



**WIRRAL
INTELLIGENCE
SERVICE**

This is Wirral

Population

**Wirral Intelligence Service
(December 2019)**

This is Wirral

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Background to This is Wirral

This is Wirral is a collected set of evidence about Wirral.

It includes information about the Wirral population including their current and future health and wellbeing needs and the borough including information about the economy, housing, environment and transport.

The insight is collected into a number of sections to allow ease of access for the reader.

Each section contains detailed content including the key messages from the analysis and insight on main issues and is underpinned by detailed information.

The information forms our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) providing a detailed picture of the borough.

It is used to enable effective strategic planning to determine what actions local authorities and other partners need to take to meet resident needs and to address the wider determinants that impact on health and wellbeing.

How can you help?

If you have ideas or any suggestions about these issues or topics then please email us at wirralintelligenceservice@wirral.gov.uk or go to <https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/>

Version Number	Date	Authors
1.0	December 2019	Sarah Kinsella, Senior Public Health Analyst for Wirral Council

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following people and organisations for their contribution to the content contained in this document:

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This is Wirral: Population

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Key Messages

- The current population of Wirral is 322,796
- Wirral has a higher proportion of older people and a lower proportion of working age people compared to England
- The population of Wirral is projected to increase by 1.6% overall by 2039 according to the Office for National Statistics, from 323,200 to 328,500
- This small overall increase hides large variation by age, with the population of children and young people decreasing by -7.2% for example, while the population of older people aged 90+ is projected to increase by 103%
- This has profound implications for statutory services, given that older people are the largest users of health and social care
- There were 3,242 births in Wirral in 2018. This was the lowest number of births for over 40 years
- Both the number and rate of births reduced in Wirral for each of the last three years (mirroring the national trend)
- Births may start to rise again in around 2025-27 if past birth patterns persist
- In 2015-17, Life Expectancy at birth in Wirral was 78.3 for males and 81.8 for females; a slight increase on 2014-16
- Over the last two decades, life expectancy at birth has increased by 5.2 years for men in Wirral and 2.8 years for women (meaning the gap between men and women is narrowing), but remains lower than England for both genders
- Life expectancy varies considerably in Wirral; ranging from 72 in Rock Ferry to 84 in Heswall, a difference of 12 years for men
- There was also a difference for females; life expectancy ranged from 78 in Rock Ferry and Birkenhead to 87 in Heswall, a difference of 9 years
- Healthy Life Expectancy (HLEx) data shows that people in Wirral spend around three-quarters of their life in good health; this is lower than in England
- The BAME population of Wirral made up 5.0% (n=16,101) of the population of Wirral in 2011 compared to 3.5% (n=10,900) in 2001
- After 'White', the next largest (main) grouping in Wirral was 'Asian/Asian British' (1.6% of the population). The largest sub-groups within the main groupings were 'Other White' (1.2%), 'White Irish' (0.8%) and 'Asian Chinese' (0.5%)
- The largest number of BAME people in Wirral lived in Birkenhead & Tranmere ward according to the 2011 Census
- There are an estimated 5,000-5,250 people in Wirral who identify as LGB, with a further 50 people estimated to be transgender
- Overall, one in five (22%) of the population reported that their day-to-day activities were limited in some way by an illness or disability in the Census, but this hides large variations by age (from just 7% in those aged <35 to 83% of those aged 85+)

POPULATION



WIRRAL'S POPULATION PROJECTED TO INCREASE BY

1.6%

overall by 2039 (from 323,200 to 328,500) according to the Office for National Statistics



3,242

BIRTHS RECORDED IN WIRRAL IN 2018 (Lowest for 45 years)



103%

INCREASE IN POPULATION AGED 90+ BY 2039



MALES

156,335



FEMALES

166,461

GENDER POPULATION OF WIRRAL

MALE LIFE EXPECTANCY 2015-2017

ROCK FERRY

72



HESWALL

84

FEMALE LIFE EXPECTANCY 2015-2017

ROCK FERRY

78



HESWALL

87

2015-2017 MALE HEALTHY LIFE EXPECTANCY

59.8

NORTH WEST 61.2
ENGLAND 63.4



2015-2017 MALE LIFE EXPECTANCY

78.3

NORTH WEST 78.2
ENGLAND 79.6

2015-2017 FEMALE HEALTHY LIFE EXPECTANCY

61.1

NORTH WEST 62.3
ENGLAND 63.8



2015-2017 FEMALE LIFE EXPECTANCY

81.8

NORTH WEST 81.1
ENGLAND 83.1

Wirral produce an [annual Compendium of Statistics](#) to accompany the [Public Health Annual Report](#) and support the local [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#). It is designed to be a quick reference guide to the most recent information on the health and wellbeing of people living in Wirral.

It includes tables and statistics on frequently requested information such as populations by age and geography (e.g. ward populations), the number of births in Wirral and the prevalence of certain conditions and diseases.

Our compendium has been produced annually for the last twelve years and is intended to be a quick reference guide to the most commonly requested information on the population, health and wellbeing of people living in Wirral.

