

Census 2021 results: *Gender identity and sexual orientation*

Southwark Public Health Division
Children and Adults Services

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This profile presents key findings on gender identity and sexual orientation at the time of the 2021 census

BACKGROUND

The census is a survey that happens every 10 years and gives us a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales.

- The last census was conducted on Sunday 21 March 2021, and collected information on a range of themes, including:

Demography & migration	Ethnicity, identity, language & religion	Health & disability	Housing
Work & travel	Gender identity & sexual orientation	Education	UK armed forces veterans

- Results of the census are being released in a phased manner:
 - 28 June 2022: Headline population figures for local authorities
 - Phase 1 – Autumn–Winter 2022: Topic profiles for census themes
 - Phase 2 – Date to be confirmed: More detailed data becomes available

This profile focuses on **gender identity and sexual orientation** in the borough, and forms part of a suite of documents that profile the Southwark results of the 2021 census. Further profiles will be released later in 2023 as new data becomes available.

Reference

1. Office for National Statistics. 2022. <https://census.gov.uk/about-the-census>

Southwark has one of the largest trans/non-binary and LGB+ populations in England

SUMMARY

New census questions on gender identity and sexual orientation give the most accurate local data on these topics to date. As at March 2021:

- 1 in 80 residents aged 16+ (1.2%; about 3,200 people) had a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth. Southwark ranked 5th highest in England for trans/non-binary identity.
 - Half this group used no specific gender identity term; the rest generally used 'trans woman', 'trans man' or 'non-binary'.
 - 1 in 70 Southwark 16–24 yr olds and 1 in 80 25–54 yr olds identified as trans/non-binary.
 - Burgess Park area had the highest trans/non-binary prevalence in England – 8.1% (1 in 12) – but almost all these residents used no specific gender identity term.
- More than 1 in 12 (8.1%; about 20,700) Southwark residents aged 16+ had a non-heterosexual ('LGB+') sexual identity. Southwark ranked 4th highest in England for LGB+ identity.
 - Southwark LGB+ people predominantly identified as lesbian or gay (almost three-fifths; 56%) or bisexual or pansexual (two-fifths; 40%).
 - Of all Southwark residents, 1 in 20 (4.5%) were lesbian or gay and 1 in 30 (3.2%) were bisexual or pansexual.
 - Overall, LGB+ prevalence peaked in 16–24 yr olds for women and 35–44 yr olds for men.
 - Burgess Park area had the largest LGB+ prevalence in the borough – 12.8% (1 in 8) – but most of these residents did not specifically identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

The 2021 Census introduced new, voluntary questions on gender identity and sexual orientation

CENSUS METHODS

Following thorough preparation, the 2021 Census introduced new questions about gender identity and sexual orientation.

- These were voluntary questions for respondents aged 16 and over; respondents could choose not to answer.
- Prior to the census, the gender identity and sexual orientation questions were tested on focus groups to ensure adequate response rates and acceptability to the general population.
- Census response rates to the gender identity and sexual orientation questions were better than expected; thus, data from these questions gives an acceptable indication of population patterns.
- This report uses Office for National Statistics (ONS) terminology for overall minority groups of interest:
 - ‘Trans or non-binary’ = people whose gender identity differs from their sex registered at birth.
 - ‘LGB+’ = people identifying with a non-heterosexual orientation (frequently lesbian, gay or bisexual).
- Census results for trans/non-binary and LGB+ identified people are probably substantial under-estimates; previous evidence shows that survey respondents are reluctant to disclose these identities due to ongoing stigma.
- Data on census respondents choosing not to answer the gender identity and sexual orientation questions should be interpreted with caution. Prior evidence shows that non-respondents to trans/non-binary and LGB+ identity questions are more likely to be members of the stigmatised group in question.

Reference

1. ONS, 2023. Gender identity, England and Wales: Census 2021.
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/genderidentity/bulletins/genderidentityenglandandwales/census2021>

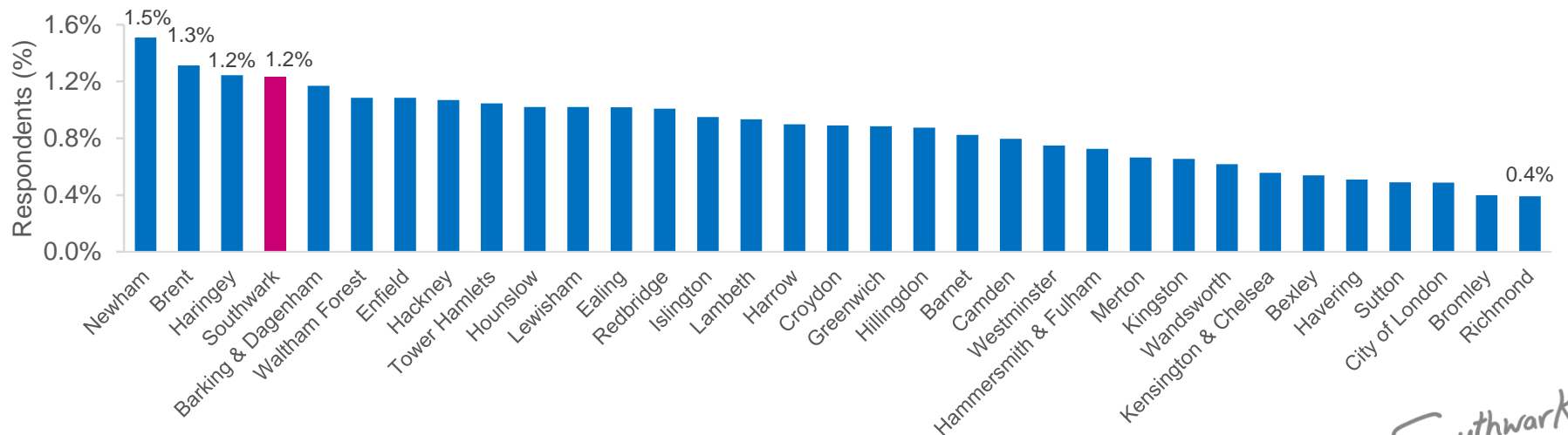
At least 3,200 Southwark people have a gender identity different from their sex at birth, equating to 1 in 80 residents

GENDER IDENTITY: PREVALENCE

Census respondents were asked whether their gender identity was the same as their sex registered at birth.

