

Household Composition

August 2023

Key Points

- The 2021 Census revealed there were 139,576 households living in Shropshire in March 2021, occupied by 316,277 residents ⁽¹⁾. The 2021 Census identified 294 communal establishments ⁽²⁾ in Shropshire, occupied by 7,329 residents ⁽³⁾. Care homes with and without nursing care represented the largest proportion of communal establishments (114 or 38.8%).
- The 2021 Census ⁽⁴⁾ revealed that 91,505 households in Shropshire live in single family households, representing 65.6% of all households. This compares with 63% nationally and 63.8% in the West Midlands region. In terms of the total population living in households, 77.5% live in single family households (74.6% nationally, 75.5% regionally.) Single family households include married, civil partnership, co-habiting couple, or lone parent family types.
- Single person households represent 29.7% of all households in Shropshire, compared to 30.1% nationally and 29.9% in the West Midlands. The number of single person households has risen by 10.4% (3,888 households) since 2011⁽⁵⁾ and 27.2% (8,850 households) since 2001⁽⁶⁾. Single person households, as a proportion of total households has risen from 27.8% in 2001 and 28.9% in 2011.
- The 2021 Census classifies households that don't fall into the category of single person or single family, as 'other.' In Shropshire, 4.8% (6,643) of households were classified as 'other', lower than both England (6.9%) and the West Midlands (6.3%). This contrast mainly reflects the lower proportion of young people / students living in Shropshire.
- The 2021 Census identifies older households (all aged 66 years and over), who live alone, in a single-family household and other household types. In total this shows there were 40,636 older households containing people aged 66 years and over in March 2021, 29.1% of all households in Shropshire. This is significantly higher than England (22.2%) and the West Midlands (22.7%).
- The number of older people living alone is expected to grow significantly as Shropshire's population ages. In March 2021, there were 21,475 single person households in Shropshire with people aged 66 years and over (15.4% of all households), compared with only 12.8% nationally.
- In Shropshire, 80 households contained occupants all in full-time education (0.06% of all households), compared with 1.64% nationally and 0.37% in the West Midlands. In 2011, there were 49 households containing occupants all in full-time education (a rise of 63.3%) and in 2001, only 25 student households (a rise of 220%).



Household Composition

The 2021 Census supplies invaluable information about population and the type of household they live in. When considered besides information on accommodation type, tenure, occupancy, health and disability and age / gender, it provides clear insight into the current and future housing needs of Shropshire residents. In particular, local authorities must consider the housing needs of older people and people living with long-term health conditions or disabilities, people unable to afford suitable housing, families, and other community groups.

Table 1: National and regional comparison: Types of households

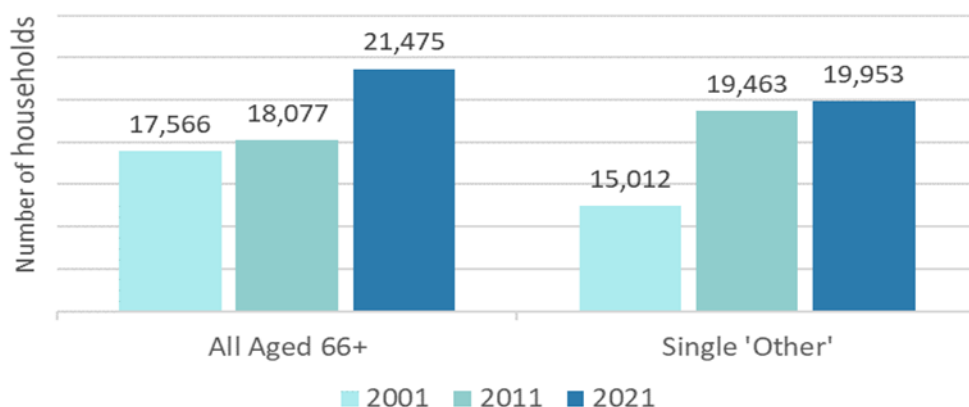
	All Households	Single person households	Couple households with no children	Couple families with children	Lone parent families	Other family type	Other household types
Shropshire							
Number	139,576	41,428	46,087	33,190	11,675	553	6,643
%	100.0	29.7	32.6	23.8	8.4	0.4	4.8
England							
Number	23,436,086	7,052,229	6,072,449	5,911,602	2,594,901	183,971	1,620,934
%	100.0	30.1	27.2	25.2	11.1	0.8	6.9
West Midlands							
Number	2,429,493	725,807	617,481	627,568	287,205	17,610	153,822
%	100.0	29.9	26.1	25.8	11.8	0.7	6.3

Please note: Couple households include married / civil partnership couples and co-habiting couples. Families with children include dependent and non-dependent children. Full definitions of each household type are included at the end of this bulletin.

Single Person Households

Table 1 reveals the broad breakdown of households by household composition in Shropshire compared with national and regional breakdowns. It shows that in March 2021, there were 41,428 single person households in Shropshire, representing 29.7% of all households. Of all single person households, 51.8% (21,475) were aged 66 years and over and 48.2% (19,953) were classified as 'other' (aged 65 years and below.) This contrasts with England (42.6% aged over 66 years, 57.4% other) and the West Midlands (43.8% aged over 66 years, 56.2% other.)

Figure 1: Change in types of single person households in Shropshire.



