



# Census 2021 - UK Armed Forces Veterans



## Key Headlines

- In 2021, 30,758 Staffordshire residents reported previously serving in the UK armed forces; 4.2% of the local population aged 16+. This proportion is above both the England (3.8%) and West Midlands (3.5%) figure.
- Of these veterans, 77.4% (23,816) had previously served in the regular forces, 18.2% (5,587) in the reserve forces, and 4.4% (1,355) in both the regular and reserve forces.
- In total, 29,025 households in Staffordshire had at least one resident who had previously served in the UK armed forces (7.7% of all households); again, higher than both the England (7.0%) and West Midlands (6.5%) figure.
- Veteran data has not previously been collected so comparisons to the 2011 Census are not possible.
- Alongside future planned Census releases regarding armed forces veterans, this new data will help inform our Staffordshire Armed Forces Covenant and feed into our action plan; allowing us to map concentrations of veterans and help us to target our support services where they are most needed.



## Introduction

Census Day took place on the 21st March 2021, with results providing a detailed snapshot of the population and its characteristics at a point in time. UK Armed Forces Veterans is the latest release in a series of topic-based summaries, which ONS published on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022. This thematic data release provides information on those who have previously served in the armed forces by population and household, for England and Wales, local

authorities and also for smaller output areas known as MSOAs (Middle Layer Super Output Areas)<sup>1</sup>.

## **Staffordshire Armed Forces Covenant**

Staffordshire Armed Forces Covenant, first launched in May 2012 and reaffirmed earlier this year, complements at a local level the National Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the nation, the government and the armed forces.

The aim of the community covenant is to encourage local communities to support the armed forces in their area and promote understanding and awareness of the issues affecting the armed forces community. In Staffordshire there are major armed forces communities at bases in Stafford and Whittington (near Lichfield).

The data from this census release and future veteran related releases will therefore feed into our Action Plan, allowing us to map concentrations, target services, and make progress towards our current priorities:

- Focus on Information, Advice & Guidance
- Encouraging veterans to register with their GP and note their status (perhaps not used to registering when all is provided by the Army)
- Adding specific information for armed forces veterans into the Staffordshire Connect search database
- Providing additional mental health support for veterans
- Building closer working relationships with district and borough councils with higher densities of veterans.

## **Staffordshire Veterans**

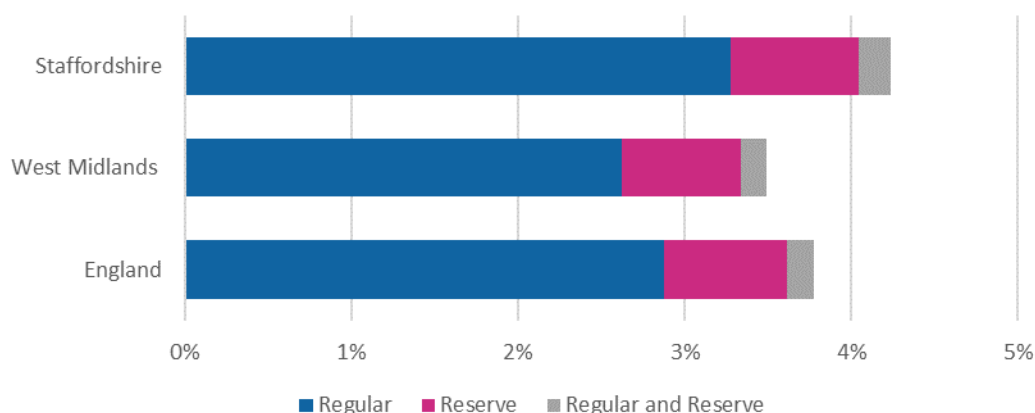
Out of the 726,398 usual residents aged 16+ in Staffordshire in 2021, 30,758 (4.2%) have previously served in the armed forces. This is higher than across England overall, where the total is 3.8%, and above the West Midlands region (3.5%) – see figure 1.

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<sup>1</sup> A Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA) is a geographic area with a typical population of 7,000 to 10,000 people.



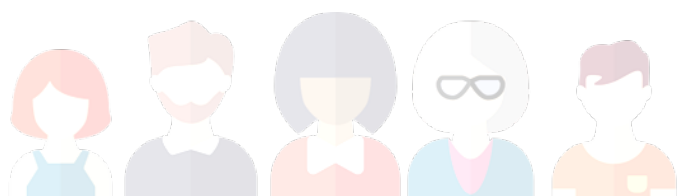
**Figure 1** - Percentage of the population aged 16 years and over who had previously served in the UK armed forces, 2021 – Staffordshire, West Midlands, England



Over three-quarters of UK armed forces veterans residing in Staffordshire had previously served in the regular armed forces only (23,816, 77.4%), while 5,587 (18.2%) had served only in the reserve armed forces. The remaining 1,355 (4.4%) had served in both the regular and the reserve armed forces. The proportion of Staffordshire veterans who had served in the regular forces (77.4%) was higher than across England as a whole (76.3%) and the West Midlands (75.3%).

Across our districts and boroughs, Stafford had the highest percentage of UK armed forces veterans, with 5.3% or over 1 in 20 of the resident population aged 16+, having served. Across our other districts and boroughs, the percentage was still higher than across England and West Midlands, ranging from 3.9% to 4.1% (see figure 2).