- In Southwark, about 1 in 80 (1.2%; 3,200) residents reported a gender identity different from their birth sex registration, significantly higher than London (0.9%) and England (0.5%) levels.
- Southwark ranked 5th highest in England and 4th highest in London for levels of trans/non-binary identity.
- These are probably substantial under-estimates. 7.3% of Southwark residents did not answer.

Figure 1: Census respondents with a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth, as a proportion of all 16+ yr respondents offered the question, by London borough



Reference

1. ONS, 2023. Gender identity, England and Wales: Census 2021. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/genderidentity/bulletins/genderidentityenglandandwales/census2021>

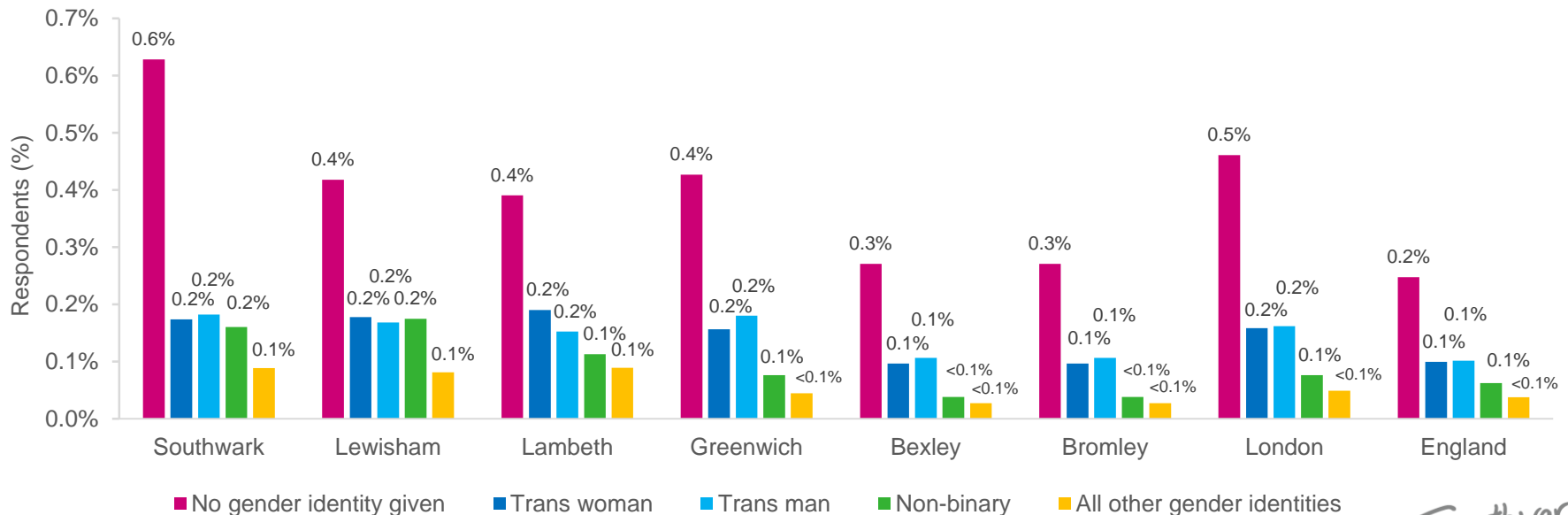
Half Southwark trans/non-binary people use no specific identity term; most others use 'trans woman', 'trans man' or 'non-binary'

GENDER IDENTITY: IDENTITY TYPES

Census respondents whose gender identity differed from their sex registration at birth were asked to write in their gender identity.

- Around half (51%; 1,600) of all Southwark trans/non-binary people did not write in a specific gender identity; other South East London boroughs, London and England had a similar pattern.
- As at March 2021, Southwark had 500 trans man, 450 trans woman and 400 non-binary identified residents.

Figure 2: Respondents with a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth, as a proportion of all 16+ yr respondents



Reference

1. ONS, 2023. Gender identity, England and Wales: Census 2021.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/genderidentity/bulletins/genderidentityenglandandwales/census2021>