Please note: Figure 1 is an indication of change as the 2001 Census uses the classification 'pensioner households' (60+ female, 65+ male). The 2011 Census uses the classification '65 years and over' and the 2021 Census uses the classification '66 years and over.'



Of all the single person households in Shropshire, 56.3% were occupied by females and 43.7% were occupied by males. This split contrasts significantly when examining older single person households, where 66.9% are female and 33.1% male. This reflects longer life expectancy in females compared to males, Shropshire's older age structure and bereavement / separation in older households, leaving more women than men living alone. In terms of 'other' households (65 years and below), 44.9% were male single person households and 55.1% were female.

Older Single Person Households

Although most older people living alone are fine, leading active and independent lives, this population group are at higher risk of experiencing the symptoms of depression, stress, loneliness and isolation, higher risks of falling or accidental injury and people living with health conditions and disabilities are less supported. The 2021 Census provides insight into this population group so that local authorities can design / shape services to best support / help vulnerable people living alone.

The Census showed that 51.4% of older people living alone (11,037), occupied homes with three bedrooms or more, meaning over half of older single occupiers are managing the financial and physical demands of maintaining larger homes. As people age and health conditions become more prevalent maintaining homes and living independently becomes more challenging and a range of suitable housing options will be needed (i.e., adaptations, specialist housing, smaller / different types of home), as well as home care options.

The Census supplies information on single person households living with a long-term health condition or disability (see Table 2.) Of note is that 47% of older people living alone (10,118) had a long-term health condition or disability in March 2021, and 38.5% of older people living alone were disabled under the Equality Act.

Table 2: Older single person households in Shropshire by size of home and disability

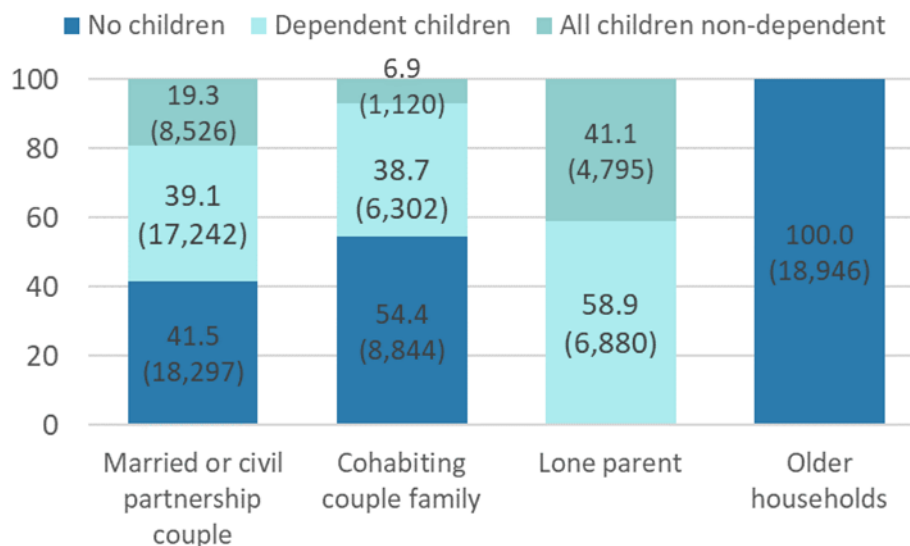
	One-person household: Aged 66 years and over	1-2 bedroom		3 bedrooms and over	
		Number	% of all households	Number	% of all households
All Households	21,474	10,437	48.6	11,037	51.4
1 person disabled under the Equality Act in household:	8,276	4,457	53.9	3,819	46.1
• whose day-to-day activities are limited a lot in household	3,692	2,075	56.2	1,617	43.8
• whose day-to-day activities are limited a little in household	4,584	2,382	52.0	2,202	48.0
1 person with a non-limiting long-term physical or mental health condition in household	1,842	833	45.2	1,010	54.8
Household is deprived in the health and disability dimension	8,484	4,588	54.1	3,896	45.9
All people in household have a long-term health condition or disability	10,118	5,290	52.3	4,828	47.7



Single family household

Single family households encompass people living together in married / civil partnership / cohabiting / lone parent or older family households (66+ years), with and without children. These single-family households represent 65.6% of all households in Shropshire (91,505 households). Since 2001, the number of single-family households has risen by 15.3% and since 2011, has risen by 7.1%. As a proportion of all households, little has changed since in 2001 (67.6%) and 65.9% in 2011.

Figure 2: Percentage breakdown of single-family types (with and without children)

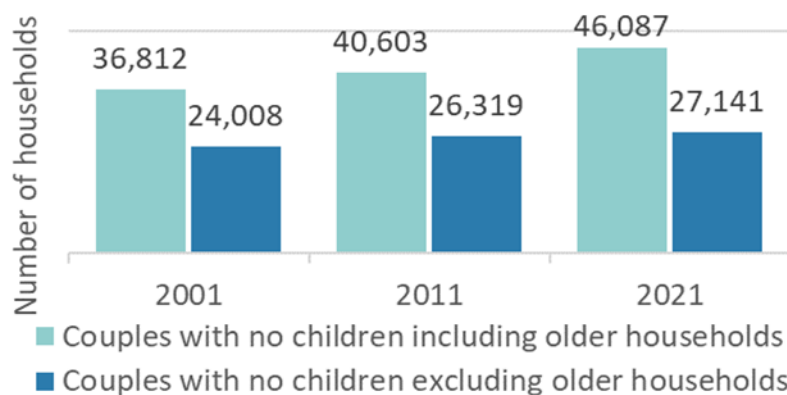


All couple households with no children

Couple households with no children were approaching a third of all households in Shropshire in March 2021, significantly above England (27.2%) and the West Midlands (26.1%). The Census revealed that 57.2% of couple households with no children were opposite sex couples, 1.7% same sex couples and 41.1% aged 66 years and over.

