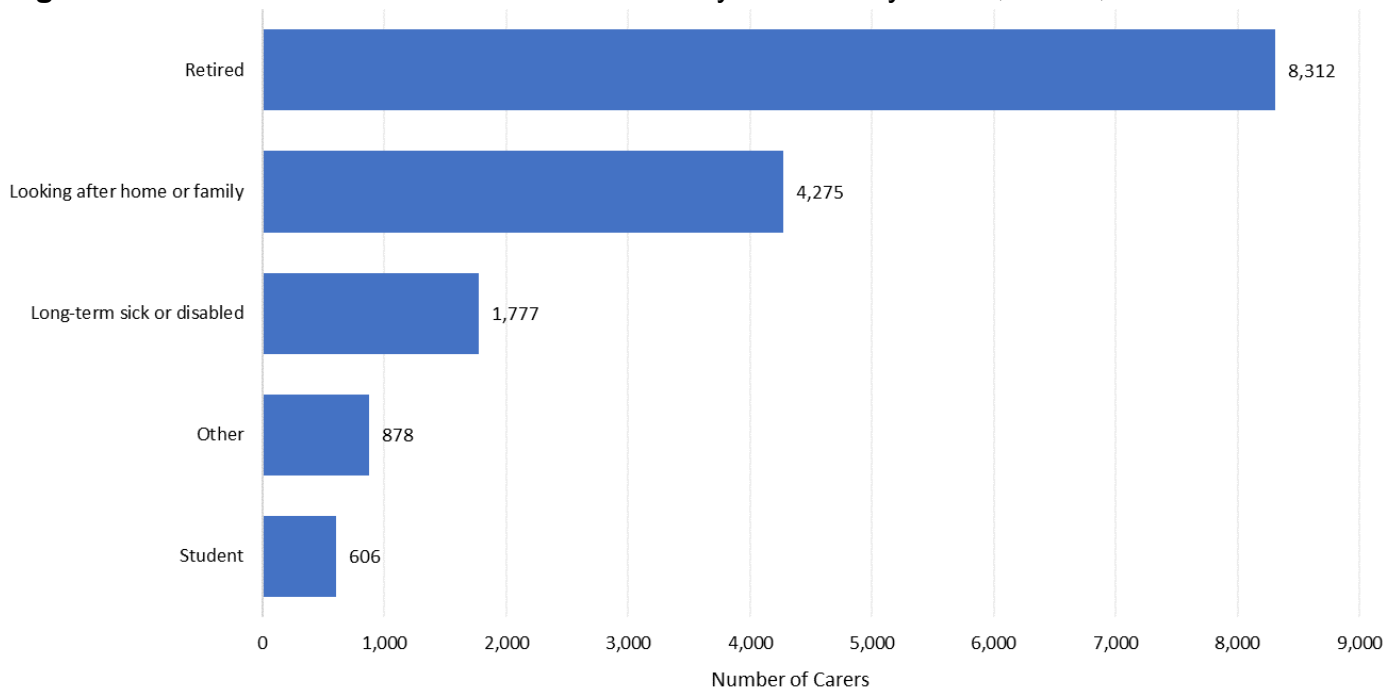
**Figure 8:** Number of Carers who are “economically active” by employment status, Wirral, 2021



**Source:** [Census 2021, via Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)

**Note:** The Census was completed in 2021 but remains the most comprehensive reporting of caring roles yet it is likely to be an under estimation and have increased since that time

**Figure 9:** Number of Carers who are “economically inactive” by status, Wirral, 2021



**Source:** [Census 2021, via Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)

**Note:** the Census was completed in 2021 but remains the most comprehensive reporting of caring roles yet it is likely to be an under estimation and have increased since that time

## Carers: Ethnicity

**Table 2** shows the comparative population numbers for Wirral, North West and England for overall population and Carer population by ethnicity.

## Table 2 highlights:

From the 2021 Census, there were 33,499 Wirral residents reported having some form of caring responsibility:

- There were 1,677 Carers from an ethnically diverse background (an increase from 1,424 in 2011)
- This equated to 7.4% of ethnically diverse residents self-reporting a caring responsibility, which was higher when compared to 6.4% in the North West and 6.4% for England relative to their respective ethnically diverse population numbers
- The self-reported number of Carers amongst ethnically diverse groups when compared to overall Wirral Carer population is just 5.0%, whereas for the North West it was 12.3% and England 18.9%. This is accounted for with Wirral having a lower proportion of ethnically diverse residents in comparison to North West and England