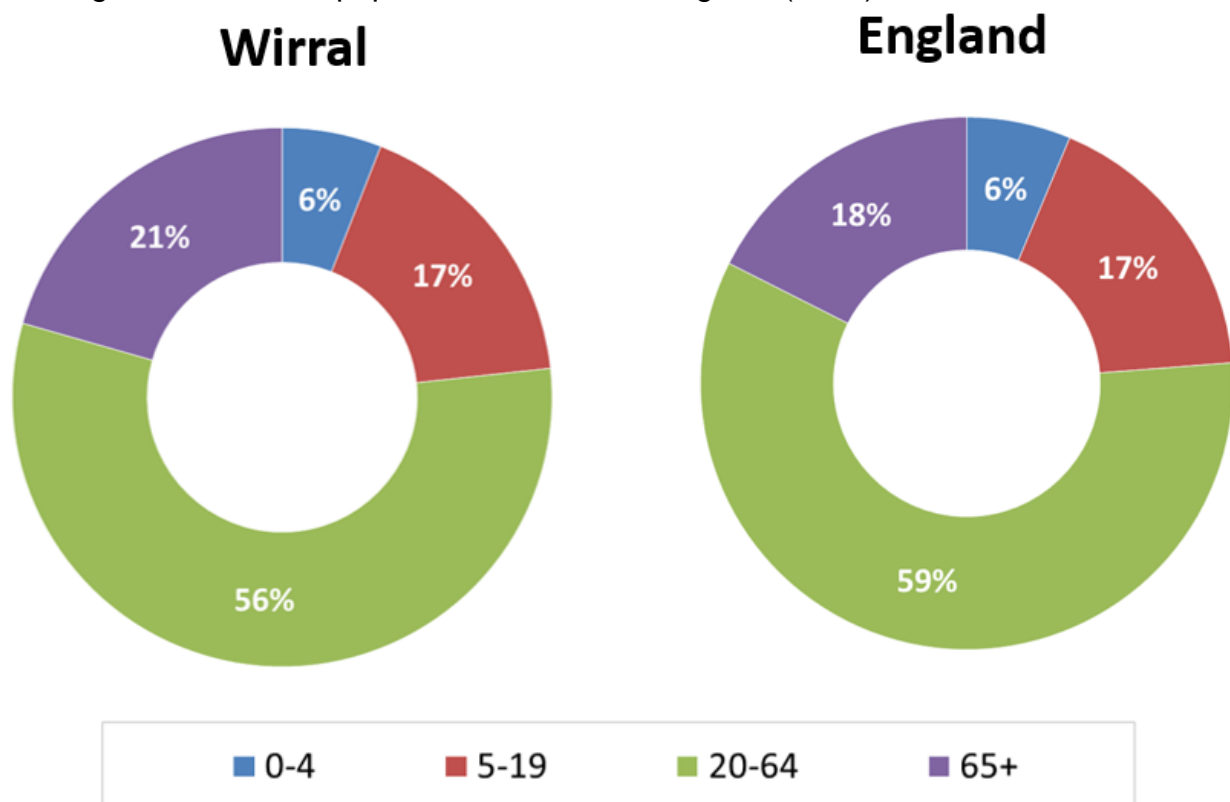
This document is not an exhaustive list of all the population related-statistics produced or have access to so [please visit This is Wirral webpage on Wirral Intelligence Service website](#) for more in-depth information and statistics on a variety of other issues in Wirral.

Population

Age and population

The population of Wirral is **322,796**. This figure is from the Office for National Statistics 2017 Mid-Year Estimates. These are the most recent figures (and will be updated for 2018 during the Autumn of 2019). The breakdown of the Wirral population is shown below in **figure 1** (broad age bands).

Figure 1: Age breakdown of population, Wirral and England (2017)



Source: Office for National Statistics Mid-Year Estimates (2017) ([ONS](#))

As the chart shows, Wirral had a higher proportion of older population aged 65+ and a lower proportion of people of working age compared to England. The estimated number of residents of Wirral by five year age band are shown in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Estimated Resident Population by 5-Year Age Group and Gender, Wirral, Mid-2017

Gender	Males	Males	Females	Females	Persons	Persons
Age Group	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
0-4	9,533	3.0	8,903	2.8	18,436	5.7
5-9	10,072	3.1	9,669	3.0	19,741	6.1
10-14	9,617	3.0	8,988	2.8	18,605	5.8
15-19	9,016	2.8	8,502	2.6	17,518	5.4
20-24	8,375	2.6	7,609	2.4	15,984	5.0
25-29	9,442	2.9	9,533	3.0	18,975	5.9
30-34	8,720	2.7	9,674	3.0	18,394	5.7
35-39	8,815	2.7	9,451	2.9	18,266	5.7
40-44	8,796	2.7	9,770	3.0	18,566	5.8
45-49	10,914	3.4	11,637	3.6	22,551	7.0
50-54	11,400	3.5	12,698	3.9	24,098	7.5
55-59	11,158	3.5	11,654	3.6	22,812	7.1
60-64	9,602	3.0	10,426	3.2	20,028	6.2
65-69	9,690	3.0	10,160	3.1	19,850	6.1
70-74	8,269	2.6	9,151	2.8	17,420	5.4
75-79	5,646	1.7	7,069	2.2	12,715	3.9
80-84	3,938	1.2	5,405	1.7	9,343	2.9
85-89	2,343	0.7	3,795	1.2	6,138	1.9
90+	989	0.3	2,367	0.7	3,356	1.0
All Ages	156,335	48.4	166,461	51.6	322,796	100.0

Source: Office for National Statistics ([ONS](#))