Since 2001 the number of couples with no children has continued to grow by a quarter if including older couples and 13% if excluding older couples. This reflects Shropshire's ageing population, where children have grown and left home, as well as couple's personal choices and circumstances.

Figure 3: Long-term change in couple households with no children in Shropshire



Couples with no children:

Long-term change 2001-2021

Including older people – 25.2%
Excluding older people – 13.0%

Change 2011-2021

Including older people – 13.5%
Excluding older people – 3.1%

In terms of marital status, 39.3% of couples with no children were married (including 66+ years), 0.4% were living in a civil partnership and 19.2% were living as cohabiting couple households.



Co-habiting couple households

The 2021 Census (Table 3) revealed there were 16,266 co-habiting couple households with and without children (excluding older households 66+), representing 11.7% of all households in Shropshire. This compares with 11.6% nationally and 11.2% in the West Midlands. The number of co-habiting couple households has continued to rise since 2001 (4,099 households) to 12,974 households in 2011, a rise of 296.8% since 2001. It should be noted that the Civil Partnership legislation passed in 2004 and the first same-sex marriage ceremonies started in 2014. These have impacted on Census classifications for household composition.

Of all couple households in Shropshire, 38.7% contained dependent children, 6.9% all non-dependent children and 54.4% no children (comparable with England.) The West Midlands had a slightly higher percentage of couple households with dependent children (42.5%) and a lower percentage of households without children (50.6%.) At Shropshire, the West Midlands and national level the percentage of couple households with non-dependent children has risen slightly since 2011. This may be influenced by young people being unable to afford their own accommodation due to the rising costs of housing and other living expenses.

Table 3: Married or civil partnership households in Shropshire

	Shropshire	England	West Midlands
Cohabiting couple family	16,266	2,708,979	272,420
<i>% Cohabiting couple family</i>	<i>11.7</i>	<i>11.6</i>	<i>11.2</i>
With no children	8,844	1,486,961	137,757
<i>% With no children</i>	<i>6.3</i>	<i>6.3</i>	<i>5.7</i>
With dependent children	6,302	1,053,001	115,766
<i>% with dependent children</i>	<i>4.5</i>	<i>4.5</i>	<i>4.8</i>
All children non-dependent	1,120	169,017	18,897
<i>% of all children non-dependent</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>0.7</i>	<i>0.8</i>

Please note this excludes households where all are aged 66 years and over.

Married couple households.

Table 4 shows 31.6% of all households (44,065) in Shropshire were occupied by couples who were married or in a civil partnership in March 2021. This is slightly above England (30.4%) and the West Midlands (30.5%). In 2001, married couple households represented 41.1% of all households in Shropshire (47,053), but by 2011 this had fallen to 36.3% of all households (48,237). This decline indicates that for some couple's cohabiting has been a more preferable option than marriage.

Table 4: Married or civil partnership households in Shropshire

	Shropshire	England	West Midlands
Married or civil partnership couple	44,065	7,129,794	741,413
<i>% Married or civil partnership couple</i>	<i>31.6</i>	<i>30.4</i>	<i>30.5</i>
With no children	18,297	2,440,210	248,508
<i>% With no children</i>	<i>13.1</i>	<i>10.4</i>	<i>10.2</i>
With dependent children	17,242	3,375,402	345,254
<i>% with dependent children</i>	<i>12.4</i>	<i>14.4</i>	<i>14.2</i>
All children non-dependent	8,526	1,314,182	147,651
<i>% of all children non-dependent</i>	<i>6.1</i>	<i>5.6</i>	<i>6.1</i>

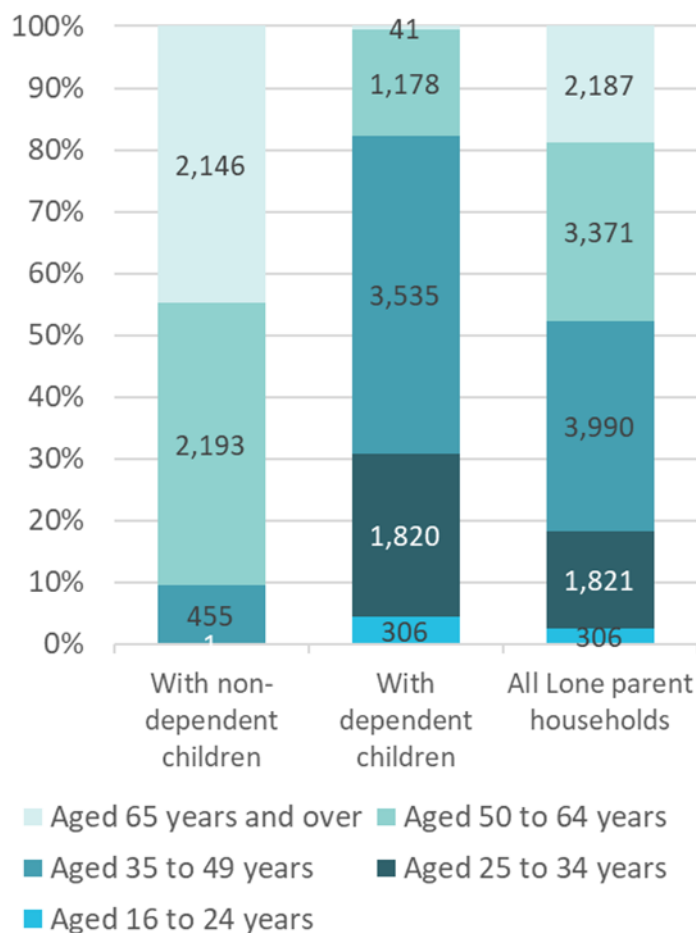
Please note this excludes households where all are aged 66 years and over.



