



This statistical bulletin provides estimates on the size and socio-demographic characteristics of the working age (16 to 64 years) UK Armed Forces veteran population, using responses provided in the 2011 Census, administered across England and Wales by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

This statistical bulletin is the first in a two-part series, presenting summary figures on veteran characteristics (gender, age and ethnicity) and location (country, region, county, local authority and NHS authority areas) across four key themes: general health and disability status; housing tenure and landlord status; education; and economic activity (employment status) and occupation.

## Key Points

As at 27 March 2011:

There were an estimated **three quarters of a million UK Armed Forces veterans of working age** in England and Wales, making up **2% of the working age population**

(Table A1, Annex A)



Of the working age veterans;

- **92%** were **male**
- **98%** reported their ethnicity as **white**
- **Three quarters** were aged between **40 and 64**

(Table B1, Annex A)



**Higher numbers** of working age veterans **were living in the South West and South East Regions**

(Table A1, Annex A)



**Four out of five** working age veterans **reported good or very good health**

(Table C1, Annex A)



Over **two-thirds** of working age veterans **owned their own property**

(Table E1, Annex A)



Almost **one third** of veterans were **educated to degree level or above**

(Table G1, Annex A)

Of working age veterans;

**Four out of five** were **employed**;



**One-third** were currently, or had previously worked, in **skilled trades** or as **process, plant and machine operatives**



**One-third** were currently, or had previously worked, in **professional, or associate professional and technical occupations**

(Tables H1 & I1, Annex A)

Sources: ONS 2011 England and Wales Census, MOD Service Leavers Database

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/census-2011-working-age-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-england-and-wales>

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## Introduction

This statistical bulletin is the first in a two-part series, providing estimates on the size and socio-demographic characteristics of the working age UK Armed Forces veteran population (between 16 to 64 years of age) residing in England and Wales, using responses provided in the 2011 Census, administered across England and Wales by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

This statistical bulletin was produced to meet the need for information on UK Armed Forces veterans at a lower geographical level. The information presented will aid Government, Local Authorities, charities and the private sector, to help them understand the number of veterans requiring their services. It will also help to assist with policy development and service provisions, that support the Armed Forces Covenant<sup>a</sup>.

The Armed Forces Covenant is an agreement by the nation and the Government that the Armed Forces community should not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. The three key areas of the Covenant (health, education and housing) are largely the responsibility of Local Authorities and NHS authority areas. However, difficulties with identifying veterans and their needs at this low geographical level has been a significant barrier to providing tailored support.

The MOD has previously published top level estimates on veterans residing in Great Britain<sup>b</sup>, though due to the survey sample size, estimates were only possible to county level. Therefore the MOD collaborated with the ONS<sup>c</sup> to set up a data linkage study to identify UK Armed Forces veterans in the 2011 Census<sup>d</sup>. Approximately 2.1 million electronic Service leavers records were linked with the 2011 England and Wales Census data resulting in three quarters of a million matched records for veterans aged under 65. Due to the lack of electronic data, those aged 65 and over were excluded. Further information on the data linkage process can be found in the Background Quality Report.

The estimates provided in this first bulletin do not enable comparisons to be made between working age veterans and usual residents in England and Wales, which may indicate potential veteran disadvantage. This will be provided in the second report in the series to be published in 2019 once the ONS have published comparison usual resident data.

**Working age veterans:** Working age usual residents identified as having served in the UK Armed Forces prior to census day. Serving personnel on this date were excluded. They are simply referred to as 'veterans' within this report.

**Working age usual residents:** Those aged 16-64 who, on census day (27 March 2011) were residing, or intended to reside, in England and Wales for a period of three months or more. They are simply referred to as 'usual residents' within this report.

The MOD is committed to releasing information wherever possible. However, whilst the linked data in this publication provides a useful research resource for informing policy and service delivery, it misses a large part of the service leavers' population. Data users need information on the whole population and therefore it has been concluded that the linked data only partially meet the user needs. Due to these limitations, ONS recommended the inclusion of an armed forces veterans question in the 2021 Census.

This work contains statistical data from ONS which is Crown Copyright. The use of the ONS statistical data in this work does not imply the endorsement of the ONS in relation to the interpretation or analysis of the statistical data. This work uses research datasets which may not exactly reproduce National Statistics aggregates.

a. The Armed Forces Covenant: <https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/>

b. Annual Population Survey Veteran Estimates: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain>

c. The Office for National Statistics (ONS): <https://www.ons.gov.uk/>

d. The 2011 England and Wales Census: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>

## Results: Working age Veterans in England and Wales - Location

As at 27 March 2011 there were an estimated **three quarters of a million<sup>e</sup> UK Armed Forces veterans of working age** residing in England and Wales.