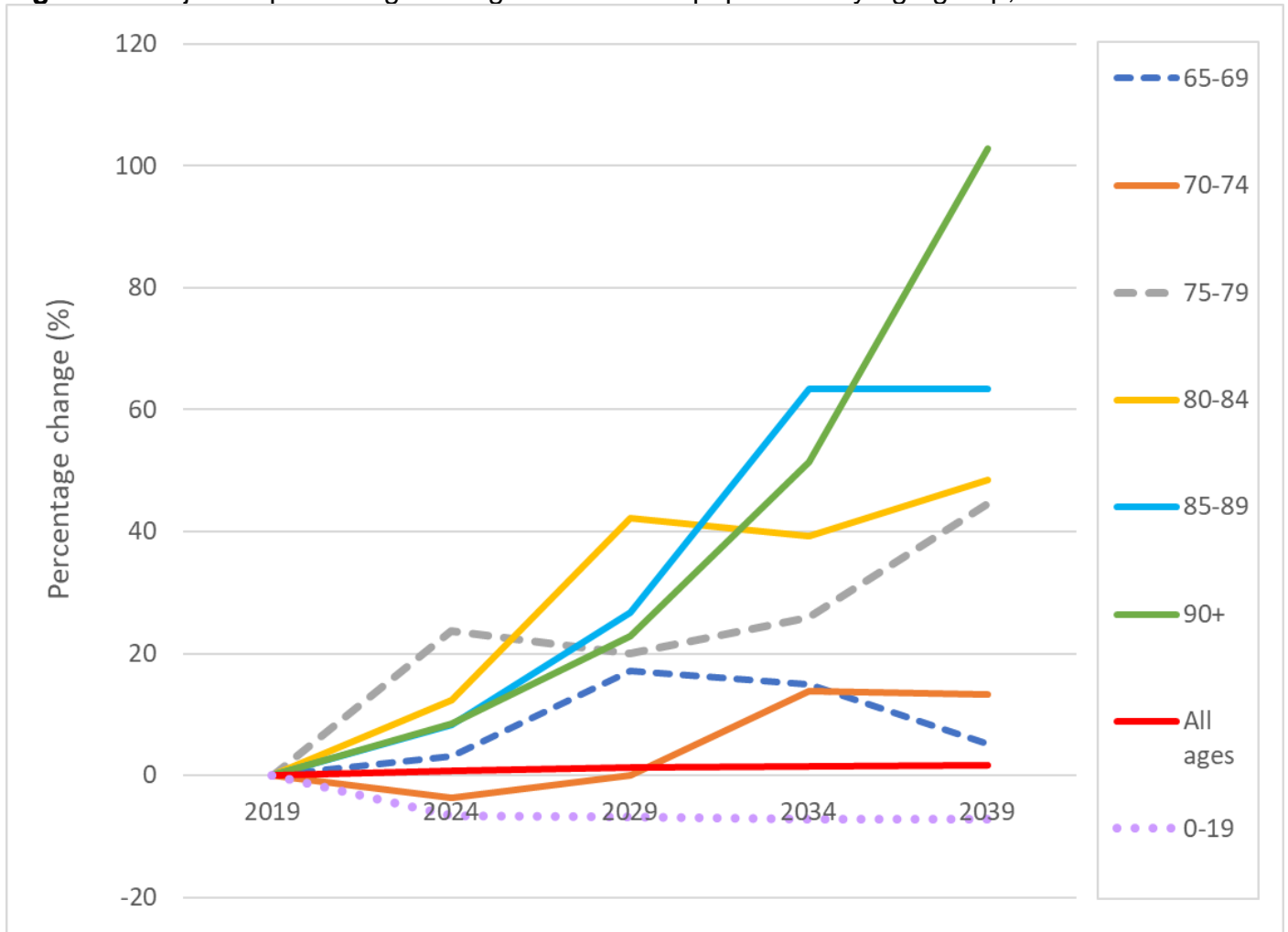
The slightly higher number of women is mostly due to women living longer than men.

The population of Wirral is projected to increase by just 1.6% overall by 2039 according to the Office for National Statistics, from 323,200 to 328,500.

The overall increase hides large variations between age groups, however, for example, the number of people aged 90+ is estimated to increase from 3,500 in 2019 to 7,100 in 2039, an increase of 103%.

This has profound implications for health and social care, given that older people are the largest users of health and social care services. At the same time, the number of children aged 0-19 is projected to decrease in Wirral by -7.2% between 2019 and 2039. **Figure 2** below shows the percentage changes in population by age band.

Figure 2: Projected percentage change in the Wirral population by age group; 2019-2039



Source: Office for National Statistics ([ONS](#))

Births & fertility

There were 3,242 births in Wirral in 2018 (the latest year for which data is available). This is the lowest number of births since Wirral was formed as a Metropolitan Borough in 1974.

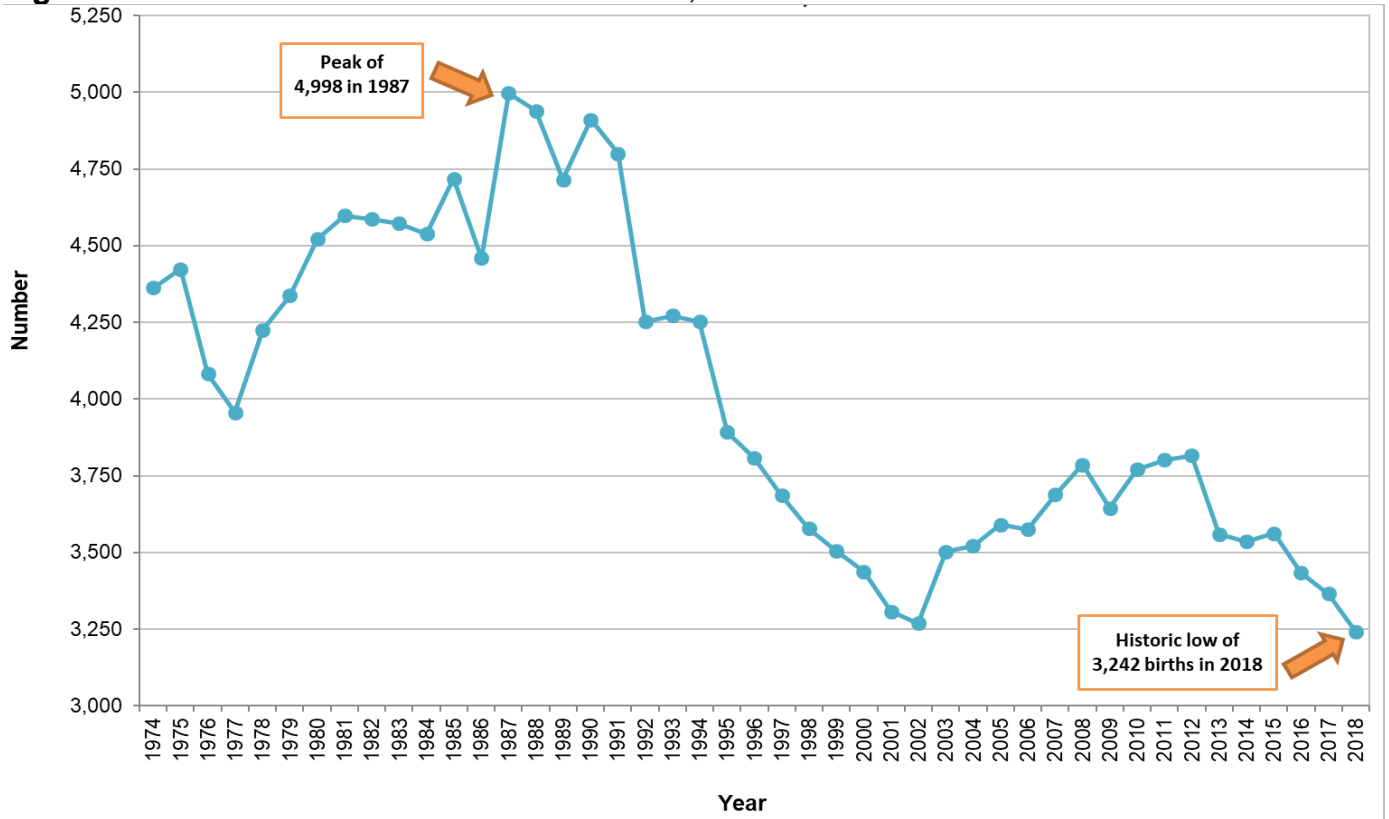
In **figure 3** below it shows the long-term trend in the number of births in Wirral from 1974 to 2018. Historical births data indicates that the number of births may continue to fall for around the next 10 years, before rising again.

