

UK Armed Forces Veterans

Introduction

On 10th November 2022, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) released data from the 2021 Census for England and Wales about the number of people who have previously served in the UK armed forces and the type of household in which they live.

Key Findings

- In 2021, 21,173 people in East Sussex reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces (4.6% of usual residents aged 16 years and over).
- Of the UK armed forces veterans in East Sussex, 75.8% (16,053 people) previously served in the regular forces, 19.6% (4,145 people) in the reserve forces, and 4.6% (975 people) served in both the regular and reserve forces.
- 2.9% of East Sussex armed forced veterans lived in communal establishments and the remainder (slightly over 21,000, 97.1%) lived in households.
- There were 19,917 households (8.3% of all households) in East Sussex with at least one person who had served in the UK armed forces.
- East Sussex had the 4th highest proportion of veterans in the 16 and over population (4.6%) in the South East after Hampshire (6.4%), Isle of Wight (6.0%), and Portsmouth (5.4%), and significantly more than the English national average (3.8%).
- The district with the highest proportion of veterans was Rother (5.3% of the population aged 16 years and over, 4,226). Hastings registered the smallest proportion of veterans (3.9% of the population aged 16 years and over, 2,914).

Counting UK Armed Forces Veterans in the Census

The 2021 Census in England and Wales was the first to ask people if they had previously served in the UK armed forces. People aged 16 years and over were asked whether they had previously served in the regular or reserve UK armed forces, or both. People currently serving in the UK armed forces and those who had never served were both advised to tick "no".

People who have previously served in the regular or reserve UK armed forces are often known as the veteran population and form part of the armed forces community (along with those who currently serve in the armed forces or Merchant Navy and their families). The question on UK armed forces veterans was added to better meet the needs for service providers and others who support veterans, in line with the Armed Forces Covenant.

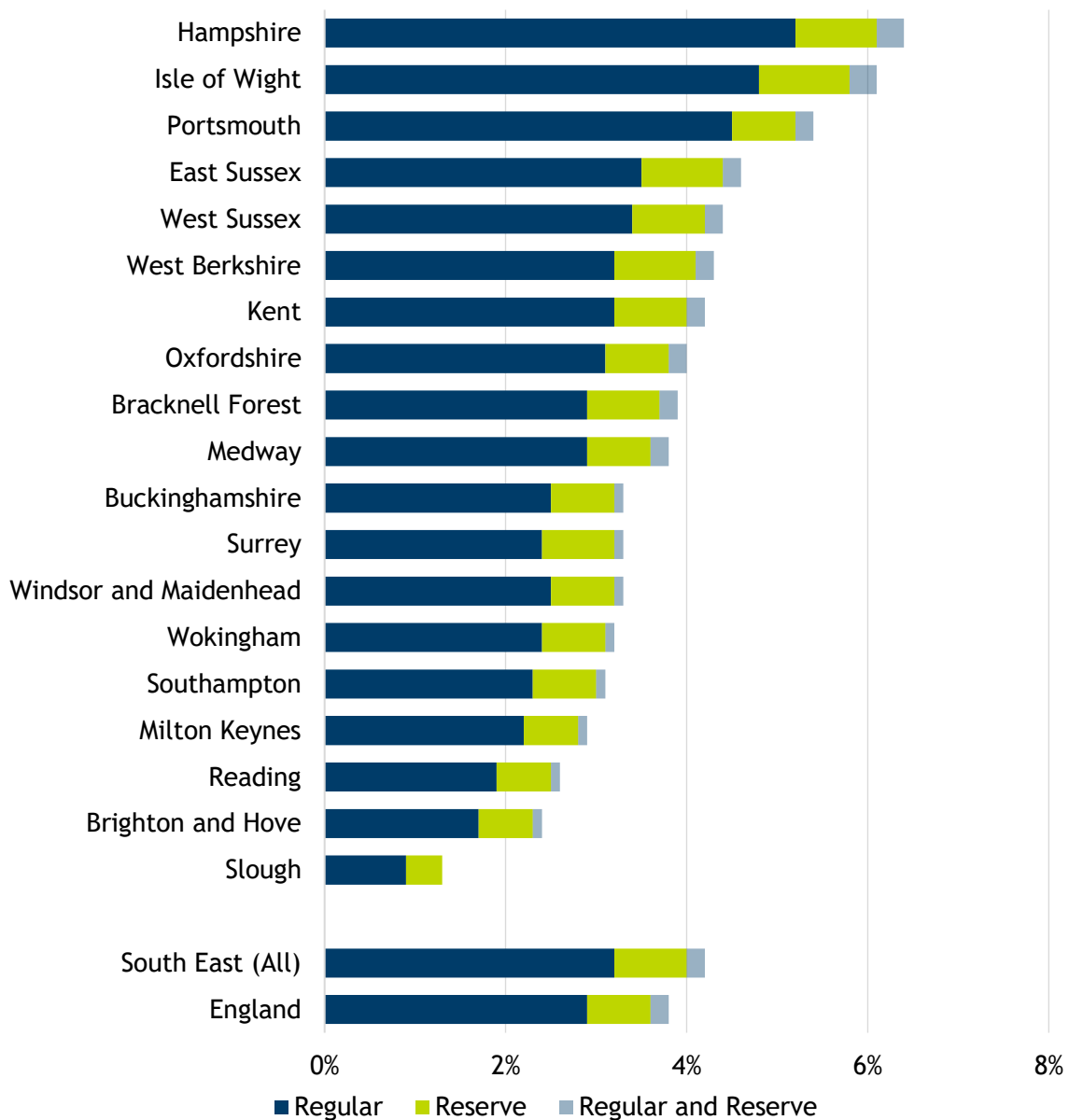
The ONS defines a veteran as anyone who has served for at least one day in the UK armed forces, either regular, reserves, or Merchant Mariners who have seen duty on legally defined military operations.

