

Census 2021 Bulletin

UK Armed Forces Veterans in Shropshire

July 2023

Prepared by the Business Improvement: Data, Analysis and Intelligence –
Resources Directorate



UK Armed Forces Veterans in Shropshire

As part of the latest census release, for the first time, the ONS has published data on UK armed forces veterans. This dataset shows the number and proportion of UK armed forces veterans that are usual residents in Shropshire compared to England. In addition to this, veteran figures will be grouped by type of service, living arrangements, number of veterans living in household compared to the national average, and household reference person by service type.

The second part of the report provides information on the characteristics of Shropshire veterans including: age, country of birth, health, disability, ethnicity, religion, economic activity, occupation, tenure and legal partnership status and compares with the non-veteran population. (please note the older population of veterans which is predominantly male can influence direct comparisons) ONS have some estimates accounting for this in further reading [Characteristics of UK Armed Forces Veterans, England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

Shropshire has proportionately more veterans compared to England and the West Midlands. The county is home to RAF Cosford, RAF Shawbury and 1 Royal Irish based at Tern Hill Barracks. There are also a number of Reserve units located in Shropshire. Information has been included in the 2021 Census to support commitments made by central and local government under the Armed Forces Covenant. This will enable central, local government and charities to better understand the profile and needs of ex-military people and their families.

Key facts

- In 2021 14,847 people in Shropshire reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. This is 5.5% of the usual resident population aged 16 and over. This is significantly higher than the England figure of 3.8%. In Shropshire 77.4% of these served in the regular forces, 18.1% of these served in the reserve forces and 4.5% served in both regular and reserve forces.
- The majority of people who had served in the UK armed forces, 12,605 (85%) were male and 2,241 (15%) were female. Females were more likely to have served in the reserve forces (28%) of females compared to men where 16% had served in the reserves. 79% of males served in the regular armed forces compared to 70% for females.
- There were 14,535 (97.9%) UK armed forces veterans living in households and the remainder (311) or 2.1% living in communal establishments. Shropshire had slightly more veterans living in communal establishments compared to 1.9% in the West Midlands and 2.0% in England.
- In Shropshire there were 13,800 households (9.4% of all households) with one or more people who had served in the UK armed forces. This is higher than 6.7% of all households in England and 6.3% in the West Midlands.
- In terms of household reference person there were 10,818 households where the household reference person either served in the regular UK armed forces, UK reserve armed forces or both. This was (7.8%) of all households higher than in the West Midlands (5.2%) and England (5.5%).
- Shropshire UK armed forces veterans are typically clustered in areas near to current or previous armed forces bases. In Shropshire higher concentrations can be seen (Map 1) around Cosford RAF,



Shawbury RAF, Tern Hill Barracks in Market Drayton, Copthorne Barracks in Shrewsbury. This is also the case nationally.

- The majority of veterans in Shropshire are aged 60 to 84 years 6,588 or (44%) of the total veterans in Shropshire. This is slightly higher than England (43%) and the West Midlands (42%). This age band is made up mostly of veterans aged 75 to 84 years who accounted for 2,898 or (19.5%) of all veterans in Shropshire. It is worth noting any male over the age of 80 years would have been required to complete National Service which ended in 1963.
- Veterans in Shropshire are generally older in age with 82% being over the age of 50 slightly higher than in England (79%) and the West Midlands (79%). 53% of Shropshire veterans are over the age of 65 similar to England (53%). Shropshire had a larger proportion of veterans aged 50 to 59, 19.7% of all veterans compared to 17% in England.
- Shropshire had slightly less veterans aged 20 to 29 years 2.6% compared to 3% for England. Shropshire also had a lower proportion of veterans aged 30 to 39 years (6.1%) compared to 7% in England. This aligns with the older demographic profile in the county compared to England and the West Midlands.
- In terms of veterans age by type of service, the population of those who had only served in the reserve forces was younger than the rest of the veteran population. Among all veterans saying they had served in the reserve forces only, 39% were aged 65 years and over, compared with 56% of veterans that had only served in the regular UK armed forces and 57% of those that had served as both a regular and reserve.
- The majority of UK armed forces veterans in Shropshire were born in England (84.5%) followed by Wales (6.6%), Scotland (2.7%) and other Europe (1.6%). Shropshire had slightly more veterans born in Wales (6.6%) compared to (5.6%) in England and Wales. Shropshire had fewer veterans born outside of Europe compared to England and Wales as a whole.
- In terms of disability 4,581 or 31% of veterans in Shropshire were disabled under the Equality Act, slightly lower than England (32%). As might be expected, this is higher when compared to the general population which shows 21% of people aged 16 years and over as having a disability in Shropshire. This figure rises to 32% when looking at only veterans who served in the regular UK armed forces.
- Of those veterans who were disabled, 14% felt that that their day-to-day activities were limited a lot, compared to 15% in England and 16% in the West Midlands. 17% felt that their day-to-day activities were limited a little and 69% were not disabled.
- This is higher when compared to the general population aged 16 and over in Shropshire, which shows 9% of people with day-to-day activities limited a lot, 12% limited a little and 79% not disabled.
- Shropshire veterans had slightly better health compared to England as a whole. 67.3% of veterans in Shropshire said that their health was good compared to 64.5% in England and 32.7% said that their health was not good compared to 35.2% in England. The health of veterans was not as good as people who had not served in the UK armed forces where 78.9% reported good health and considerably less reported not good health (21.1%). This can be influenced by the older