Lone Parent Households

The 2021 Census showed there were 11,675 lone parent households (8.4%) in Shropshire, 58.9% with dependent children and 41.4% with non-dependent children. Nationally and in the West Midlands, lone parent households represented a higher proportion of households, 11.1% and 11.8% respectively. There were 3,671 lone parents with one dependent child, 3,209 lone parents with two or more dependent children and 4,759 lone parents with non-dependent children in Shropshire.

Figure 4: Lone parent households by the age of the household reference person in Shropshire



The 2021 Census revealed there were 306 lone parent households where the parent was aged 16-24 years, representing 2.6% of all lone parent households in Shropshire.

At the other end of the age spectrum, there were 2,187 lone parent households where the household reference person was aged 65 years and over. 41 of these households included dependent children and 2,146 included non-dependent children.

This may reflect grown children caring for an older parents or non-dependent children unable to afford to leave home.

The highest percentage of lone parent households (34.2%) had a household reference person aged 35 to 49 years old.

Other Households

Households that don't fall into the single person or single-family household type are defined as 'other types' in the 2021 Census (Table 5.) In Shropshire, all other household types accounted for 4.8% of all households, a significantly lower percentage than England (6.9%) and the West Midlands (6.3%). The main reason for this is the significantly higher proportion of households in full-time education nationally and regionally, compared to Shropshire.

Since the 2001 Census the more detailed classification of other types of households has varied, however overall, in 2001 these households represented 4.6% of all households in Shropshire and in 2011, 5.2%. Long-term change (2001-2021) showed a rise of 1,255 households (23.3%), but since 2011, the number of households fell by -49 households (-0.7%).



Table 5: Other types of households: Shropshire comparison with England and the West Midlands

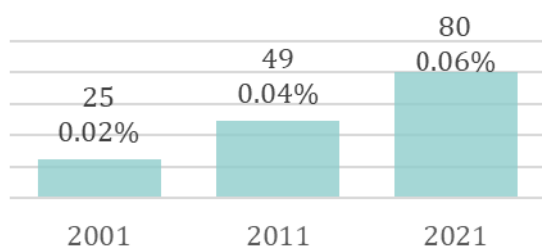
Other household types	Shropshire		England		West Midlands	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
All aged 66 years and over	215	3.2	61,006	0.9	2,348	1.5
All in full-time education	80	1.2	383,617	5.8	9,022	5.9
Other family composition	3,503	52.7	2,853,461	43.4	69,740	45.3
With one dependent child	1,469	22.1	1,318,063	20.1	33,294	21.6
With two or more dependent children	1,376	20.7	1,956,014	29.8	39,418	25.6
Total	6,643	100.0	6,572,161	100.0	153,822	100.0

Student households

The higher education offer in Shropshire has increased since 2001, specifically with the establishment of the Chester University campus in Shrewsbury (University Centre Shrewsbury) in 2014/2015. However, many factors such as already resident students, Brexit, the COVID pandemic, costs associated with higher education and the offer elsewhere have not led to the original forecast rise in student numbers in Shropshire.

The presence of Halls of Residence has also led to lower levels of demand for private rented accommodation for students than expected. As a result, the number of students households has risen from 25 in 2001, to only 80 in 2021 (Figure 4.) In March 2021, 394 students (aged 18-29 years) were living in all student households and 80 people were living in University accommodation.

Figure 4: Long-term change in student households in Shropshire



Long-term change 2001-2021

Students all in full-time education – 220.0%

Change 2011-2021

Students all in full-time education – 63.3%

Other family composition

With more non-dependent children still living with parents and a rising older population, multi-generational households are more prevalent. This may be because older family members can help with childcare or require support due to health conditions / disabilities or it may be a way to reduce living costs. The 2021 Census revealed there were 2,845 other households with dependent children (2% of all households in Shropshire) and 3,503 other family households in Shropshire (2.5% of all households in Shropshire.) Interestingly other types of older households have fallen by -56.4% since 2001, compared to -60% nationally and -63.2% regionally.