Appendix 1 shows the percentages of UK armed forces veterans in Staffordshire mapped at MSOA level. The two areas of Stafford with the highest concentration of veterans are close to the location of Beacon Barracks, one of two large Ministry of Defence (MOD) sites in Staffordshire, suggesting that veterans here may choose to remain in, or return to, a local community with strong armed forces ties. However, rates of armed forces veterans were not noticeably higher around Whittington Barracks in Lichfield, the other large MOD site in Staffordshire. This may be due to the more rural location of this site compared to Beacon Barracks.



**Figure 2** – Number and percentage of the population aged 16 years and over who had previously served in the UK armed forces, 2021 – Staffordshire and Staffordshire local authorities

District/Borough	2021 Population aged 16+	Served in Regular Forces, Reserve Forces or both	% Served in Regular Forces, Reserve Forces or both
Cannock Chase	82,478	3,414	4.1%
East Staffordshire	100,508	3,880	3.9%
Lichfield	88,596	3,607	4.1%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	103,183	4,129	4.0%
South Staffordshire	93,372	3,836	4.1%
Stafford	113,613	6,070	5.3%
Staffordshire Moorlands	80,855	3,323	4.1%
Tamworth	63,791	2,497	3.9%
<b>Staffordshire</b>	<b>726,398</b>	<b>30,758</b>	<b>4.2%</b>

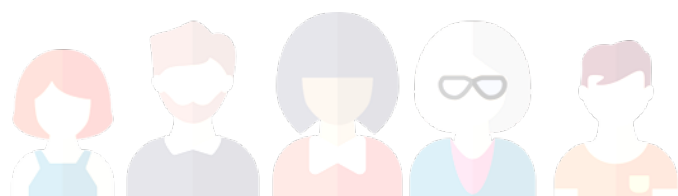
Almost 80% of UK armed forces veterans in Stafford had served in the regular forces – this was higher than across the rest of the county where the average was just under 77%.

## Households

In total, 29,025 households in Staffordshire had at least one resident who had previously served in the UK armed forces - 7.7% of all households. This was above the percentage for England (7.0%) and for the West Midlands (6.5%).

Of these households, the vast majority (27,951, 96.3%) included only one veteran, 1,052 included 2 veterans (3.6%) and the remaining 19 (0.1%) included 3 or more veterans.

Across our districts and boroughs, Stafford had the highest percentage of households with 1 or more veterans, at 9.4%. Percentages in the other districts and boroughs ranged from 7.2% households with 1 or more veteran in East Staffordshire to 7.6% in South Staffordshire (figure 3). The higher rate in Stafford is not surprising given the higher percentage of veterans in the borough.



**Figure 3** – Number and percentage of households including 1 or more UK armed forces veterans, 2021 – Staffordshire and Staffordshire local authorities

District/Borough	2021 Households	Households including 1 or more veterans	% Households including 1 or more veterans
Cannock Chase	43,457	3,258	7.5%
East Staffordshire	51,290	3,678	7.2%
Lichfield	45,631	3,431	7.5%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	53,423	3,935	7.4%
South Staffordshire	46,122	3,498	7.6%
Stafford	60,047	5,649	9.4%
Staffordshire Moorlands	42,355	3,186	7.5%
Tamworth	32,895	2,390	7.3%
<b>Staffordshire</b>	<b>375,223</b>	<b>29,025</b>	<b>7.7%</b>

## Residence

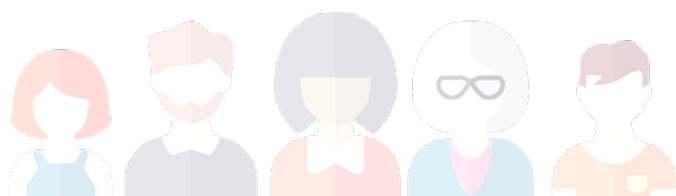
Of the UK armed forces veteran population in Staffordshire, 97.9% (30,109) lived in households and 2.1% (649) lived in communal establishments<sup>2</sup>. The percentage living in communal establishments is slightly higher than across the population as a whole; 98.3% of usual residents in England and Wales lived in households and 1.7% lived in communal establishments.

## Future Releases

ONS is planning to release further reports about the veteran population. Planned publications for 2023 include an overview of the veteran population (including age, sex, ethnic group and country of birth), where the veteran population lives and information on their health and wellbeing.

Further publications about veterans and their employment, financial situation and links with the criminal justice system are planned for 2024.

<sup>2</sup> A communal establishment is an establishment providing managed residential accommodation. "Managed" in this context means providing full or part-time supervision of the accommodation. Communal establishments exclude all sheltered accommodation, serviced apartments, houses rented to students by private landlords, and nurses' accommodation. These are defined as households. Communal establishments would include medical or care establishments, armed forces establishments, detention establishments and staff or worker accommodation.



Further details are available [here](#).



## Useful Links

The ONS Census 2021 data is available to explore and use now, with a number of helpful resources made publicly available.

- Access to the ONS data tables can be found [here](#).
- ONS Local Authority interactive guide is available [here](#).
- The ONS Census 2021 bulletin on UK armed forces veterans can be found [here](#).

For more information contact the Insight Team at:  
[insight.team@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:insight.team@staffordshire.gov.uk).





## Appendix 1 – Location and Concentration of UK armed forces veterans, Staffordshire 2021

This map shows the percentages of UK armed forces veterans in Staffordshire mapped at MSOA level.