demographic of the veteran population which is also majority male.

- 98.9% of Shropshire UK armed forces veterans were white, the second largest group was mixed or multiple ethnic groups (0.5%). The veteran population was more diverse in England with 96.2% of veterans describing their ethnicity as white and 3.8% from other ethnic groups, the largest of these being Asian, Asian British or Welsh (1.4%) followed by Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African (1.1%).
- Those who had previously served in the UK armed forces were more likely to identify their ethnicity within the high-level “White” category (98.9%) than non-veterans (97%) differences remained even after accounting for the older age distribution of veterans. This is also the case in England where 96.4% of veterans identified their ethnicity as white compared to 83.1% for non-veterans.
- The question about religion was a voluntary question in the Census 2021 and 95.1% of veterans in Shropshire answered the question. Among the UK armed forces veterans living in Shropshire 67.3% described themselves as Christian slightly higher than England (64.6%). Just over a quarter of veterans described themselves as having no religion similar to England (27.7%).
- A higher proportion of veterans in Shropshire, described themselves as Christian compared with the non-veteran population (67.3% compared to 57.4%).
- 41.6% of Shropshire veterans were economically active and in employment, similar to the England percentage (40.6%) but less than the Shropshire non-veteran population (57.2%). There were fewer veterans economically active and unemployed (1.2%) compared to 2.5% for non-veterans.
- Shropshire UK armed forces veterans were more likely to be economically inactive (57.2%) compared to non-veterans (40.7%). The main reasons for this were retirement which accounted for 51% of all those economically inactive compared to 27.2% for the non-veteran population. Of those economically inactive 3.0% of veterans were classed as long-term sick or disabled similar to England (3.0%) but slightly less than the non-veteran population (3.5%). The veteran population is older and more likely to be retired or not working, which is reflected in these figures.
- Shropshire UK armed forces veterans are more likely to be employed as managers, directors and senior officials (16.3%) compared to non-veterans (13.8%), also as associate professional and technical occupations (16.9%) compared to non-veterans (12.0%). They are twice as likely to be employed in process, plant and machine operatives (12.0%) compared to non-veterans (6.5%). They are less likely to be employed in caring, leisure and service occupations (5.8%) compared to 10.2% for non- veterans and also in administration and technical roles (5.2%) compared to non-veterans (8.9%).
- Shropshire UK armed forces veterans were more likely to own their own home (74.4%) compared with non-veterans (62.8%) (based on households with 1 person who has previously served). A larger proportion of veterans owned their homes outright (50.5%) compared to 33.3% for non-veterans. There were also fewer veterans who rented their homes (25.6%) compared with 37.2% for non-veterans. The veteran population is an older population more likely to own their own home or no longer have a mortgage, the age structure needs to be considered when comparing the veteran population and non-veteran population.