Figure 5: Other types of households in Shropshire as a percentage of total households: long-term change 2001-2021

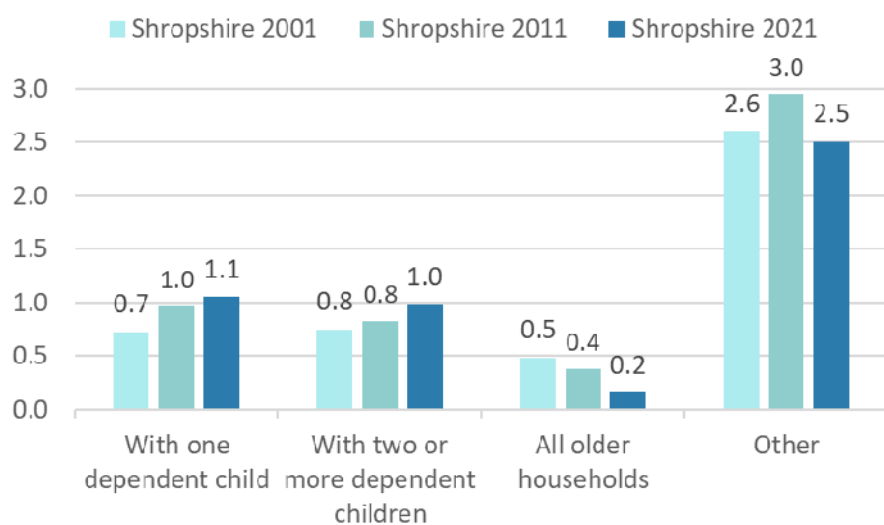


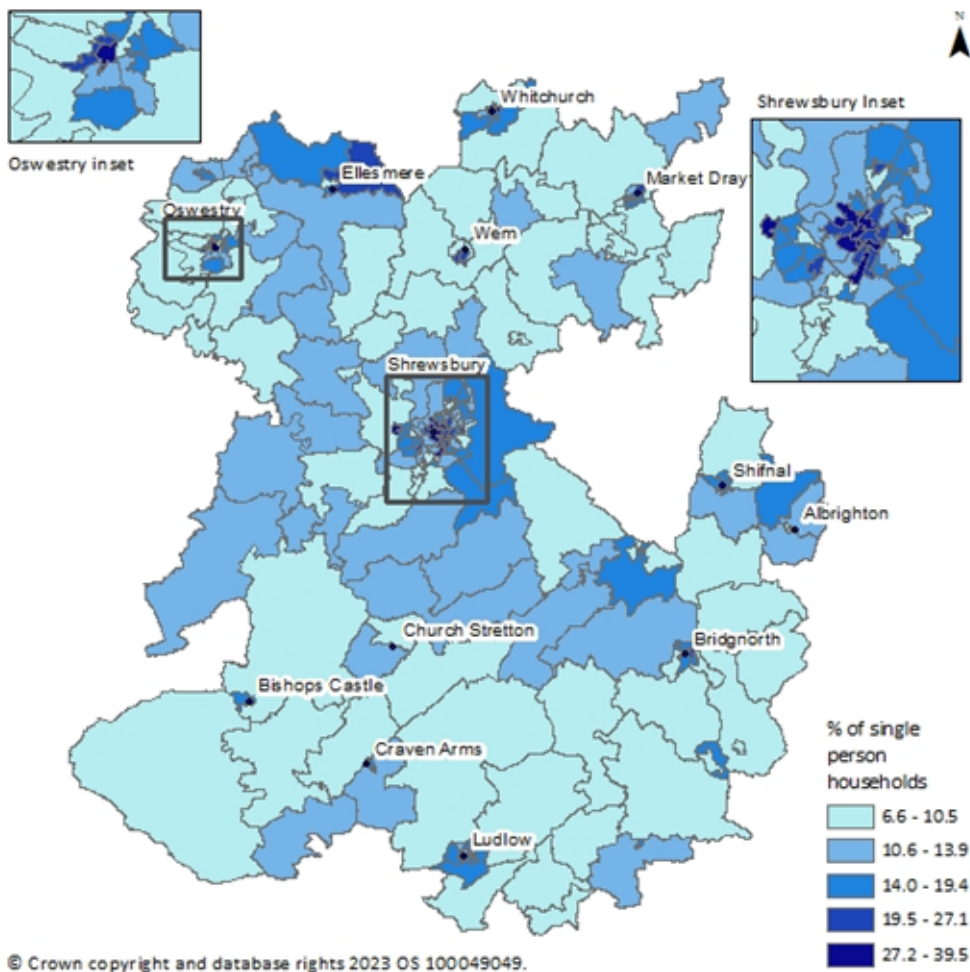
Table 6: Percentage change in other household types

	% Change	
	2001-2021	2011-2021
With 1 dependent child	72.6	17.4
With 2+ dependent children	56.4	29.1
All student	220.0	63.3
All pensioner	-62.3	-56.4
Other	14.4	-8.6
Total: Other	23.3	-0.7

Sub-county analysis

Maps 1-5 show the proportion of household accommodation by type at a sub-county level, by lower layer super output area (LSOA) ⁽⁷⁾.





Map 1: Percentage of all single person households in Shropshire by LSOA

Map 1 shows the LSOAs with the highest percentage of single person households were in the densely built centres of Shrewsbury, Oswestry, and Ludlow. These LSOAs also contained the highest percentage of households living in flats, apartments, and maisonettes.