**Table 2:** Number and proportion of Carers, by ethnicity, Wirral, North West and England, 2021

Indicators	Wirral	North West	England
Population	303,883	7,009,744	53,413,098
Number of self-reported carers	33,499	668,280	4,678,265
Carers as a proportion of population	11.0%	9.5%	8.8%
White British population	281,276	5,723,896	39,519,896
Number of White British self-reported carers	31,818	585,940	3,795,550
White British carers as a proportion of White British population	11.3%	10.2%	9.6%
Proportion of White British self-reported carers as a % of all carers	95.0%	87.7%	81.1%
Ethnically Diverse population	22,606	1,285,847	13,893,201
Number of Ethnically Diverse self-reported carers	1,677	82,342	882,715
Ethnically Diverse carers as a proportion of Ethnically Diverse population	7.4%	6.4%	6.4%
Proportion of Ethnically Diverse self-reported carers as a % of all carers	5.0%	12.3%	18.9%

Source: [Census 2021, via Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)

### Note:

- the Census was completed in 2021 but remains the most comprehensive reporting of caring roles yet it is likely to be an under estimation and have increased since that time
- All populations are aged 5 and over

Based on the 2021 Census and population projections, **Table 3** suggests that Wirral's self-reported ethnic minority Carers population is 1,677 (or 5.3% of the total carer population). The ethnic minority group that makes up the largest majority of ethnic minority Carers is Asian/Asian British with 449 (26.8%), though proportionally this group is underrepresented. On the other hand, there are 315 White Irish self-reported Carers, which is proportionally higher than expected.

**Table 3:** Estimated ethnically diverse and ethnically diverse carer populations by ethnicity, Wirral, 2021

Ethnicity	Population		Number of self-reported carers	
	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)
White: Irish	2,597	11.5%	315	18.8%
White: Other	5,827	25.8%	409	24.4%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group	4,274	18.9%	302	18.0%
Asian/Asian British	6,878	30.4%	449	26.8%
Black: African, Caribbean, Black British	1,274	5.6%	84	5.0%
Other Ethnic Group	1,756	7.8%	118	7.0%
Wirral Ethnically Diverse Population	22,606		1,677	
Wirral Population	303,883		33,499	
Ethnically Diverse Population Proportion	7.4%		5.0%	

Source: [Census 2021, via Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)

**Note:**

- the Census was completed in 2021 but remains the most comprehensive reporting of caring roles yet it is likely to be an under estimation and have increased since that time
- All populations are aged 5 and over

## Adult Carers Known to Adult Social Care in Wirral

In April 2023, there were 7,571 individual Carers known to and/or accessing support from Adult Social Services in Wirral. As **Table 4** shows, Seacombe has the highest rate of adult Carers known to Adult Social Care in Wirral (nearly 40 Carers per 1,000 adults in Wirral) compared to Oxtun, which has the lowest rate (around 23 Carers per 1,000 adults). Wirral's average is 30 Carers per 1,000 residents, with exactly 11 wards having a higher and lower rate of adult Carers.

Referring back to **Figure 4** (page 6), it is estimated that Moreton West & Saughall Massie and Leasowe & Moreton East ward had the highest rate of Carers, and this is also reflected in the adult social care data, with both wards having rates above the Wirral average. Further to this, Birkenhead & Tranmere, Bromborough, Heswall and Oxtun had some of the lowest rates of self-reported Carers according to Census 2021 in Wirral by Ward, and, again, this is reflected within the adult social care data, with all wards having rates below the Wirral average (**Table 4**).

**Table 4:** Number and Rate of Carers (aged 18+) known to Adult Social Care, by Wirral Ward, July 2023

Ward	Carers aged 18+	Population aged 18+	Rate per 1,000
Seacombe	439	11,019	39.84
Leasowe and Moreton East	405	11,552	35.06
Upton	433	12,771	33.90
Liscard	410	12,267	33.42
Rock Ferry	379	11,572	32.75
Moreton West and Saughall Massie	360	11,261	31.97
Bidston and St. James	371	11,619	31.93
Cloughton	371	11,886	31.21
Bebington	375	12,070	31.07
Eastham	341	11,143	30.60
Wallasey	346	11,795	29.33
Hoylake and Meols	309	10,626	29.08
Pensby and Thingwall	302	10,623	28.43
New Brighton	342	12,109	28.24
Greasby, Frankby and Irby	325	11,551	28.14
West Kirby and Thurstaston	275	10,114	27.19
Prenton	313	11,581	27.03
Bromborough	349	13,014	26.82
Clatterbridge	298	11,337	26.29
Birkenhead and Tranmere	314	12,407	25.31
Heswall	255	10,938	23.31
Oxton	259	11,386	22.75
<b>Wirral</b>	<b>7,571</b>	<b>254,641</b>	<b>29.73</b>
Non-Wirral Residents	487	N/A	N/A