- In terms of legal partnership status, a greater proportion of Shropshire UK armed forces veterans are married (61.3%) compared with 48.8% for Shropshire non-veterans. Fewer veterans had never been married (11.8%) compared with 32.4% for non-veterans. A greater proportion of veterans were divorced (12.0%) than non-veterans (9.8%) and more veterans were widowed (12.5%) compared with 7.0% for non-veterans. These figures were similar for England. These proportions are influenced by the older age profile of veterans as older people are more likely to be married or widowed than the general population.



Table 1: UK armed forces veterans by type of service Shropshire compared to England and the West Midlands.

UK Armed Forces Veterans	Shropshire	Shropshire %	West Midlands %	England %
*UK Armed Forces Veterans	14,847	5.5	3.5	3.8
Previously Served in regular UK armed forces	11,487	77.4	75.3	76.3
Previously Served in reserve UK armed forces	2,687	18.1	20.4	19.5
Previously served in both regular and reserve UK armed forces	673	4.5	4.4	4.3
Has not previously served in any UK armed forces	257,400	94.5	96.5	96.2

*Percentage of usual resident population over the age of 16

Table 2: UK armed forces veterans in communal establishments and in households

UK Armed Forces Veterans	Shropshire	Shropshire %	West Midlands %	England %
Living in Households	14,535	97.9	98.1	98.0
Living in Communal Establishment	311	2.1	1.9	2.0

Table 3: Number of people in the household previously serving in the UK armed forces

UK Armed Forces Veterans Households	Shropshire	Shropshire %	West Midlands %	England %
No people in the household previously served in UK armed forces	125,779	90.1	93.5	93.0
1 person in the household previously served in UK armed forces	13,077	9.4	6.3	6.7
2 people in the household previously served in UK armed forces	711	0.5	0.2	0.3
3 or more people in the household previously served in UK armed forces	12	0.0	0.0	0.0