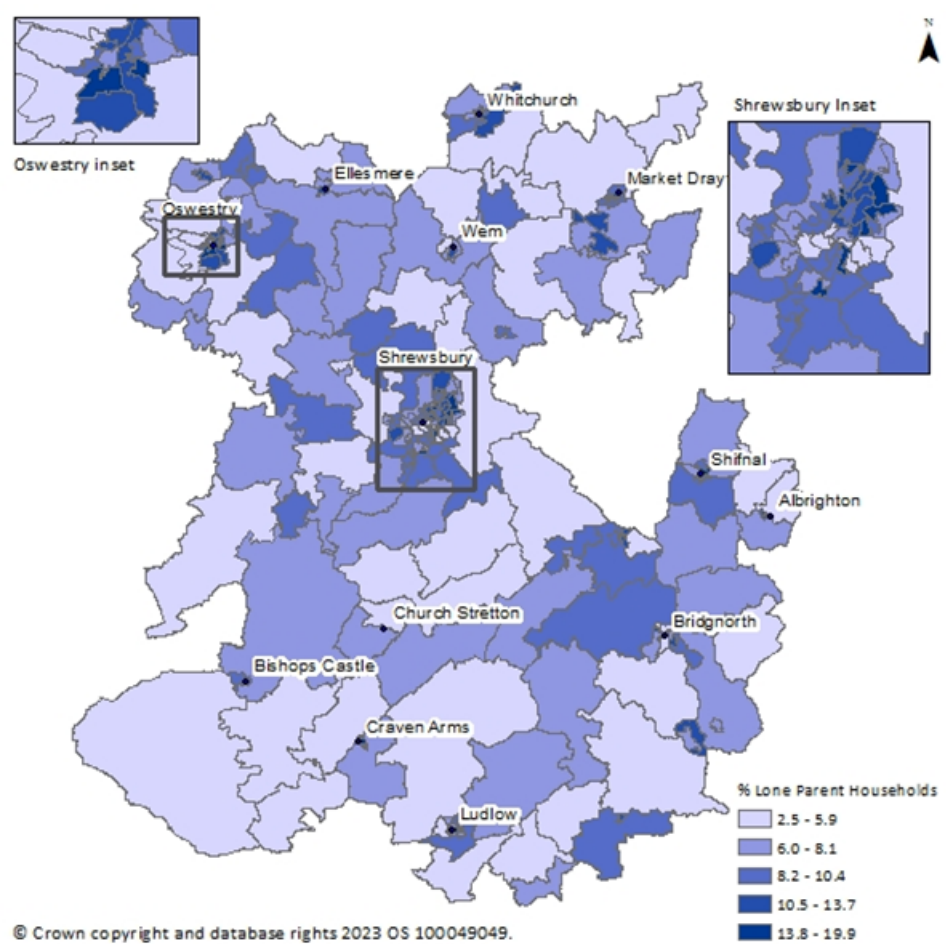
LSOA E01035064 (Abbey electoral division) has the highest percentage of single person households (64.5%). This LSOA has seen much new development in the last 10 years.

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Map 2: Percentage of all lone parent households in Shropshire by LSOA

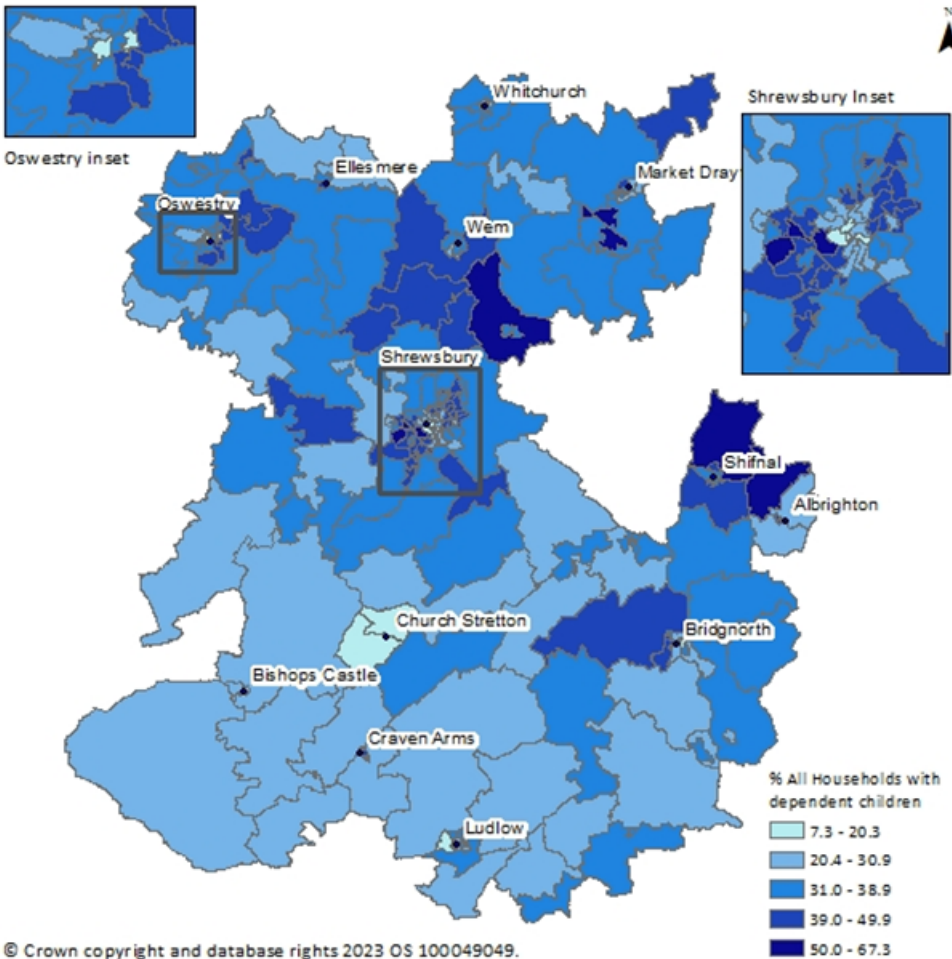
Map 2 highlights LSOAs with the highest percentage of lone parent households. These LSOAs are in the more densely populated market towns of Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Gobowen, Craven Arms and Ludlow.