**Source:** Wirral Adult Social Care, 2023 and Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2021

**Note:**

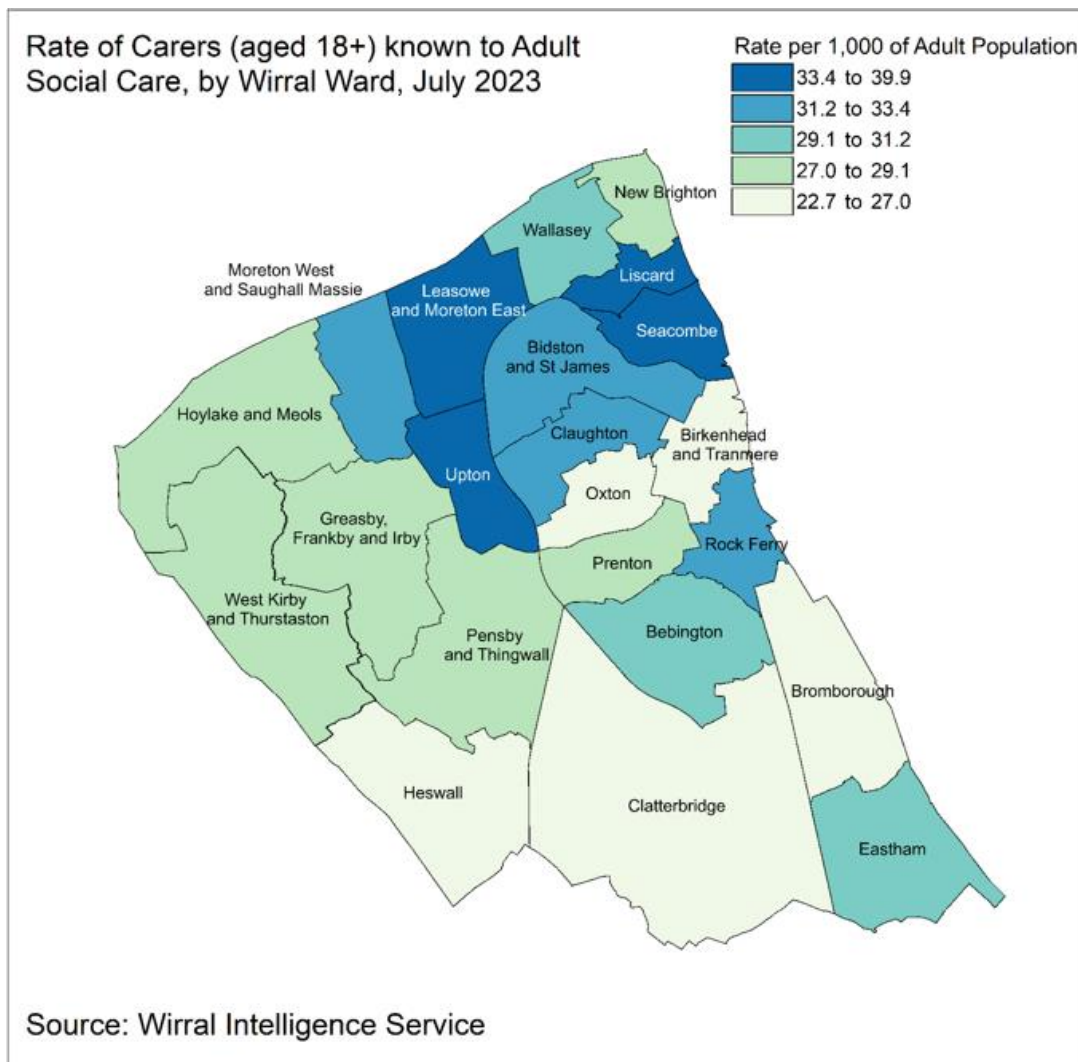
- The population data used is sourced from the [Census 2021 via ONS](#)
- This table can also be visualised in a map, please see Appendix

Do you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age?

Exclude anything you do as part of your paid employment

- No
- Yes, 9 hours a week or less
- Yes, 10 to 19 hours a week
- Yes, 20 to 34 hours a week
- Yes, 35 to 49 hours a week
- Yes, 50 or more hours a week

**Map 1:** Number and Rate of Carers (aged 18+) known to Adult Social Care, by Wirral Ward, July 2023



## Contact details

**For further details please contact:**

Wirral Intelligence Service at [wirralintelligenceservice@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:wirralintelligenceservice@wirral.gov.uk)

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