<sup>e</sup> Estimated number of 745,765 (Table A1, Annex A)

Working age veterans were estimated to make up

**2% of the working age population in England and Wales**

(Table A1, Annex A)

### Location of veterans, by Region:

As at 27 March 2011, higher numbers of veterans were recorded to be residing in the South West and South East Regions. However, the proportion of the working age population who were estimated to be veterans remained consistent across all Regions (**Table 1** and **Figure 1**).

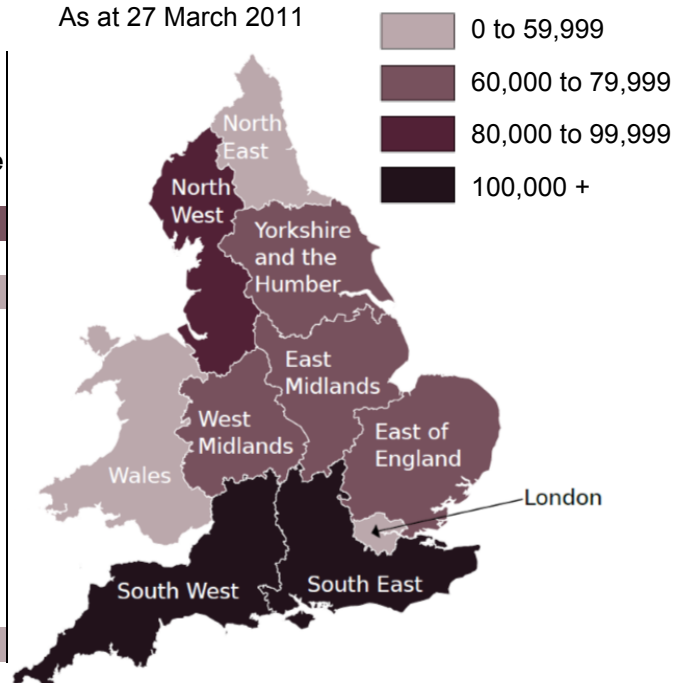
**Table 1: Working age veterans in England and Wales, by Region, estimated numbers and percentage of Regional populations**

As at 27 March 2011

Country and Region	Estimated Number of working age veterans	Estimated proportion of total working age population
<b>England and Wales</b>	<b>745,765</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>697,427</b>	<b>2%</b>
North East	52,995	3%
North West	98,031	2%
Yorkshire and the Humber	79,395	2%
East Midlands	69,346	2%
West Midlands	65,692	2%
East of England	69,464	2%
London	37,605	1%
South East	121,472	2%
South West	103,427	3%
Wales	48,338	2%

**Figure 1: Working age veterans in England and Wales, by Region, estimated numbers**

As at 27 March 2011



### Estimated numbers of veterans are presented at lower geographical levels in Annex A.

Table A1 in Annex A presents estimated numbers by County and Local Authority.

Table A2 in Annex A presents estimated numbers by NHS Clinical Commission Group (CCG) in England, and Local Health Board in Wales.

Veterans made up a higher proportion of the usual residents in local authorities where Service bases are located, for example:



**Naval Service:** Gosport, where an estimated 9% of usual residents were veterans, is where the Royal Navy shore base is located.



**Army:** Richmondshire, where an estimated 7% of usual residents were veterans, is where Catterick Garrison is located.



**RAF:** North Kesteven, where an estimated 7% of usual residents were veterans, is home to two main RAF stations - RAF Cranwell and RAF Waddington.

Sources: ONS 2011 England and Wales Census, MOD Service Leavers Database

## Results: Working age Veterans in England and Wales - Population Characteristics and Health and Disability Status

This section presents estimated veteran summary statistics for the following: Population characteristics and Health and Disability status.