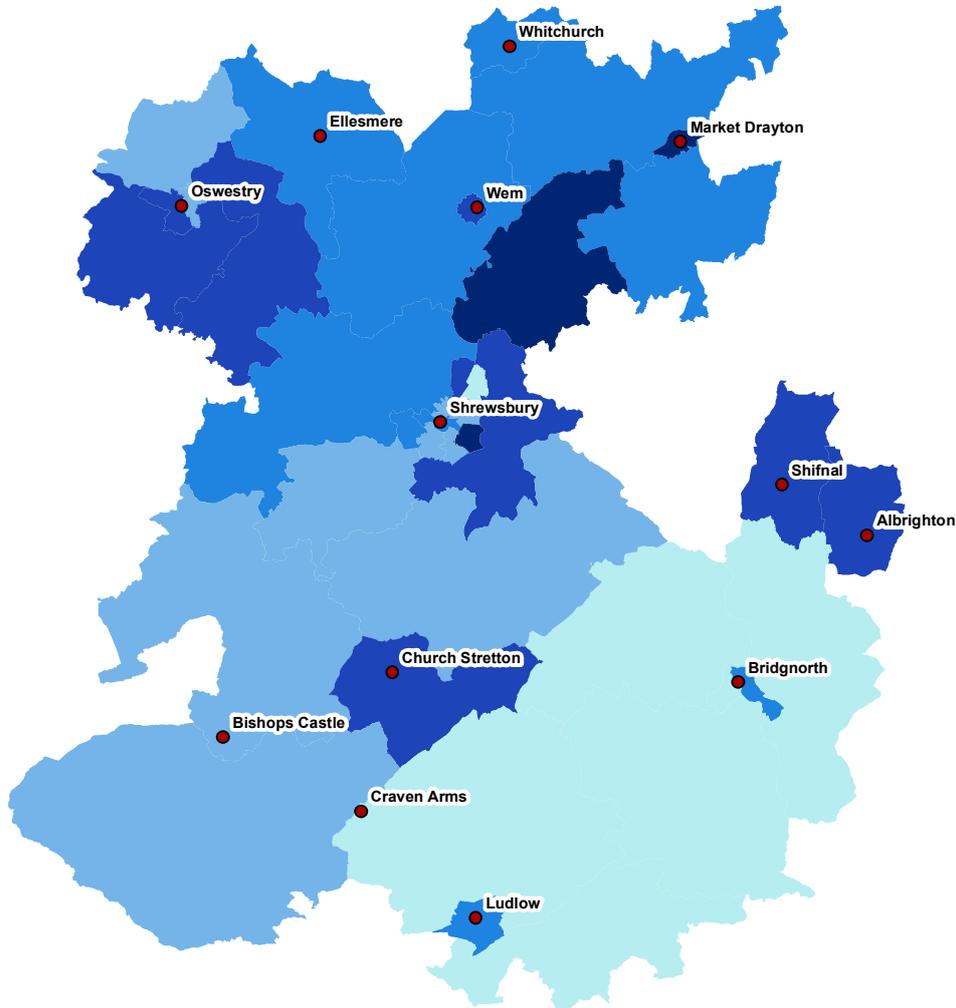


Table 4: Household reference person by service type

UK Armed Forces Veterans Households	Shropshire	Shropshire %	West Midlands %	England %
Household reference person served either in regular UK armed forces, UK reserve armed forces or both.	10,818	7.8	5.2	5.5
Household reference person previously served in regular UK armed forces	8,465	78.2	76.8	77.5
Household reference person previously served in reserve UK armed forces	1,834	17.0	18.5	17.9
Household reference person previously served in both regular and reserve UK armed forces	519	4.8	4.7	4.5
Household reference person has not previously served in regular or reserve UK armed forces	128,745	92.2	94.8	94.5



Map 1: - Percentage of people (aged 16 and over) UK armed forces veterans regular, reserve and both by middle layer output area (MLSOA)



Percentage of the Population Aged 16 and Over

© Crown copyright and database rights 2023 OS 100049049.

UK Veterans Regular, Reserves or Both %

- 4.5% - 4.8%
- 4.9% - 5.2%
- 5.3% - 5.7%
- 5.8% - 6.5%
- 6.6% - 7.6%
- Main Towns