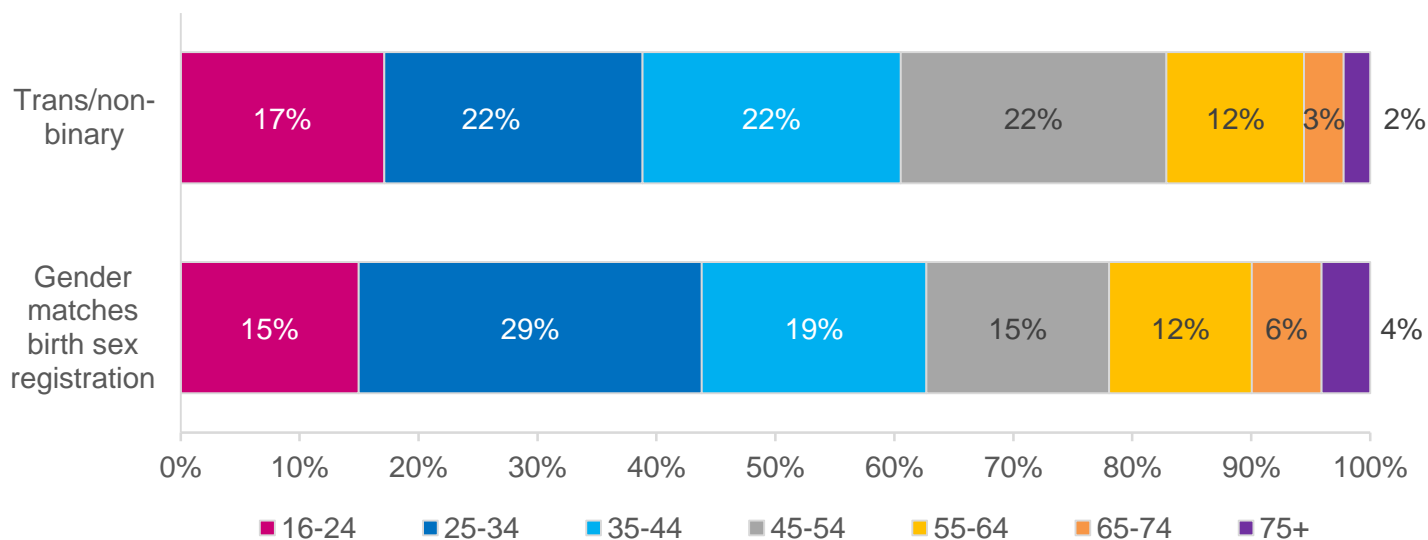
Around two thirds of Southwark's trans/non-binary residents are aged between 25 and 54 years

GENDER IDENTITY: AGE GROUP

Age data is available for trans/non-binary groups; figures are probably under-estimates.

- Two-thirds (66%; 2,100) of Southwark trans/non-binary people are aged 25–54; at least 1 in 80 (1.3%; 2,100) of all Southwark 25–54 yr olds are trans/non-binary.
- One-sixth of Southwark trans/non-binary people are aged 16–24 (17%; 550); at least 1 in 70 of all Southwark 16 to 24 yr olds (1.4%; 550) are trans/non-binary.
- 1 in 18 (5.5%; 200) of Southwark trans/non-binary people are aged 65+; at least 1 in 140 of all Southwark residents aged 65+ (0.7%; 200) are trans/non-binary.

Figure 3: Age profile of Southwark trans/non-binary population compared with those whose gender identity matched their birth sex registration

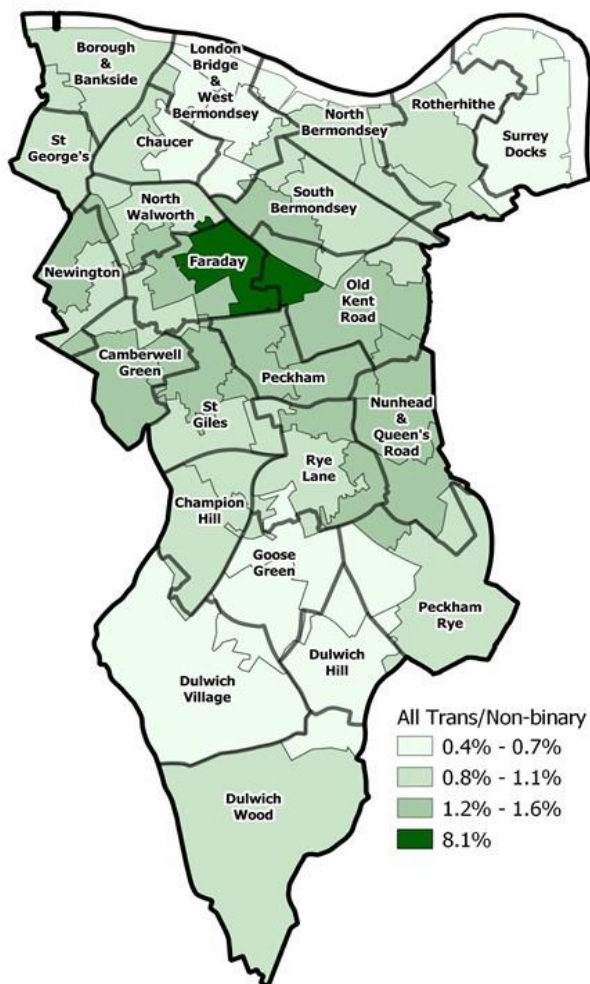


Reference

1. ONS, 2023. Gender identity: age and sex, England and Wales: Census 2021. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/genderidentityageandsexenglandandwalescensus2021>

Southwark's Burgess Park area has the highest prevalence of trans/non-binary residents in England: 8%

GENDER REASSIGNMENT: ALL TRANS/NON-BINARY



Census 2021 data showed the prevalence of trans and non-binary identity at large neighbourhood level.