If historical patterns are repeated, the next climb in births is likely to start in around 2027 (as the cohort of women born during the peak of 2005-2012 start to reach childbearing years in numbers).

Any future climb may be less pronounced than the previous peak (2007-2012), just as that peak was smaller than the previous peak in the late 1980s to early 1990s.

There are various reasons for this such as women having fewer children and the age of mothers increasing. This means the historical 20-25 cyclical peaks observed in births may become less noticeable in the future than was the case in the past.

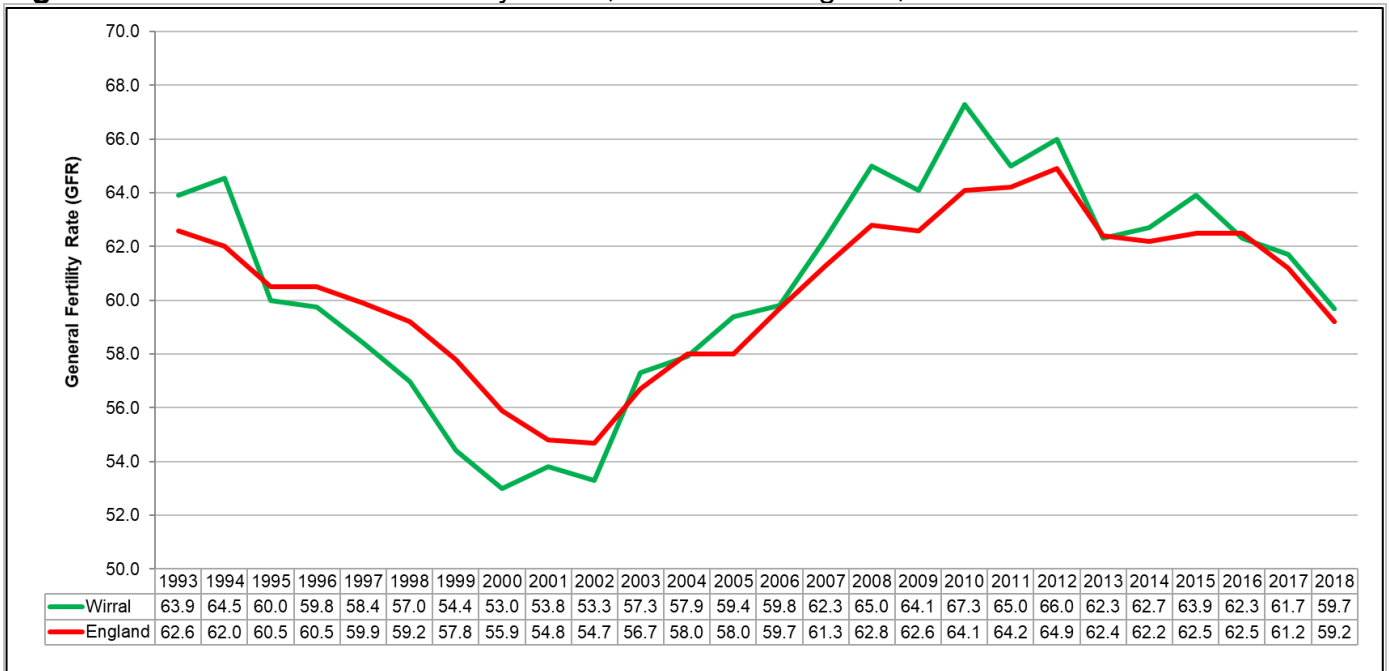
Figure 3: Trend in number of live births in Wirral, 1974-2018



Source: Office for National Statistics ([ONS](#))

The fertility rate in Wirral (number of births per 1,000 women aged 15-44) has broadly followed the same trend as England over time. As **figure 4** shows, the rate is currently falling in both England and Wirral and has been for the last 3 time periods (from 2015 onwards).