LSOA E01028962 (19.9%) in south Shrewsbury had the highest percentage, closely followed by LSOA E01028905 (19.2%) in east Oswestry and LSOA E01028905 (19.1%) in the north of Shrewsbury.



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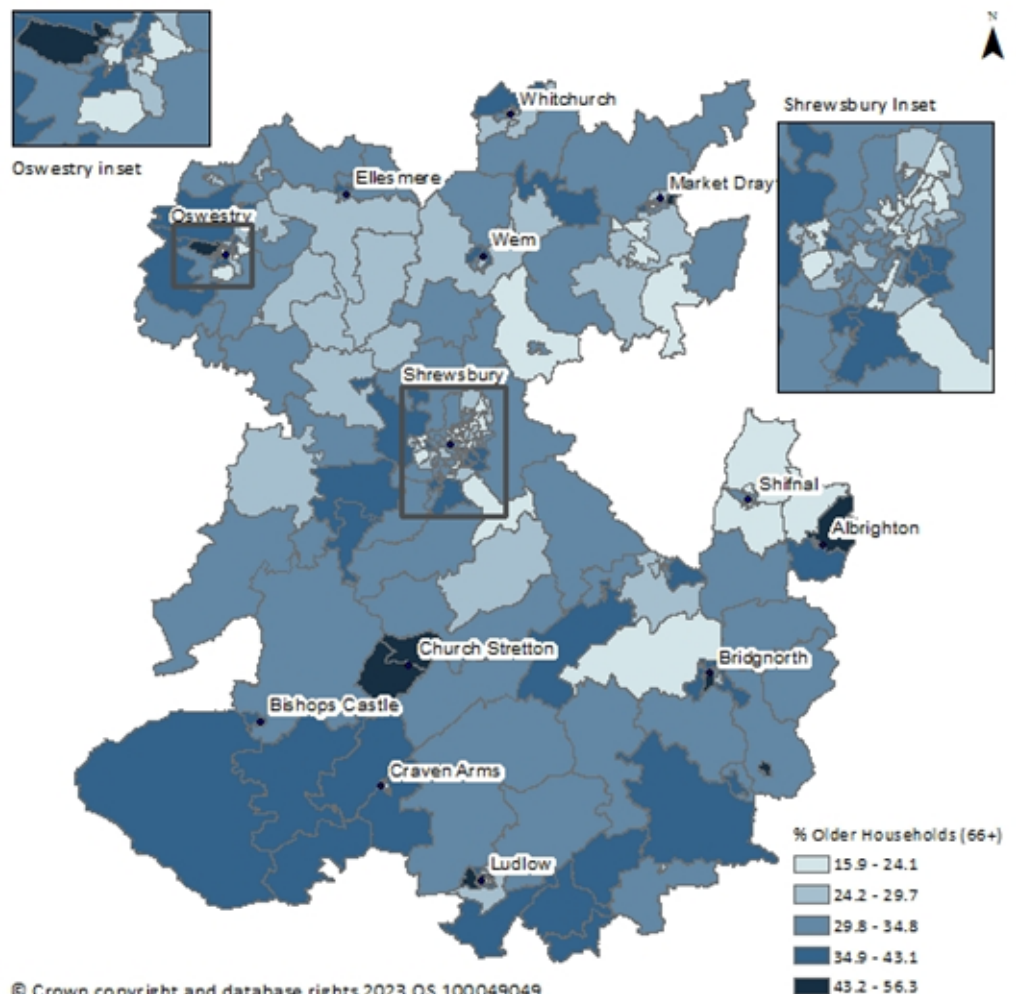
Map 3: Percentage of all households with dependent children in Shropshire by LSOA

There were seven LSOAs in Shropshire, where in excess of 50% of households contained dependent children. These areas are all adjoining current and former armed force's locations in Shropshire or areas of significant development. The rural LSOA E01028844, (including Tong Norton) has the highest proportion of 67.3% with the adjoining LSOA E01035069 (including Sherrifhales) having 60%. These adjoin RAF Cosford. Similarly, the rural LSOA surrounding RAF Shawbury (56.2%), the LSOA (60%) surrounding RAF Ternhill / Clive Barracks. Three LSOAs covering Port Hill (58.0%), Copthorne (51.9%) and Bowbrook (62.5%) in Shrewsbury.

