

2001 Census Topic Report: Older People

Summary

- Nearly 284,000 of Birmingham's residents are 50 or more years old. This is 29% of the City's population, compared with the national average of 33%.
- Higher concentrations of older people are located in the northern, southern, and eastern peripheral parts of the City.
- There are more females than males in the older population.
- About 58% of older residents have reached or passed pensionable age.
- Just over 2% of Birmingham's older residents live in communal establishments. There are more women than men in these establishments.
- Between 1991 and 2001, the older population in Birmingham decreased by 4%, compared with increases of 10% in the West Midlands and England as a whole.
- Despite the overall reduction in the older population, the City saw an increase of about 3,500 in the number aged over 84. This is a 26% increase since 1991.
- About 86% of older people in Birmingham come from White ethnic groups.
- About half of older people in Birmingham are married and a fifth are widowed.
- The proportion living alone is higher at more advanced ages. Just over half of people aged 85 or more years live alone and a further 14% live in communal establishments.
- Two thirds of older people in Birmingham live in owner occupied dwellings, compared with three quarters in the West Midlands and England as a whole.
- About 21% of older people in Birmingham live in homes without central heating, compared with 9% in England as a whole. 30% of household residents aged over 84 do not have central heating.
- About three quarters of older people in Birmingham enjoy good or fairly good health but this is less than the regional and national averages. Percentages with good health tend to be lower, and percentages with not-good health higher, at more advanced ages.
- 45% of Birmingham's older residents have a limiting long-term illness, compared with the national average of 38%. Nearly two-thirds of residents aged over 74 report a limiting illness.
- About 16% of Birmingham's older residents provide unpaid care to another person for reasons of health or old age. The percentage providing care is higher among people in their 50s. 24% of women aged between 50 and 59 years provide care.
- About 64% of Birmingham's residents aged between 50 and the state pension age are economically active (working or seeking work). About 16% of people in this age group are not working for reasons of disability or long-term sickness.
- Economic activity rates fall with age. Fewer than half of male residents aged between 60 and 64 years are economically active.
- More than half of households that contain pensioners do not have a car or van.