Figure 4: Trend in Birth and Fertility Rates, Wirral and England, 1993 to 2018



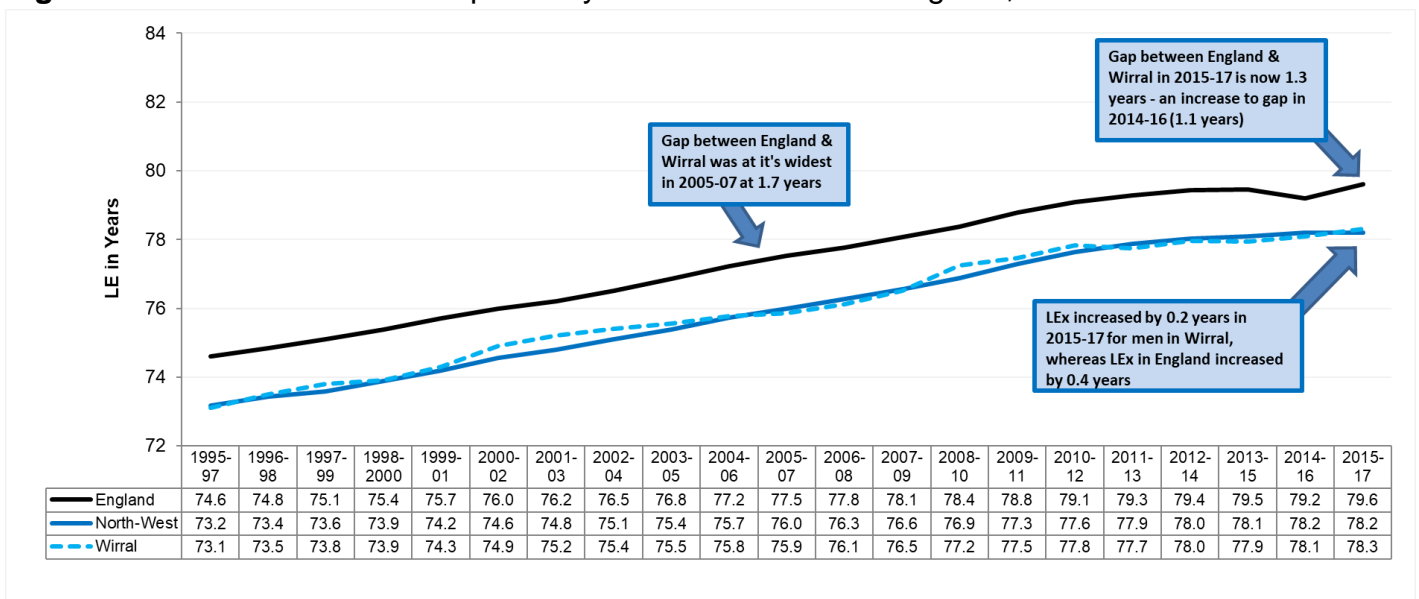
Source: Office for National Statistics ([ONS](#))

Life expectancy

Life expectancy is a key Public Health indicator, as it is often judged to be a good marker of the health of the overall population. Over the last two decades, life expectancy at birth has increased by 5.2 years for males in Wirral, compared to 5.0 years for males in England.

So, although there have been increases locally, similar national increases mean that the gap between England and Wirral. This gap between Wirral and England has remained broadly stable over the last two decades, it was 1.5 years in 1995-97 and it was 1.3 years in 2015-17. See **Figure 5** below.

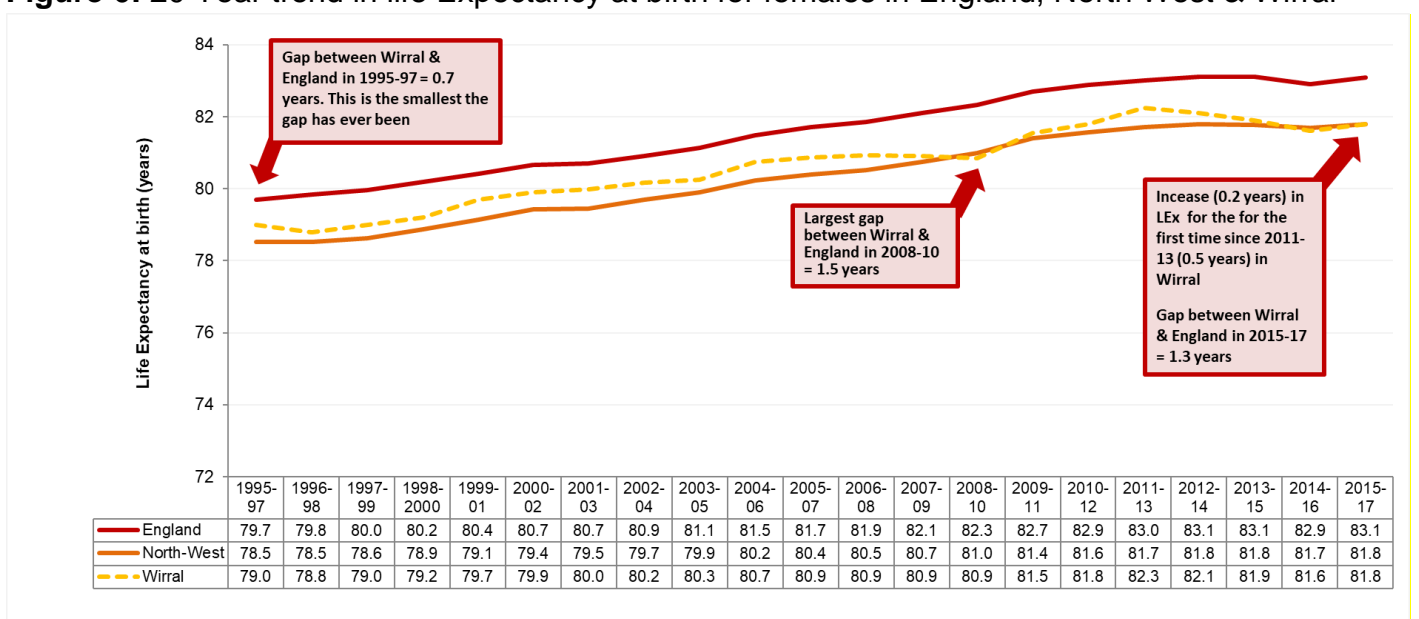
Figure 5: 20 Year trend in life expectancy at birth for males in England, North West & Wirral



Source: [Office for National Statistics, 2018a](#)

Figure 6 below shows a similar pattern for female life expectancy. Over the past 20 years, there has been a 3.4 year increase for females in England, and a 2.8 year increase in Wirral.

Figure 6: 20 Year trend in life Expectancy at birth for females in England, North West & Wirral