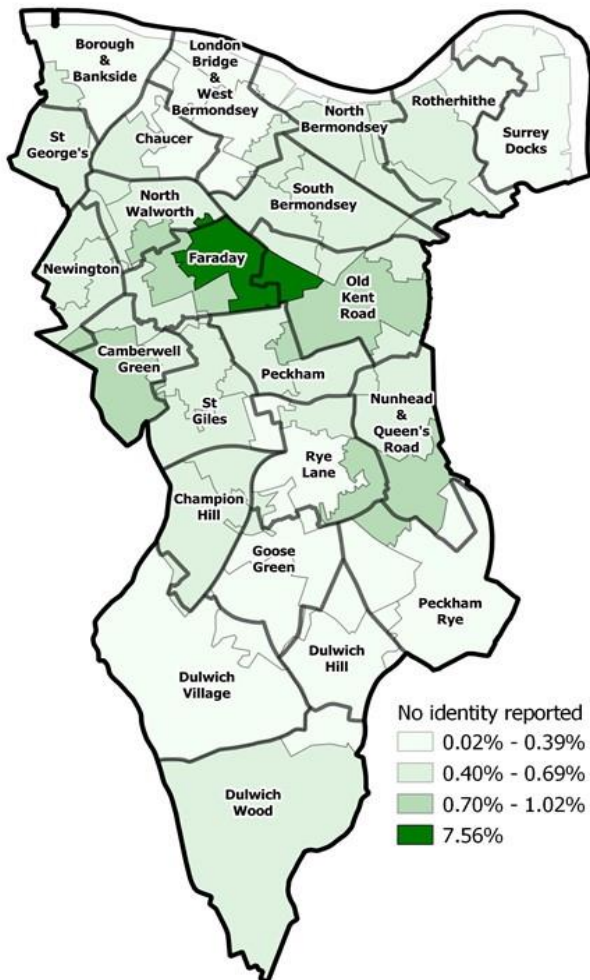
- Over 1 in 12 (8.1%; about 600) residents in Southwark's Burgess Park neighbourhood area (extending across Faraday and Old Kent Road) identified as trans/non-binary; this was the highest trans/non-binary prevalence in England (far ahead of 3.8% in East Central Oxford and 2.4% in Manor Park, Newham).
- The next highest ranking Southwark neighbourhoods had far lower prevalences: around 1 in 70 (about 100 residents):
 - Nunhead North, 1.6%
 - Peckham Park Road, 1.6%
 - Walworth South, 1.6%
- Southwark's Herne Hill & Dulwich Park area had the lowest proportion of trans/non-binary residents, at 0.4% (fewer than 1 in 200).

Reference

1. ONS, 2023. Census 2021: gender identity. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS078/editions/2021/versions/1>

Southwark people termed 'trans/non-binary' but without a specific identity term were overwhelmingly in Burgess Park

GENDER REASSIGNMENT: NO SPECIFIC GENDER IDENTITY



Census 2021 data showed:

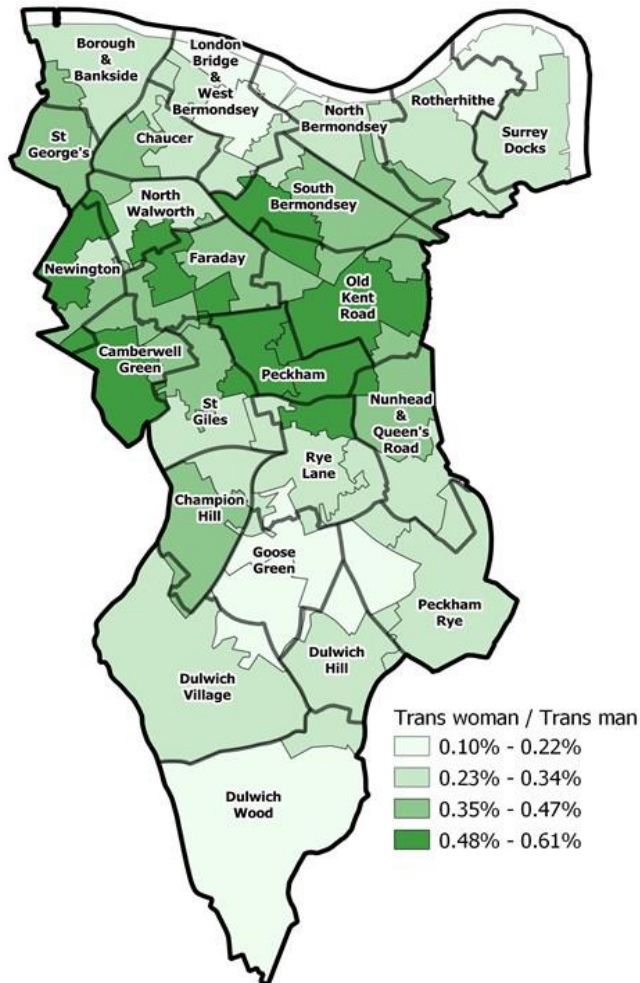
- About 1,600 Southwark residents had a gender identity differing from their birth sex registration but no specific gender identity; proportions varied greatly across the borough.
- In the Burgess Park neighbourhood area, 1 in 13 residents (7.6%; about 560) had a gender identity different from their birth sex registration but did not report a specific gender identity term.
- Elsewhere, prevalence of non-cis-gendered people not reporting a gender identity term was much lower, ranging from 1 in 100 (1.0%; about 80) in part of Nunhead & Queen's Road / Rye Lane, down to less than 1 in 1,000 (0.02%; fewer than 10) in Dulwich Village.

