



Health and Disability

This section features data taken from NHS Somerset, the Department of Health and the 2011 Census (Office for National Statistics).

Key facts for Somerset:

- In the 2011 Census, more than four in five Somerset residents considered themselves to be in good or very good health, while 5.1% (27,000 people) described their health as bad or very bad, in line with the regional average and slightly below the England and Wales mark of 5.6%.
- Just under 100,000 people in Somerset (18.8% of the population) said they had a long-term condition or disability which limited their day-to-day activities a lot or a little.
- Almost 41,000 of them were aged 16-64 (12.7% of that age group in Somerset). The proportion is on a par with both regional and national averages.
- Almost 1 in 3 people in Minehead North ward said their activities were limited in this way and the same ward had the fewest percentage of residents in very good health (35%) in Somerset.
- Wards with the healthiest residents tended to be those with high concentrations of armed forces (such as Yeovilton) and major new housing developments (such as Taunton's Nerrols Farm and Yeovil's Houndstone).
- 13,317 working-age residents (3.5% of those aged 16-74) described themselves as economically inactive because of long-term sickness or disability. Proportions were much higher in parts of Highbridge, Taunton and central Glastonbury.
- There are nearly 9,000 households (3.9% of all households in Somerset) containing at least one adult with a long-term disability or health condition and dependent children.
- At 14.7 per 1000 usual residents, Taunton Deane had one of the highest proportions in the whole country of people living in a medical or care communal establishment. Taunton Deane was unlike most other local authorities in that most of those living in a medical or care establishment were in a private care home with nursing.
- The ageing population has particular implications for services in Somerset. Projected estimates, based solely on demographic change, suggest that the number of those over 65 years with limiting long-term illness will increase by almost 9% by 2015. There are increases predicted for diabetes, obesity, heart attacks, stroke and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) as well as conditions such as falls, dementia, depression, visual and auditory impairments.
- Some predicted increases are very large, particularly for the numbers with dementia and heart failure. However, it must be noted that smaller increases in conditions that are more common (for example, hypertension) can have a bigger impact on the burden of disease.

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- Disability-Free Life Expectancy (DFLE), the estimated lifetime free from a limiting persistent illness or disability, for males and females, is almost always higher than the national figure, at birth and at age 65. The single exception is for males at birth in 2006-08. However, there was a significant improvement in DFLE for males at birth between 2006-08 and 2009-11.
- People in the least deprived 20% areas in England are estimated to live disability-free fourteen years longer than those in the most deprived 20%. In Somerset, around 38,000 people live in the most deprived 20% of local areas. For more details, please go to the [ONS website](#).
- There is a disability employment rate 'gap' in Somerset of 27.1 percentage points. This is the difference between employment rates of non-disabled (83.2%) and disabled people (56.0%). Nationally, the disability employment rate gap is higher, at 32.2 percentage points. In terms of the characteristics of Somerset's disabled population: 25% live in social housing; 11% have no qualifications; 35% have mental health problems; and 41% don't have a partner (source: [DWP/DoH](#))