UK Armed Forces Veterans in East Sussex

There were 21,173 people who had previously served in the UK armed forces in East Sussex in 2021, 4.6% of the population aged 16 years and over. This is around 1 in 25 people in East Sussex (or 3.9% of the overall population).

East Sussex has the 4th highest proportion of UK armed forces veterans per total population in the South East, behind Hampshire (6.4%), the Isle of Wight (6.0%) and Portsmouth (5.4%). Nationwide, it ranks 43rd out of 152 upper-tier authorities - which includes all of England's county councils, Metropolitan councils, and Unitary councils.

East Sussex has the 4th highest proportion of veterans per population in the South East

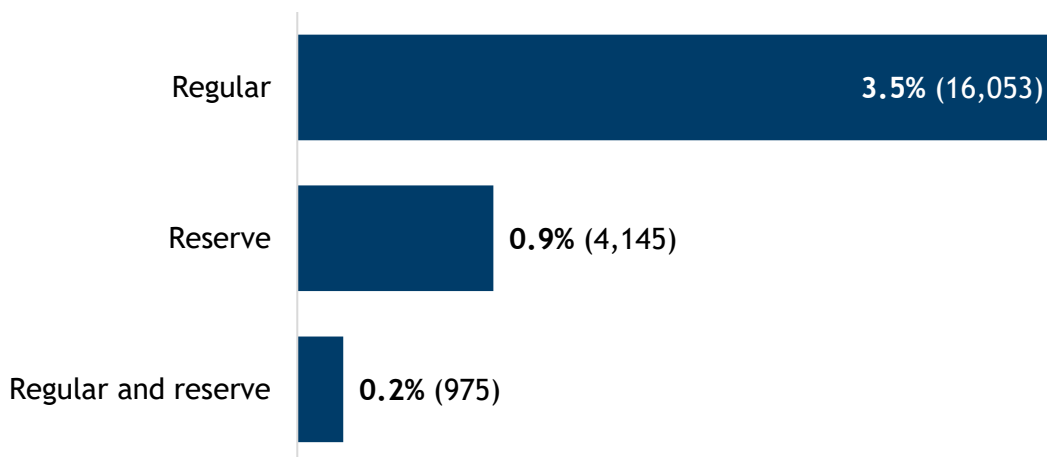


Source: ONS/Census 2021

Note: Figures are calculated based on the population aged 16 and over. However, taking the population as a whole does not change the ranking order.

Over three-quarters of UK armed forces veterans residing in East Sussex had previously served in the regular armed forces only (16,053, 75.8%), while 4,145 (19.6%) had served only in the reserve armed forces. The remaining 975 (4.6%) had served in both the regular and the reserve armed forces.

Percentage of the East Sussex population aged 16 years and over who had previously served in the UK armed forces



Source: ONS/Census 2021

Of the UK armed forces veteran population in East Sussex, 97.1% (20,560) lived in households and 2.9% lived in communal establishments. This is similar to the breakdown for the county as a whole; 98.3% of usual residents in East Sussex lived in households and 1.7% lived in communal establishments.