Characteristics of the Veteran Population in Shropshire

Chart 1: - Veterans by Age Group Shropshire, England and the West Midlands

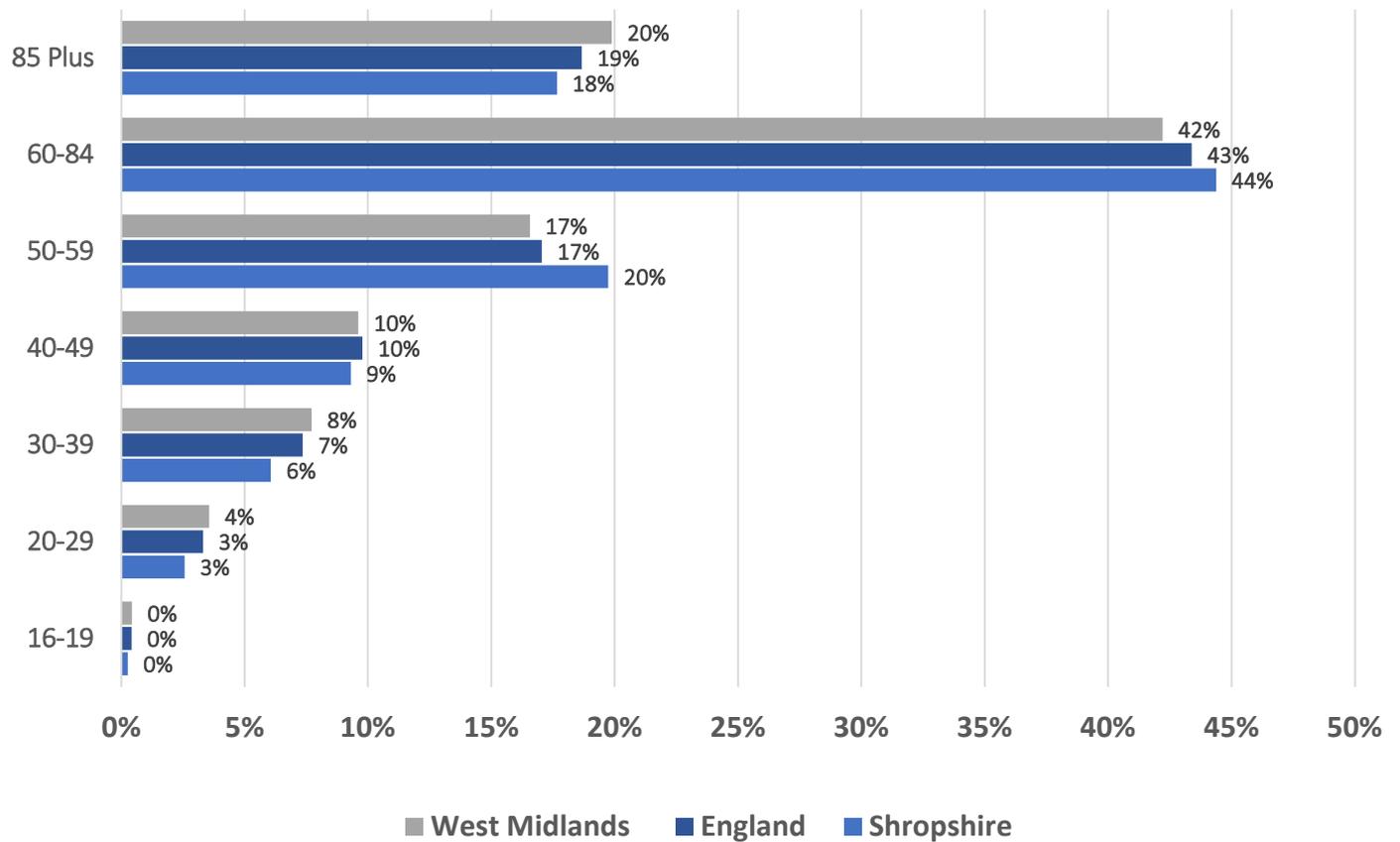


Chart 2: - Veterans by Age Group and armed forces type Shropshire

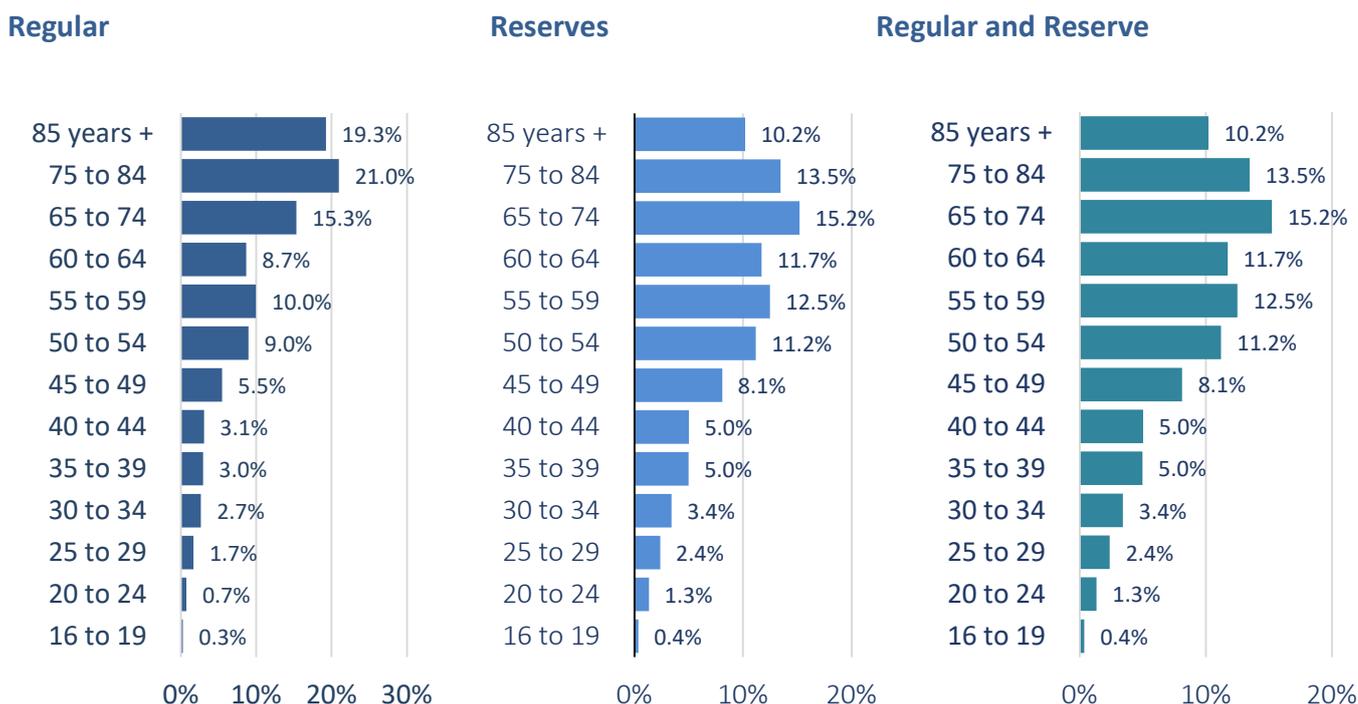


Table 5: Country of Birth UK armed forces veterans in Shropshire

UK Armed Forces Country of Birth	Shropshire	England and Wales
Europe: United Kingdom: England	86.1%	84.5%
Europe: United Kingdom: Wales	6.6%	5.6%
Europe: United Kingdom: Scotland	2.7%	3.2%
Europe: Other Europe	1.6%	2.0%
Middle East and Asia	0.7%	1.6%
Africa	0.5%	0.9%
Europe: United Kingdom: Northern Ireland	0.7%	0.8%
The Americas and the Caribbean	0.2%	0.6%
Europe: Ireland	0.5%	0.5%
Antarctica and Oceania (including Australasia)	0.2%	0.2%
Europe: United Kingdom: United Kingdom not otherwise specified	0.0%	0.0%
Europe: United Kingdom: Great Britain not otherwise specified	0.0%	0.0%