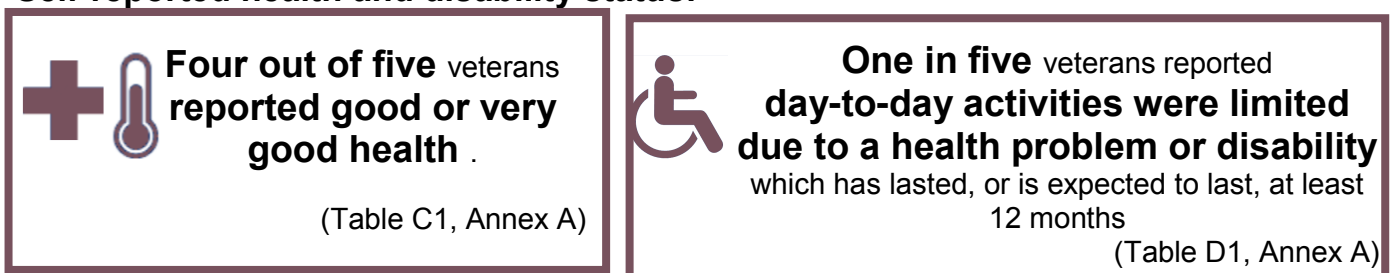
### Population Characteristics:

The majority of veterans were estimated to be Male, White and /or aged 40 or over:



**Section B in Annex A** presents detailed summary statistics on the population characteristics of working age veterans as at 27 March 2011, by location and NHS authority areas. These tables show there was considerable variation in the population characteristics of veterans in each location.

### Self-reported health and disability status:



Four out five (82%) veterans reported good or very good health, which was consistent with the reported health status of usual residents in England and Wales aged 16-64 (85%)<sup>1</sup>.

Almost one in five (16%) veterans reported that their day-to-day activities were limited due to a health problem or disability, which was consistent with that reported by usual residents aged 16-64 in England and Wales (13%)<sup>1</sup>.

There was variation in veterans' self-reported health and disability status. Notably, fewer than 70% of veterans in the following Clinical Commissioning Groups in England reported good or very good health (Table C2, Annex A):

- NHS Bradford City (65% of veterans reported good or very good health)
- NHS Central Manchester (68% of veterans reported good or very good health)

Please note this may also be seen in the usual residents' population. The comparison tables will be available by the end of 2018.

**Sections C and D in Annex A** presents detailed summary statistics on the self-reported health and disability status of working age veterans in England and Wales, by location and NHS authority areas. Further breakdowns at Regional level are also presented by ethnicity, gender and age group.

## Results: Working age Veterans in England and Wales - Housing and Education

This section presents estimated veteran summary statistics for the following: Housing tenure and landlord status, and highest level of educational qualification.

**Annex A** presents detailed summary statistics on each theme by location and NHS authority areas. Further breakdowns at Regional level are also presented by ethnicity, gender and age group.

### Housing Tenure and Landlord Status:




Over two-thirds (70%) of veterans owned their own property, compared with almost two-thirds (64%) of usual residents in England and Wales aged 16 and over<sup>2</sup>.

There was considerable variation in the proportion of veterans who owned their own property at lower geographical locations (Tables E1 and E2, Annex A), for example fewer veterans in Inner London reported to own their own home (46%), which was consistent with that seen amongst usual residents in Inner London aged 16+ (34%)<sup>2</sup>.

More detailed summary statistics on the housing tenure and landlord status of working age veterans in England and Wales can be found in **Sections E and F** in **Annex A**.

### Highest Level of Education:



Almost **one-third** of veterans reported their highest qualification to be level 4+ (higher national certificate), degree or higher degree.

**1 in 8** veterans reported having no academic or professional qualifications.

(Table G1, Annex A)

Almost one-third of veterans (30%) reported qualifications of Level 4 or above, e.g. Bachelor's degree, which was consistent with that seen amongst usual residents aged 16-64 in England and Wales (30%)<sup>3</sup>.

There was a regional difference in the proportion of working age veterans who reported having no qualifications (Table G1, Annex A). Veterans in the North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber had a higher proportion of veterans (16%) with no qualifications than the South East and South West (9%). This was seen amongst the usual residents aged 16 to 64 in England and Wales but not to the same extent (17% in North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber; 12% in South East and South West)<sup>4</sup>.

More detailed summary statistics on the highest level of education achieved by working age veterans in England and Wales can be found in **Section G** in **Annex A**.

**Sources: ONS 2011 England and Wales Census, MOD Service Leavers Database**



## Results: Working age Veterans in England and Wales - Economic Activity and Occupation

This section presents estimated veteran summary statistics for the following: Economic activity and occupation.

**Annex A** presents detailed summary statistics on each theme, by location and health authority. Further breakdowns at Regional level are also presented by ethnicity, gender and age group.