In total, 19,917 households in East Sussex had at least one person who had previously served in the UK armed forces in 2021 (8.3% of all households in East Sussex). Of these households, the vast majority (96.9%) included only one veteran, 3.1% included two veterans, and the remaining 0.1% included three or more veterans.

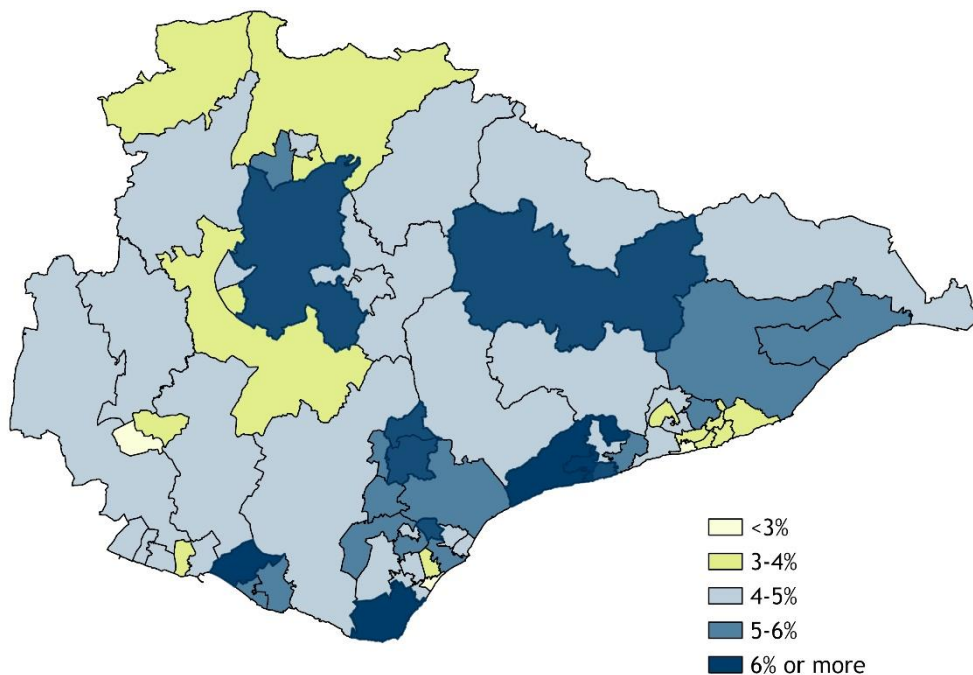
Rother has the highest proportion of veterans in East Sussex

At district level, Rother registered the highest proportion of veterans. That said, veterans can be found across the whole of the county, as can be seen from the map on the following page. Hastings recorded the lowest proportion of veterans in East Sussex (3.9%). However, the proportion of veterans in Hastings is still higher than the average across the whole of England (3.8%).

Area	Total Population	Percentage of population that has previously served in the Armed Forces and/or Armed Forces Reserves	Percentage of households containing at least one Armed Forces Veteran
East Sussex	545,844	4.6%	8.3%
Eastbourne	101,686	4.7%	8.2%
Hastings	90,991	3.9%	6.8%
Lewes	99,904	4.6%	8.2%
Rother	93,112	5.3%	9.4%
Wealden	160,151	4.7%	8.9%
South East	9,278,065	4.2%	7.8%
Brighton and Hove	277,106	2.4%	4.4%
Kent	1,576,071	4.1%	7.7%
Surrey	1,203,107	3.4%	6.3%
West Sussex	882,683	4.4%	8.0%
ENGLAND	56,490,049	3.8%	7.0%

Source: ONS/Census 2021

Percentage of the East Sussex population aged 16 years and over who had previously served in the UK armed forces at MSOA-level



Source: ONS/Census 2021; ESRI/ArcGIS

Future publications

The ONS will publish more detailed data on UK armed forces veterans will be over the coming months, alongside the release of multivariate data. This will enable breakdowns of the UK armed forces veterans population by other census variables, such as age, health and labour market characteristics.

Further Information

For more information about the census data visit the [ONS website](#). For queries specifically relating to East Sussex, please contact the Research and Intelligence Team via email at esif@eastsussex.gov.uk.

The Research and Intelligence Team, Governance Services, provides demographic and socio-economic data, intelligence and insight to support East Sussex County Council and other East Sussex Partners. The Team also manages East Sussex in Figures (ESiF), the Local Information System for East Sussex. Visit www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk for more information.