Table 6: Percentage of total Veterans with a Disability

UK Armed Forces Veterans	Shropshire	Shropshire %	West Midlands %	England %
Disabled under the Equality Act	4,581	31%	33%	32%
Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a lot	2,122	14%	16%	15%
Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a little	2,459	17%	17%	17%
Not disabled under the Equality Act	10,265	69%	67%	68%

Chart 3: Percentage of total Veterans in Good or Not Good Health

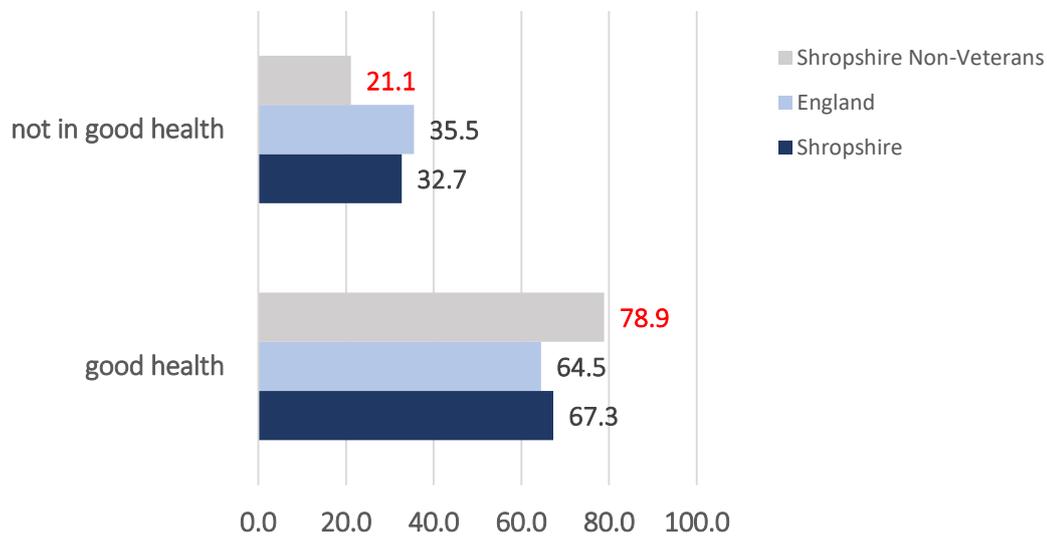


Table 7: Percentage of total Veterans by Ethnicity

UK Armed Forces Veterans	Shropshire %	England %	Shropshire Non-Veterans
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	0.2%	1.4%	1.4%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	0.1%	1.1%	0.3%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	0.5%	0.9%	0.8%
Other ethnic group	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%
White	98.9%	96.2%	97.0%