Reference

1. ONS, 2023. Census 2021: gender identity. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS078/editions/2021/versions/1>

Residents identifying as trans women or trans men were most prevalent in north-central Southwark

GENDER REASSIGNMENT: TRANS MAN & TRANS WOMAN



Census 2021 data showed:

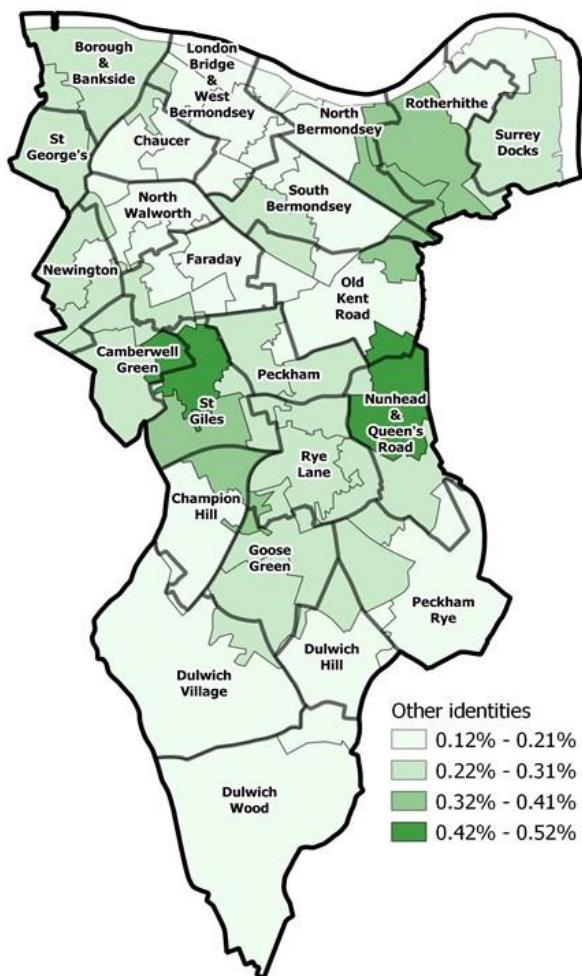
- The prevalence of residents identifying as trans women or trans men was spread more evenly across the borough.
- In parts of North Walworth, Faraday, Peckham and Rye Lane, about 1 in 170 people (about 0.6%) identified as trans women or trans men.
- In parts of Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks, fewer than 1 in 1,000 (0.1%) identified in this way.

Reference

1. ONS, 2023. Census 2021: gender identity. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS078/editions/2021/versions/1>

Residents with other trans/non-binary identities (most commonly non-binary) were most prevalent in central Southwark

GENDER REASSIGNMENT: OTHER GENDER IDENTITIES



Census 2011 data showed:

- Southwark residents reporting other trans/non-binary identities (most commonly non-binary) were unevenly distributed across the borough.
- In parts of Camberwell Green, St Giles and Nunhead & Queen's Road, around 1 in 200 residents (0.5%) has a non-cis-gendered identity other than trans woman or trans man (e.g. non-binary).

Reference

1. ONS, 2023. Census 2021: gender identity. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS078/editions/2021/versions/1>

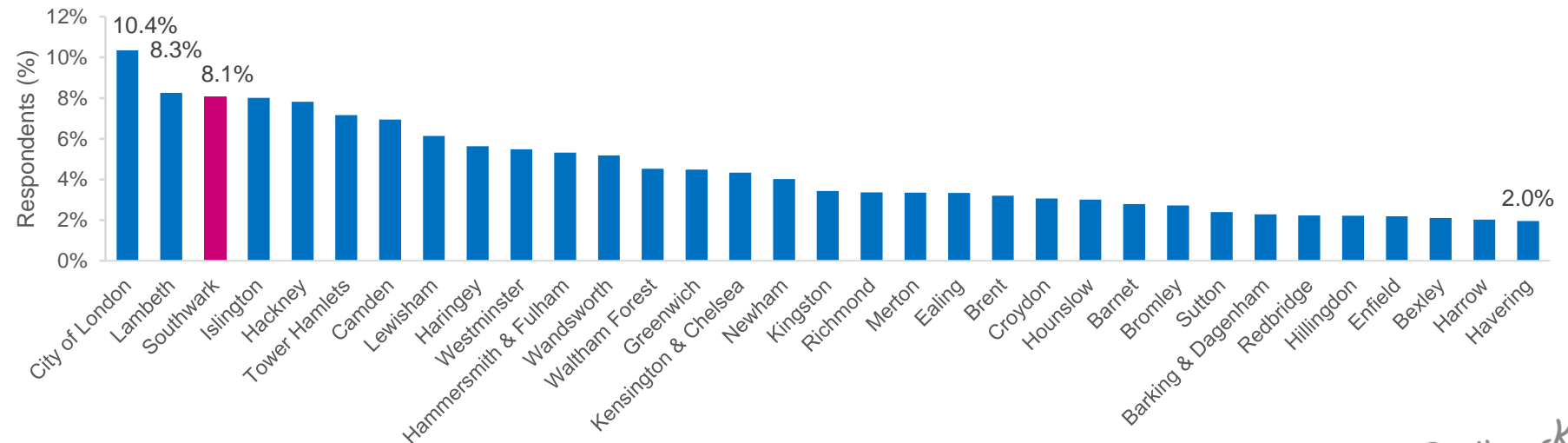
More than 1 in 12 Southwark residents have an LGB+ sexual identity, equating to around 20,700 residents

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: PREVALENCE

Census respondents were asked which term best described their sexual orientation: straight or heterosexual; gay or lesbian; bisexual; or another orientation.

- In Southwark, more than 1 in 12 (8.1%; 20,700) residents reported an LGB+ sexual identity, around double the levels for London (4.3%) and England (3.2%).
- Southwark ranked 4th highest in England and 3rd highest in London. Seven of the top 10 local authorities were in London.
- Just under 1 in 10 Southwark residents did not answer the question.