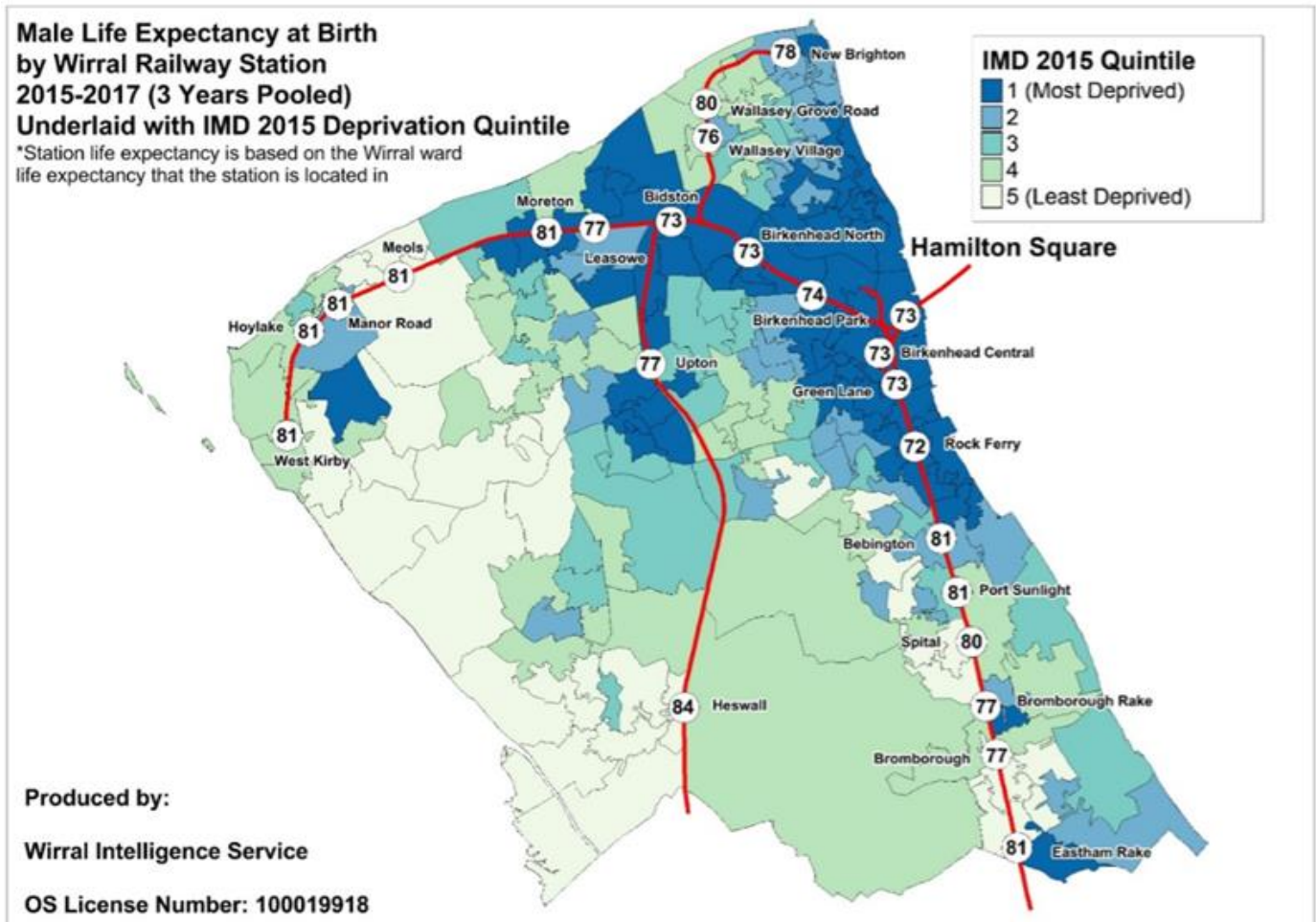


Source: [Office for National Statistics, 2018a](#)

As **figure 6** shows, life expectancy (LEx) at birth since 1995-97 has increased by 2.8 years for females in Wirral, compared to an increase of 3.4 years for females in England over the same period.

Showing figures for Wirral overall, however, is misleading. There are significant differences in life expectancy between different areas of Wirral, as **map 1 and map 2** below show.