### Economic Activity and Occupation:



**Four out of five** veterans reported they were **employed**

Just under **1 in 20** veterans reported they were **unemployed**

(Table H1, Annex A)

Four out of five (82%) veterans reported to be employed, compared with 71% of usual residents aged 16-64 in England and Wales<sup>5</sup>. Just under 1 in 20 (6%) of veterans reported to be unemployed, compared with 8% of usual residents aged 16-64 in England and Wales<sup>5</sup>.

One in ten veterans in the North East Region reported being unemployed (Table H1, Annex A), the highest regional percentage of unemployment. This was driven by higher levels of unemployment in Middlesbrough and Hartlepool (13% and 12% respectively). These findings were consistent with rates of economic activity reported by usual residents aged 16-64 in England and Wales: 10% in the North East reported to be unemployed, with high unemployment rates in Middlesbrough (14%) and Hartlepool (13%)<sup>5</sup>.

Veterans most commonly reported to be currently working, or having previously worked (for those unemployed and economically inactive), in the following occupations;



- **Associate professional and technical occupations (18%)**
- **Professional Occupations (13%)**

(Table I1, Annex A)



- **Process plant and machine operatives (17%)**
- **Skilled trades occupations (15%)**

(Table I1, Annex A)

One-third (32%) of veterans reported currently working, or have previously worked, as process plant and machine operatives, or in skilled trade occupations. This differs from the percentage of usual residents who reported to be currently working, or have previously worked, in these occupations (19%)<sup>6</sup>.

Veterans in the Northern Regions (North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber) were more likely to report working, or have previously worked, in process plant and machine operative occupations (between 20% and 22%), and less likely to report working, or have previously worked, in professional occupations (between 9% and 11%). Please note this may also be seen in the usual residents' population. The comparison tables will be available by the end of 2018.

More detailed summary statistics on the economic activity and occupations of working age veterans in England and Wales can be found in **Sections H** and **I** in **Annex A**.

**Sources:** ONS 2011 England and Wales Census, MOD Service Leavers Database

## Data, Definitions and Methods

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This section provides a brief summary of the data sources and methodology. More detailed information is available in the Background Quality Report for this Bulletin.

### Data Sources

The MOD Service Leavers Database (SLD) is a single source of electronic information for Service personnel that have left the UK Armed Forces, irrespective of regular/reserve status and length of Service. This database contains records for approximately 2.1 million Service leavers, sourced from a variety of legacy and current administrative systems held within the MOD.

The ONS 2011 England and Wales Census data. Full details of the 2011 Census data and how it was collected can be found on the ONS website: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>.

### Data Coverage

SLD data includes electronic records for all Service leavers since: 1973 for Naval Service leavers; 1974 for Army Service leavers; and 1969 for RAF Service leavers.

MOD 'Annual Population Survey: UK Armed Forces Residing in Great Britain' statistics<sup>4</sup> estimate that almost two thirds of UK Armed Forces veterans are aged 65 and over; the majority of which would have left Service prior to 1969. Therefore, the veteran cohort excludes a large number of veterans, including veterans of the Second World War and subsequent National Service which ended in 1960, with the last National Servicemen released from the Armed Forces in 1963. Due to lack of electronic data on older Service leavers, these statistics include only veterans of working age - those younger than 65 years of age.

ONS 2011 England and Wales Census data is comprehensive. As at 27 March 2011 everyone who had lived or intended to live in the country for three months or more was required to complete a questionnaire. Data were collected from around 25 million households and special arrangements were made to count people living in communal establishments such as; boarding schools, prisons, military bases, hospitals, care homes, student halls of residence, hotels, royal apartments and embassies, as well as for particular communities; rough sleepers, travellers and those living on waterways. In these cases, field staff delivered and collected questionnaires and, where needed, provided advice or assistance in completing the questionnaire.

### Methodology

The SLD dataset was matched with the ONS 2011 England and Wales Census data using various combinations of first name, surname, previous surname, gender and date of birth. The data linkage was undertaken by ONS Researchers and resulted in approximately 850,000 matched records. Due to the SLD having a low coverage for older veterans, only records for those aged under 65 were retained, resulting in a final matched cohort of 745,765 SLD records with the Census dataset. Further details on the data linkage process carried out by ONS Researchers can be found in the accompanying Background Quality Report.

The linked dataset used in this publication provides a useful research resource for informing policy and service delivery, but misses a large part of the service leavers' population. Due to these limitations, ONS has stated that it intends to recommend the inclusion of an Armed Forces veterans question in the 2021 Census<sup>7</sup>.