Figure 4: Census respondents with an LGB+ identity, as a proportion of all 16+ yr respondents



Reference

1. ONS, 2023. Sexual orientation, England and Wales: Census 2021. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualorientationenglandandwales/census2021>

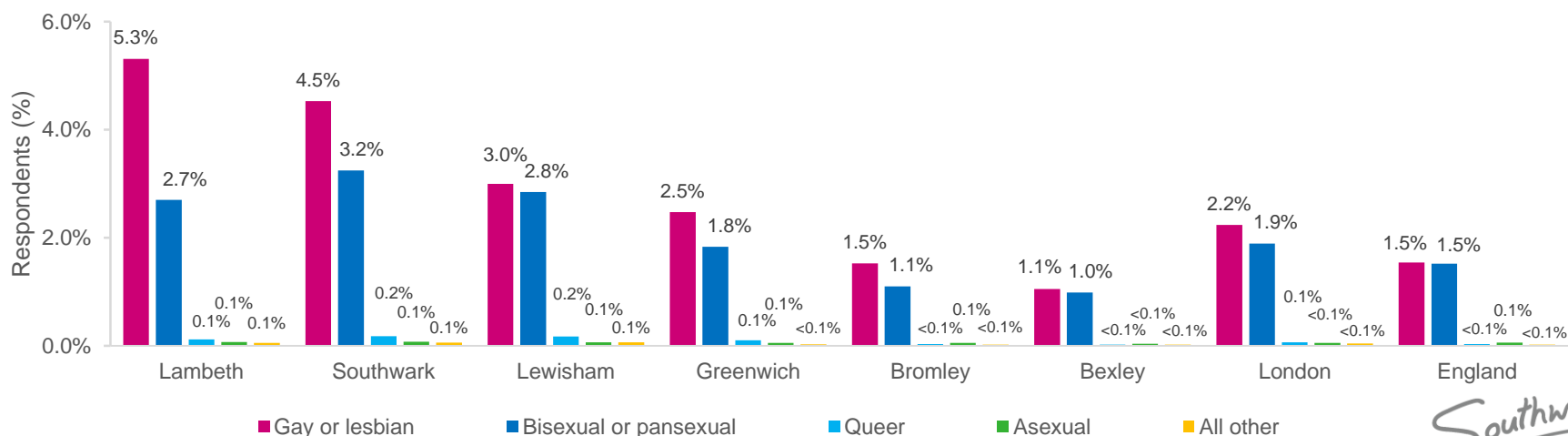
1 in 20 Southwark residents identified as lesbian or gay, while 1 in 30 identified as bisexual or pansexual

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: IDENTITY TYPES

Census respondents who chose 'other sexual orientation' were asked to write in the orientation with which they identified.

- Southwark's LGB+ population predominantly identified as lesbian/gay (56%) or bisexual/pansexual (40%).
- Around 1 in 20 Southwark residents (4.5%; 11,600) identified as lesbian or gay; about 1 in 30 (3.2%; 8,300) identified as bisexual or pansexual; and 0.2% identified as queer (450), 0.1% as asexual (200) and 0.1% with another LGB+ identity (150).
- Southwark had over double the lesbian/gay prevalence and over one-half higher bisexual/pansexual prevalence, compared with London and England levels.

Figure 5: Census respondents with an LGB+ identity, as a proportion of all 16+ yr respondents, by specific identity term selected or volunteered



Reference

1. ONS, 2023. Sexual orientation, England and Wales: Census 2021.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualorientationenglandandwales/census2021>

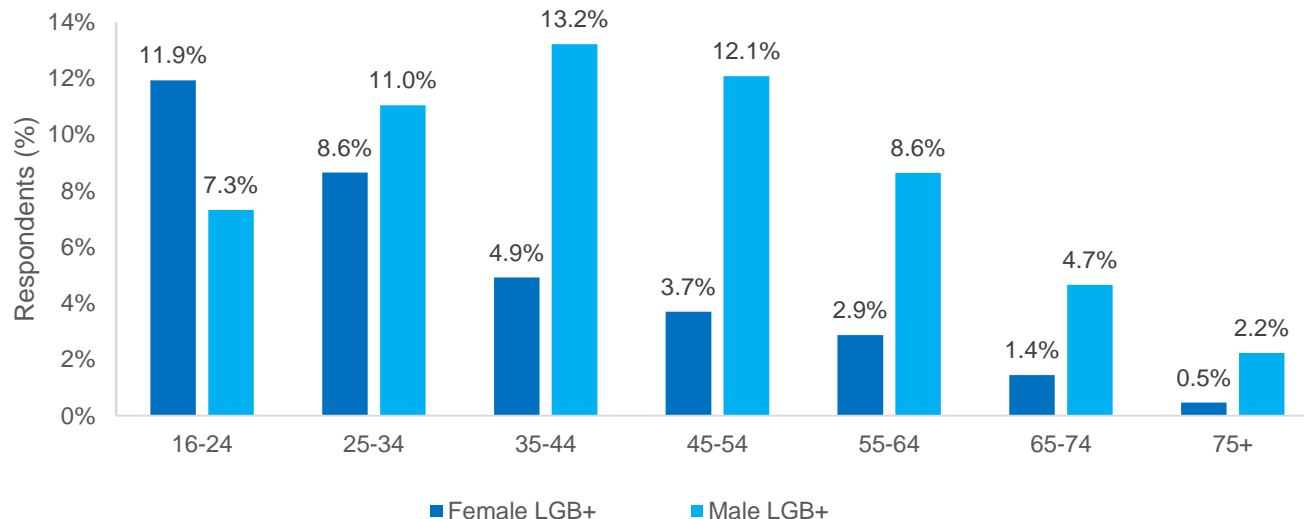
1 in 16 Southwark women and 1 in 10 men are LGB+; levels are highest in young women and middle-aged men

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: AGE GROUP

Age data is available for LGB+ residents; figures are probably under-estimates.