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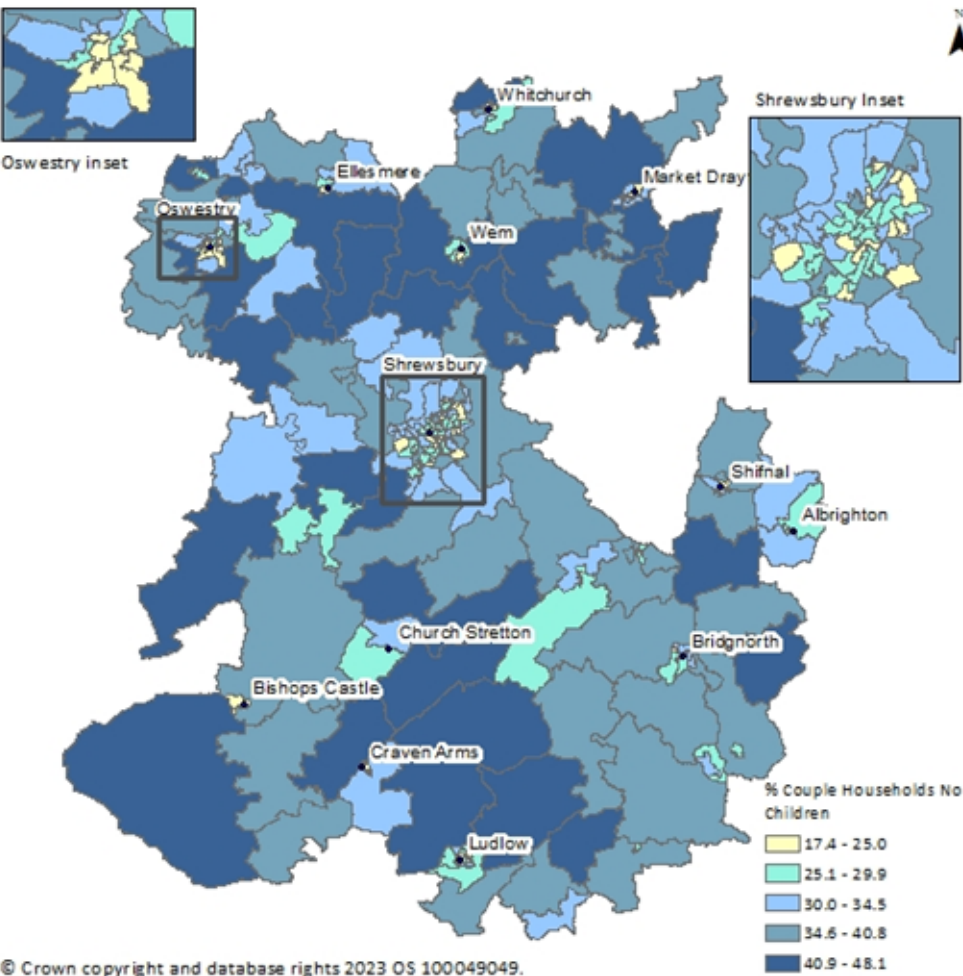
Map 4: Percentage of all older households (66 years plus) in Shropshire by LSOA

Map 4 shows the LSOAs with the highest percentage of older households (66 years and over). There were two LSOAs where over 50% of households were older households, E01033527 (56.3%) in west Ludlow and E01028997 (51.8%) in Church Stretton.



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Map 5: Percentage of couple households with no children (married, civil partnership and co-habiting) in Shropshire by LSOA

There were 12 LSOAs, where in excess of 45% of households were couples (co-habiting, married or in a civil partnership) who had no children. The highest percentage (48.1%) was in LSOA E01028869 located in Cheswardine electoral division in north-east Shropshire.

These LSOAs were predominantly in rural areas, across the north of Shropshire and in the south-west of Shropshire.



Definitions

Household composition (22 categories)

Definition: Households according to the relationships between members.

One-family households are classified by: - the number of dependent children - family type (married, civil partnership or cohabiting couple family, or lone parent family)

Other households are classified by: - the number of people - the number of dependent children - whether the household consists only of students or only of people aged 66 and over.

Quality information: Data about household relationships might not always look consistent with legal partnership status. This is because of complexity of living arrangements and the way people interpreted these questions. Take care when using these two variables together.

Comparability with 2011: Broadly comparable. This is derived from the legal partnership status derived variable. We have made changes to reflect that people can now marry someone of the same-sex and people of the opposite-sex can be in a civil partnership.

- Total: All households
- One-person household
- One-person household: Aged 66 years and over
- One-person household: Other
- Single family household
- Single family household: All aged 66 years and over
- Single family household: Married or civil partnership couple
- Single family household: Married or civil partnership couple: No children
- Single family household: Married or civil partnership couple: Dependent children
- Single family household: Married or civil partnership couple: All children non-dependent
- Single family household: Cohabiting couple family
- Single family household: Cohabiting couple family: No children
- Single family household: Cohabiting couple family: With dependent children
- Single family household: Cohabiting couple family: All children non-dependent
- Single family household: Lone parent family
- Single family household: Lone parent family: With dependent children
- Single family household: Lone parent family: All children non-dependent
- Single family household: Other single-family household
- Single family household: Other single-family household: Other family composition
- Other household types
- Other household types: With dependent children
- Other household types: Other, including all full-time students and all aged 66 years and over



The data in this bulletin is sourced from the:

1. [TS001 - Number of usual residents in households and communal establishments](#)
2. [TS048 - Communal establishment management and type](#)
3. [TS047 - Communal establishment residents by age and sex](#)
4. [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\) 2021 Census table TS003 – Household Composition](#)
5. [ONS 2011 Census QS113EW – Household composition – Households](#)
6. [2001 Census Univariate Table UV065 – Household Composition \(households\)](#)
7. [ONS Geography Portal Lower Layer Super Output Areas \(LSOAs\)](#)

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

Or refer to ONS website to useful articles:

- [Household and resident characteristics: Census 2021](#)