All successfully matched data were held anonymously in a secure environment and MOD Accredited Researchers extracted summary tables from within the ONS Secure Research Service (SRS) based in Newport. All tables were scrutinized by the SRS to ensure there was no risk of disclosing sensitive or personal information.

Percentages were calculated as the ratio of each number, relative to the total number of veterans within the specific location or demographic group. The exception to this were the calculation of economic activity outcomes, presented in Section H of Annex A. These percentages do not sum to 100% as a different denominator has been used to calculate the unemployment percentage than the employment and economically inactive percentages. The methodology used is in line with ONS definitions as detailed in the accompanying Background Quality Report.

This work contains statistical data from ONS which is Crown Copyright. The use of the ONS statistical data in this work does not imply the endorsement of the ONS in relation to the interpretation or analysis of the statistical data. This work uses research datasets which may not exactly reproduce National Statistics aggregates.

## Glossary

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**Census 2011:** The 2011 Census of the population of the United Kingdom was held on 27 March 2011 in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Office for National Statistics was responsible for the 2011 Census in England and Wales.

**Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG):** Clinical commissioning groups are NHS organisations set up by the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to organise the delivery of NHS services in England.

**County council:** Is the elected administrative body governing an area known as a county. County councils were introduced in England in 1889 and reformed in 1974, whilst Wales has been divided into unitary principal areas since 1996. County councils and unitary principal areas are responsible for education, social services, highways, fire and rescue services, libraries, waste disposal, consumer services and town and country planning.

**Local Authority:** An administrative body in local Government.

**Local Health Board (LHB):** The seven Local Health Boards across Wales were created following NHS reforms in 2009 to plan, secure and deliver healthcare services in their areas.

**Non-White Veterans:** Veterans who identified as being of Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; Asian/Asian British; Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; of Other Ethnic Group.

**Office for National Statistics (ONS):** Is the executive office of the UK Statistics Authority, a non-ministerial department which reports directly to the UK Parliament and was responsible for the 2011 Census in England and Wales.

**Regions of England:** Formerly known as the government office regions, are the highest tier of sub-national division in England.

**UK Veteran:** A veteran of the UK Armed Forces is any person of any age who has served in the Armed Forces for one day or more.

**Usual Resident:** Anyone who, on census day, was in England and Wales (E&W) and had stayed or intended to stay in E&W for a period of 12 months or more, or had a permanent E&W address and was outside of E&W and intended to be outside of E&W for less than 12 months.

**White Veterans:** Include veterans who identified as being White British; Gypsy or Irish traveller; or Other White.

## References

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1. Office for National Statistics Census 2011: Table KS301EW - Health and provision of unpaid care, local authorities in England and Wales: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/ks301ew>
2. Office for National Statistics Census 2011: Table KS402EW- Tenure, local authorities in England and Wales: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/ks402ew>
3. Office for National Statistics Census 2011: Table DC5102EW - Highest level of qualification by sex by age: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/dc5102ew>
4. Office for National Statistics Census 2011: Table DC6112EW-Highest level of qualification by age: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/dc6112ew>
5. Office for National Statistics Census 2011: Table DC6107EW - Economic Activity by sex by age: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/dc6107ew>
6. Office for National Statistics Census 2011: Table DC6112EW - Occupation by sex by age: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/dc6112ew>
7. Information on the inclusion of an Armed Forces veterans question in the 2021 Census: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/questiondevelopment/armedforcescommunity/updateonmeetinginformationneedsontearmedforcescommunityveterans>



## Further information

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### Disclosure Control

The ONS Secure Research Service's disclosure policy for these statistics was to ensure that figures fewer than ten were suppressed, and presented as '~', to prevent disclosure of sensitive or identifiable personal information.

The top-level summary statistics on estimated numbers of veteran by location have been presented in Tables A1 and A2 in Annex A in unrounded format. In all other tables in Annex A, numbers of ten or more have been rounded to the nearest five. In line with the directives of the JSP 200, Defence Statistics took the additional step of rounding all numbers that present responses to specific questions, and all numbers in tables which present population characteristics of the veteran cohort. This was to prevent users from inadvertently deriving small numbers from across the tables.

The information presented has been structured in such a way to release information to the public domain that contributes to the MOD accountability to the British public but which does not compromise data protection.

### Revisions

There are no planned revisions to these statistics. However, if any errors are found the data would be revised and Defence Statistics would highlight the error and the impact on the numbers presented.

### Contact Us

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<https://www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request/the-freedom-of-information-act>

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