- At least 1 in 16 Southwark women (6.2%; 8,300) identify as LGB+. Levels peak in young people: at least 1 in 8 among those aged 16–24 (11.9%; 2,500). Over two-thirds of Southwark LGB+ women (69%) are aged under 35.
- More than 1 in 10 Southwark men (10.1%; 12,400) identify as LGB+. Levels peak in middle-aged adults, with more than 1 in 8 of those aged 35–44 (13.2%; 3,100) identifying as LGB+. Over three-quarters of Southwark LGB+ men (76%) are aged between 25 and 54.

Figure 6: Southwark population identifying as LGB+ by age and sex



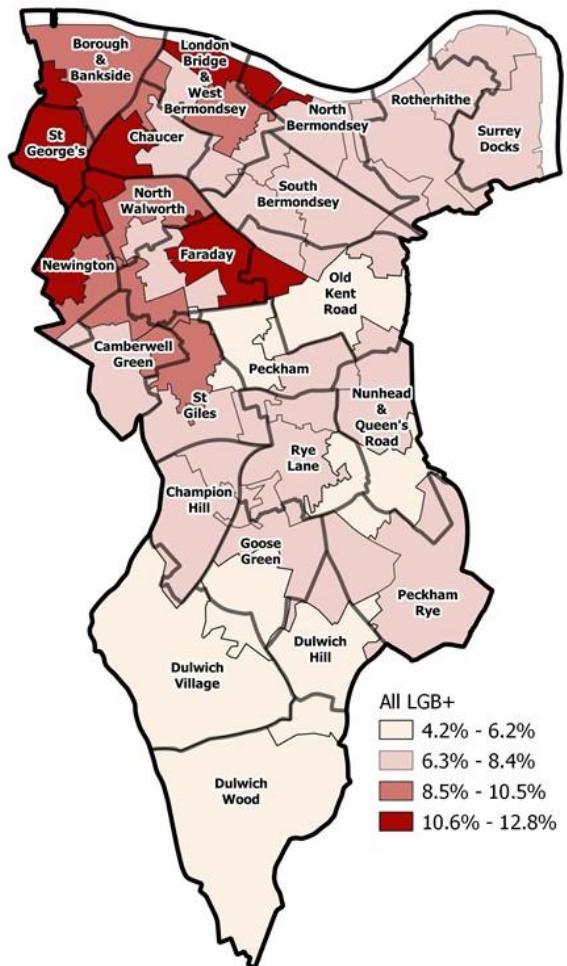
Reference

1. ONS, 2023. Sexual orientation (4 categories) by age and sex, England and Wales: Census 2021.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/datasets/sexualorientation4categoriesbyageandsexenglandandwalescensus2021>

Southwark's Burgess Park area has the largest LGB+ population, equating to over 1 in 8 residents

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: ALL LGB+



ONS census data indicates prevalence of LGB+ identity by large neighbourhood area.

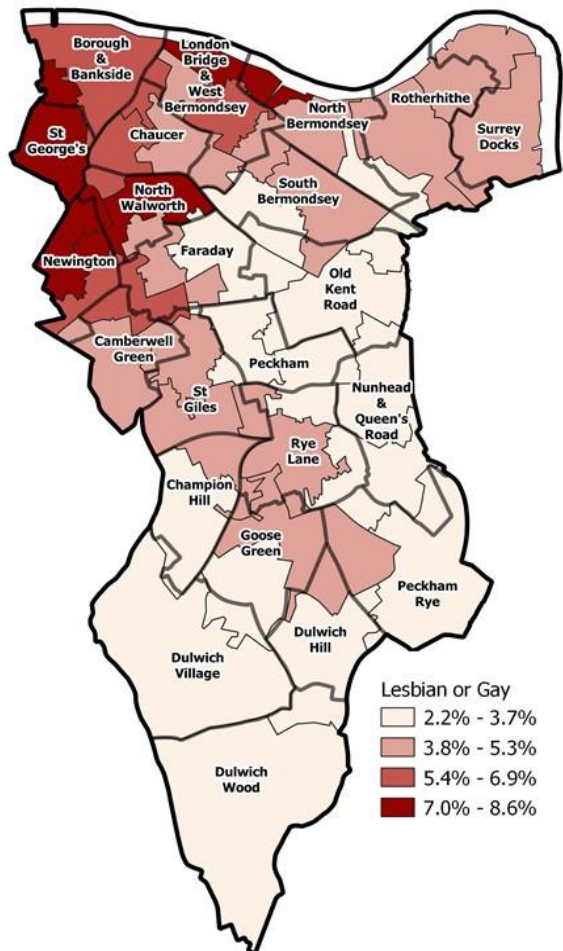
- The highest ranking Southwark neighbourhood was Burgess Park (extending across Faraday and Old Kent Road), where over 1 in 8 (12.8%; about 950) residents reported an LGB+ identity.
- The next highest ranking Southwark MSOAs all had prevalences of more than 1 in 10:
 - Newington, Kennington East & Walworth West MSOA, 12.7%
 - Elephant & Castle MSOA, 11.7%
 - Southwark St George's MSOA, 11.1%
- Southwark's Herne Hill & Dulwich Park areas had the lowest proportion of LGB+ residents, at 4.2% (fewer than 1 in 20).