Table 8: Percentage of total Veterans by Religion

UK Armed Forces Veterans	Shropshire %	England %	Shropshire Non-Veterans
Buddhist	0.2%	0.5%	0.3%
Christian	67.3%	64.6%	57.4%
Does not apply	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Hindu	0.0%	0.4%	0.2%
Jewish	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%
Muslim	0.1%	0.6%	0.5%
No religion	26.6%	27.7%	35.2%
Not answered	4.9%	5.3%	5.6%
Other religion	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%
Sikh	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%

Table 9: Economic Activity

UK Armed Forces Veterans	Shropshire %	England %	Shropshire Non-Veterans
Economically active: In employment (including full-time students)	41.6%	40.7%	57.2%
Economically active: Unemployed (including full-time students)	1.2%	1.6%	2.5%
Economically inactive	57.2%	57.6%	40.7%



Table 10: Reasons for Economic Inactivity

UK Armed Forces Veterans	Shropshire %	England %	Shropshire Non-Veterans
Long-term sick or disabled	3.0%	3.3%	3.5%
Looking after home or family	1.4%	1.2%	3.7%
Other	1.3%	1.5%	2.5%
Retired	51.0%	51.0%	27.2%
Student	0.5%	0.6%	3.7%

Chart 4: Percentage of Shropshire Veterans and Non-veterans by Occupation

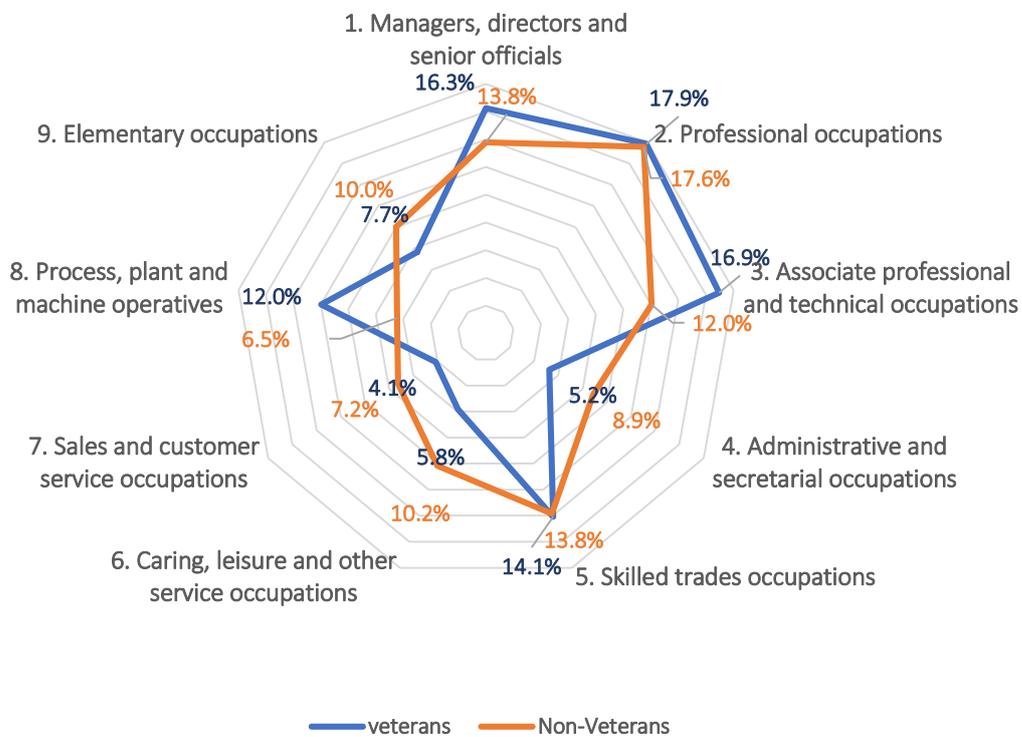


Chart 5: Housing Tenure

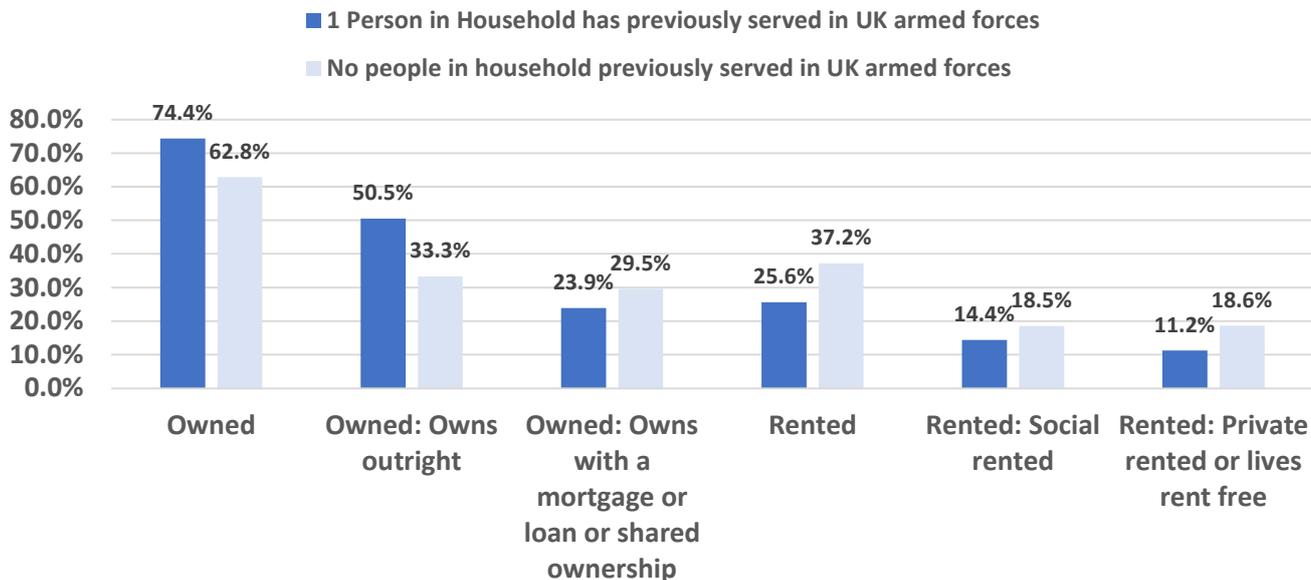


Table 11: Legal Partnership Status

UK Armed Forces Veterans	Shropshire %	England %	Shropshire Non-Veterans
Divorced or civil partnership dissolved	12.0%	12.4%	9.8%
Married or in a registered civil partnership	61.3%	57.1%	48.8%
Never married and never registered a civil partnership	11.8%	14.6%	32.4%
Separated, but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership	2.5%	2.5%	2.0%