Map 1: Male life expectancy (at birth) by Wirral Railway Station

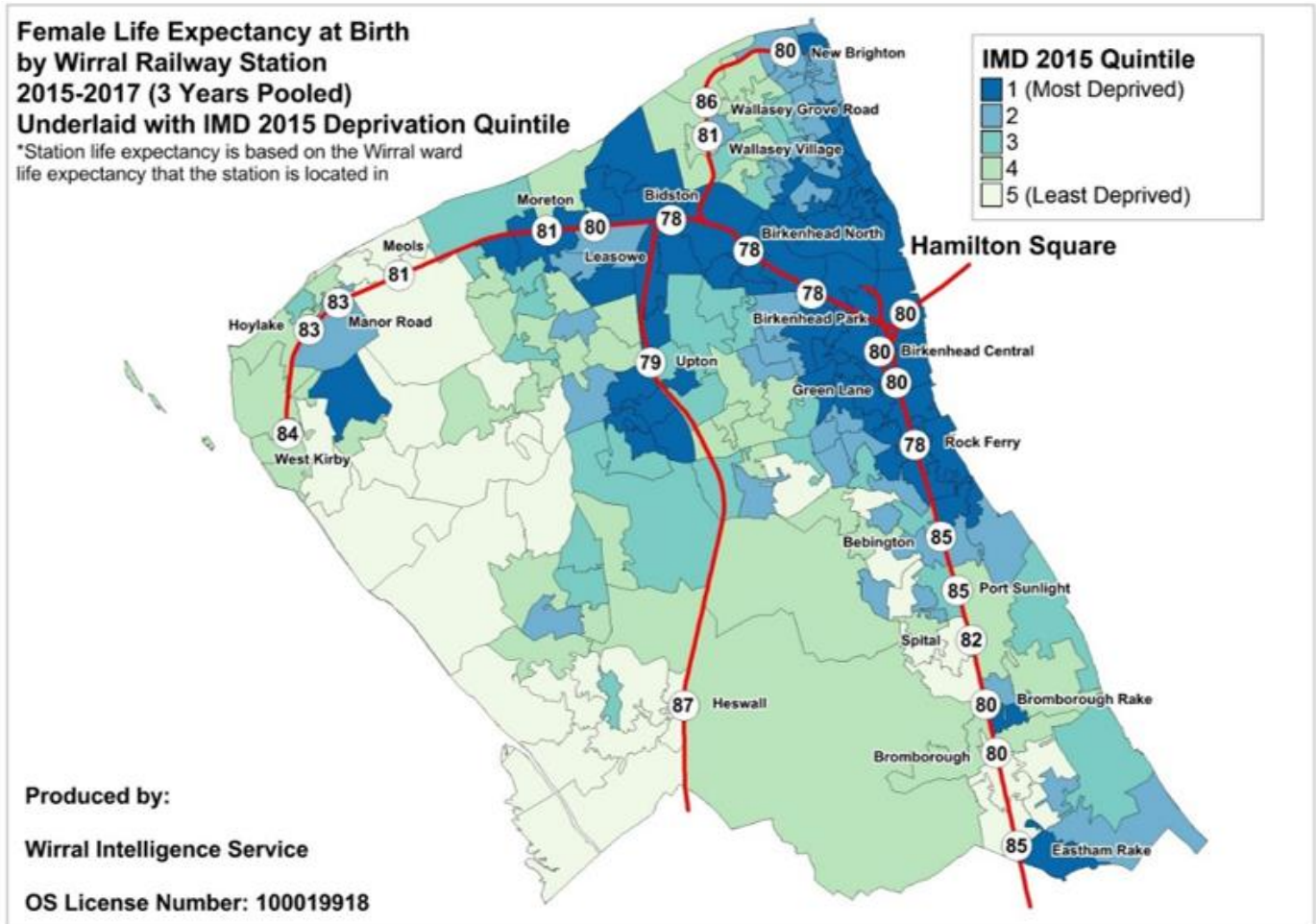


Source: [Wirral Intelligence Service: Life Expectancy \(2019\)](#)

As **map 1** shows, life expectancy for males in Wirral ranges from 72 in Rock Ferry to 84 in Heswall, a difference of 12 years.

In **map 2** below shows the same information for females and shows that as is the case for males, life expectancy varies considerably in females in Wirral; from 78 in Rock Ferry and Birkenhead to 87 in Heswall (a difference of 9 years).

Map 2: Female life expectancy (at birth) by Wirral Railway Station



Source: [Wirral Intelligence Service: Life Expectancy \(2019\)](#)

Healthy Life Expectancy

Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE_x) is an estimate of the number of years a person can expect to spend in 'very good' or 'good' health ([ONS, 2018d](#)). It is calculated using mortality data and self-reported health status data from the Annual Population Survey.

In 2015-17, HLE_x in Wirral was 59.8 years for men and 61.1 years for women. This is lower than England, where the same figures were 63.4 years for men and 63.8 years for women (**see table 2**). HLE_x figures show that in Wirral, both males and females spend approximately three-quarters of their life in 'good' health, with the remainder spent in poorer health.

Table 2: Life Expectancy with Healthy Life Expectancy and proportion, 2015-17

Area	Life Expectancy, Males (Years)	Healthy Life Expectancy, Males (Years)	Proportion of life spent in 'good' health, Males	Life Expectancy, Females (Years)	Healthy Life Expectancy, Females (Years)	Proportion of life spent in 'good' health, Females
Wirral	78.3	59.8	76.4%	81.8	61.1	74.7%
North West	78.2	61.2	78.3%	81.8	62.3	76.2%
England	79.6	63.4	79.6%	83.1	63.8	76.8%

Source: [Office for National Statistics, 2018b](#)

Ethnicity

Access to up to date ethnicity data continues to be a challenge. National mid-year population estimates are published annually, but do not contain ethnicity data. Hence, the 2011 Census data remains the most recent and reliable data source of data on ethnicity, despite it now being 8 years old (see table 3).

According to the 2011 Census data, Wirral's BAME population grew between the 2001 and 2011 Census collections. In 2011, the BAME population comprised 5.0% (n=16,101) of the population of Wirral compared to 3.5% (n=10,900) in 2001.

The 2011 Census showed that after White, the largest (main) grouping in Wirral was Asian/Asian British (1.6% of the population). Within each of the main groupings, the largest sub-groups were Other White (1.2%), White Irish (0.8%) and Asian Chinese (0.5%).

The Census also showed that the largest number of BAME people in Wirral lived in Birkenhead & Tranmere ward. The wards with the next highest numbers were included Claughton, Rock Ferry and Hoylake & Meols.

Table 3: Ethnic groups in Wirral, 2011 Census (number and percentage)

Ethnic Group	No.	%
White	310,156	97.0
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	303,682	95.0
White: Irish	2,667	0.8
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	77	0.0
White: Other White	3,730	1.2
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	3,286	1.0
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	964	0.3
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	558	0.2
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	949	0.3
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed	815	0.3
Asian/Asian British	5,116	1.6
Asian/Asian British: Indian	1,344	0.4
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	226	0.1
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	851	0.3
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	1,653	0.5
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	1,042	0.3
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	695	0.2
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African	389	0.1
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean	189	0.1
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other Black	117	0.0
Other ethnic group	530	0.2
Other ethnic group: Arab	208	0.1
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	322	0.1
Total	319,783	100.0

Source: [ONS, Census \(2011\)](#)

Since 2011, it is probable that Wirral's BAME population has continued to grow. An indicator of this is the annual School Census (2017), which showed that BAME pupils made up 8.1% of the overall Wirral school population. Another indication of the BAME population can be found in the analysis of pupils for whom English is a second language.

The proportion of the school population with a first language other than English rose from 2.6% (n=1,150) in 2013 to 3.9% (n=1,795) in 2017.

During the same four-year period, the largest proportional increases in Wirral school pupils with a first language (other than English) were found to be Polish, Tamil (Sri Lanka) and Urdu (India/Pakistan) speakers, all of which doubled in number.

Sexuality

There most recent estimate of the size of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual (LGB) population in the UK comes from the 2017 Annual Population Survey (APS). The **table 4** below shows the results of the APS; the percentage of the population by their identified sexual identity have been extrapolated to the Wirral population (aged 16+ as the Annual Population Survey is only conducted among those aged 16+).

This is a crude way of estimating likely populations which does not take into account local variation, but in the absence of more robust local data, remains the best way of estimating likely numbers of people of different sexualities in Wirral.

Table 4: Estimates of sexuality in Wirral (2018)

Sexual orientation	National (%)	Wirral Estimate (Number)
Heterosexual or straight	93.2%	244,950
Lesbian, gay or bisexual	2.0%	5,256
• Gay or lesbian	1.3%	3,417
• Bisexual	0.7%	1,840
Other	0.6%	1,577
Do not know or refuse	4.1%	10,776
Total	100%	262,822

Source: [ONS Annual Population Survey for 2017](#) and [2018 Mid-Year Estimates](#)

As **Table 4** above shows, the estimates indicate that there may be around 5,250 people in Wirral who identify as LGB. Younger people were more likely than older people to report being bisexual than gay or lesbian and as estimates are also available by gender and age band, these national survey results have also been extrapolated to Wirral. See **table 5** below for breakdown.