Reference

1. ONS, 2023. Census 2021: Sexual orientation. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS077/editions/2021/versions/1>

Residents identifying as lesbian or gay were most prevalent in north, north-west and west-central areas

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: LESBIAN OR GAY



Census 2021 data showed:

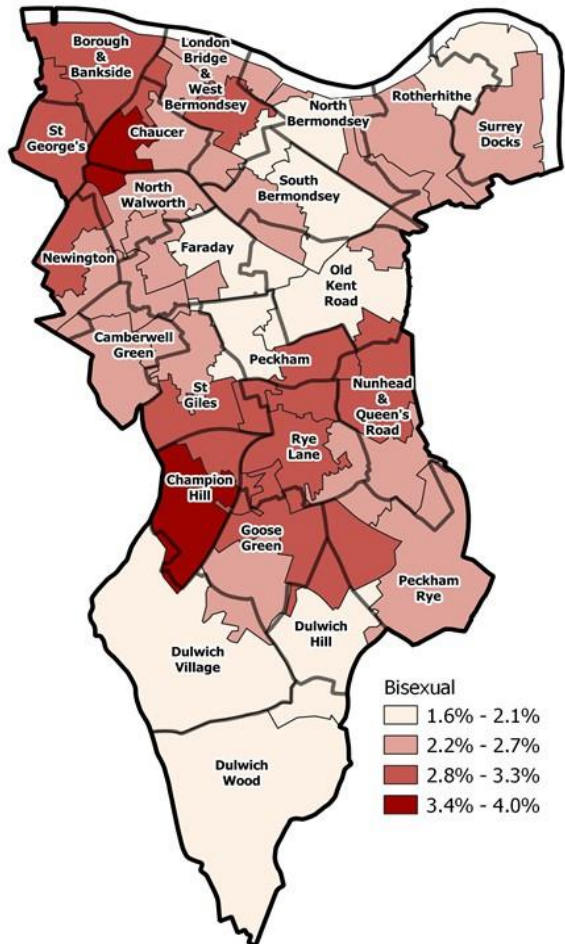
- Residents identifying as lesbian or gay were most prevalent in north, north-west and west-central parts of the borough.
- The highest prevalence was in part of Newington, where more than 1 in 12 (8.6%) of residents identified as lesbian or gay.
- Lowest prevalence was in areas of Old Kent Road and Dulwich Village, where about 1 in 50 (2.2%) identified as lesbian or gay.

Reference

1. ONS, 2023. Census 2021: Sexual orientation. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS077/editions/2021/versions/1>

Bisexual residents were most prevalent in parts of Chaucer and Champion Hill

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: BISEXUAL



Census 2021 data showed:

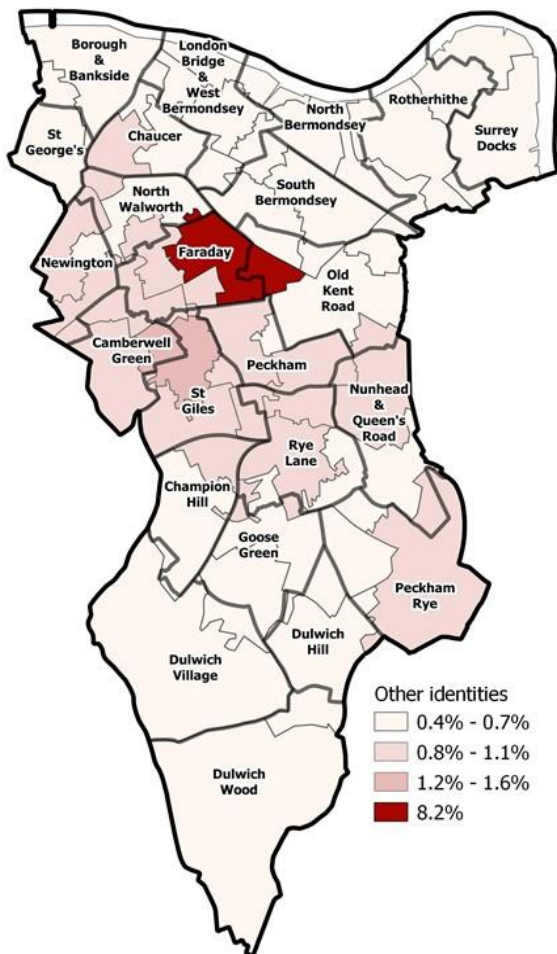
- Neighbourhood areas with high levels of bisexual residents differed from patterns for lesbian and gay residents.
- The highest prevalence of bisexual residents was in areas of Chaucer and Champion Hill, where about 1 in 25 (4.0%) residents identified as bisexual.
- Lowest prevalence is in Burgess Park neighbourhood area, where fewer than 1 in 60 (1.6%) identify as bisexual.

Reference

1. ONS, 2023. Census 2021: Sexual orientation. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS077/editions/2021/versions/1>

Burgess Park area is home to one-quarter of Southwark residents with other non-heterosexual identities

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: OTHER SEXUAL IDENTITIES



Census 2021 data showed:

- Residents with sexual identities other than lesbian, gay or bisexual were not distributed evenly across the borough.
- The Burgess Park neighbourhood area had far higher levels of residents with other non-heterosexual identities: about 1 in 12 (8.2%; about 600) residents. This area was home to almost one-quarter of all Southwark residents with other non-heterosexual identities (i.e. not lesbian, gay or bisexual).
- Elsewhere, prevalence of other non-heterosexual identities ranged from about 1 in 60 (1.6%) in Camberwell Green / St Giles, down to fewer than 1 in 250 (0.4%) in Dulwich Village.

Reference

1. ONS, 2023. Census 2021: Sexual orientation. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS077/editions/2021/versions/1>

Find out more at
southwark.gov.uk/jsna

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