Widowed or surviving civil partnership partner	12.5%	13.4%	7.0%

END



Sources

[UK Armed Forces Veterans, England and Wales, Census 2021, Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)

Census 2021 Topic Summaries/Ready Made Tables Nomis: Table TS071, TS072, TS073 and TS074, RM142, RM143, RM144, RM145, RM146, RM147.

ONS Census Custom Tables: Age, country of birth, health, disability, ethnicity, religion, economic activity, occupation, tenure and legal partnership status. Available from [ONS Create a Custom Dataset Census 2021](#).

Further Information

[Characteristics of UK Armed Forces Veterans, England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

[Census Maps - Census 2021 data interactive, ONS](#)

[Shropshire Facts and Figures](#)

For more information please contact: BusinessIntelligence@shropshire.gov.uk

Notes

- I. **Middle Layer Output Areas (MLSOA) 2021 boundaries.** MLSOA are a statistical geography created by the Office for National Statistics for the Census. They are areas consisting of a minimum of 5,000 residents and 2,000 households with an average population size of 7,800.
- II. The **household reference person** is the member of the household in whose name the accommodation is owned or rented, or is otherwise responsible for the accommodation
- III. The veteran population is older in age compared to the non-veteran population. This is likely to influence some of the comparisons. ONS have included some estimates to show if any, difference would exist between veterans and non-veterans if the two populations had the same age, sex and regional distribution by making adjustments to account for this. More on this is included in the Characteristics of UK armed forces listed above.