Table 5: Estimates of sexuality in Wirral by gender and age band

Gender	Age band	% who identify as LGB (Nationally)	Total population in Wirral	Estimated LGB in Wirral
Male	16-24	3.7	15,281	565
Male	25-34	3.6	18,235	656
Male	35-49	2.2	28,152	619
Male	50-64	1.9	32,326	614
Male	65+	0.8	31,427	251
Female	16-24	4.7	14,254	670
Female	25-34	2.3	19,255	443
Female	35-49	1.6	30,465	487
Female	50-64	1.3	35,043	456
Female	65+	0.6	38,384	230
Total			262,822	4,993

Source: [ONS Annual Population Survey for 2017](#) and [2018 Mid-Year Estimates](#)

As the **table 5** shows, when numbers are extrapolated to take into account age, the estimated figure is slightly lower, but still around 5,000.

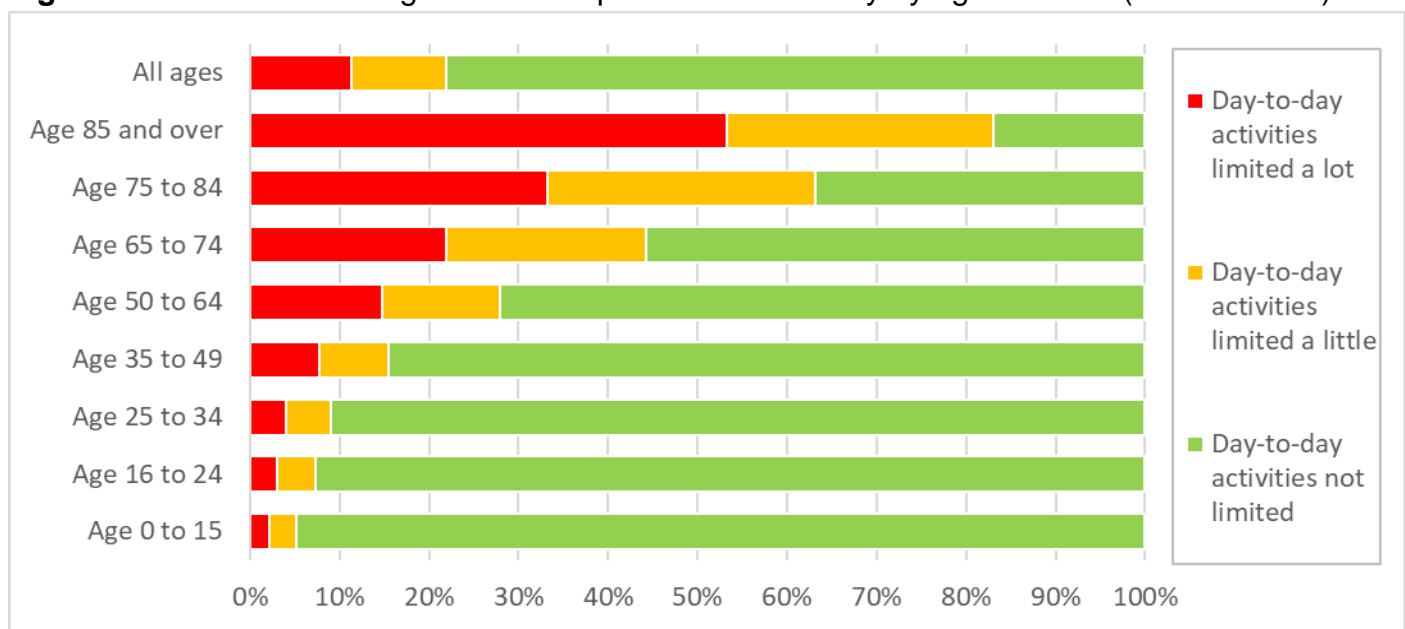
There is a large degree of uncertainty about the estimates above, for example, they may be an underestimate, given that the North-West has a higher proportion of LGB than any area outside London and surveys are likely to under-report LGB due to continuing levels of stigma and discrimination meaning that many people may not wish to reveal their sexuality to anybody.

Information on the transgender population is also difficult to determine. Using estimates produced by the charity [GIRES in 2009](#) (and applying them to the Wirral population), would mean around 50 people in Wirral are likely to be experiencing gender dysphoria/ trans-sexualism. The majority of these would be males (the ratio is 4:1 males to females). The GIRES research found that the average age at presentation for treatment was 42.

Disability

The information below is from the last Census in 2011. Although this data is now several years old, it remains the most comprehensive indication to the level of disability in the Wirral population by age band. The chart in **figure 7** below shows responses to questions about how much ill health and disability affected the activities of daily living.

Figure 7: Prevalence of long-term health problem or disability by age in Wirral (Census 2011)



Source: [NOMIS, 2019](#)

As **figure 7** shows, up to the age of 34, less than 10% of Wirral residents reported that their activities were limited either ‘a lot’ or ‘a little’ – or conversely, 90% of younger residents indicated that their day to day activities were not limited by any illnesses or disabilities. This rises sharply with age, so that by the age of 85+, the opposite is then true and the majority (83%) report that their activities are limited (either a lot or a little) by an illness or disability.

Overall, one in five (22% or 69,100 people) reported that their day-to-day activities were limited in some way by an illness or disability. In numbers, the age band with the highest number of people reporting any limiting of their day-to-day activities, was 50-64 year olds (17,900). Around 28% report their day to day activities are limited in this age group, but they are a large group of the population.

For many however, their health is starting to noticeably deteriorate. By contrast, there are only 5,500 people aged 85+ who reported their day-today activities were limited, but that was 83% of all people aged 85+ in Wirral (this group is relatively small, as many people do not live to reach this age group).

Underpinning and supporting evidence

[Visit Wirral Intelligence Service website for more details that inform this document.](#)

Contact details

For further details please contact

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