

Census 2021

Armed Forces Topic Report



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council



Caru Love
Ceredigion



HEADLINE RESULTS

4.1%

(2,525 people)

of usual residents aged 16 and over have previously served in the **UK armed forces**



5.4%

(140 people)

have previously served in both the **regular and reserve UK armed forces**

78.3%

(1,850 people)

have previously served in the **UK regular armed forces**



21.3%

(540 people)

have previously served in the **UK reserve armed forces**

Aberporth & Y Ferwig *Electoral Ward*

had the **highest percentage** of population that have previously served in the UK armed forces.

(6.7% / 190 people)



Cardigan & Aberporth MSOA

had the **highest percentage** of population that have previously served in the UK armed forces.

(5.1% / 440 people)



2,380

households in Ceredigion have **at least one person** who had previously served in the UK armed forces



2,260

(95.3%)

households had **one veteran** only



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1.0 Background

Information about the armed forces community has not previously been collected in the census, except in relation to the occupation of those currently serving. Since the 2011 census, the need for information on those who have previously served in the UK armed forces and their dependents has grown.

The 2021 Census in England and Wales, which took place on the 21st of March 2021, was the first to ask people if they had previously served in the UK armed forces. People aged 16 years and over were asked if they had previously served in the regular or reserve UK armed forces, or both. People currently serving in the UK armed forces and those who had never served were both advised to tick “no”.

The census data significantly improves our understanding of the armed forces community. Understanding where armed forces veterans reside is important as it enables the local authority and local community to support people who used to serve in the UK armed forces. This information will be used by the local authority to carry out commitments made under the Armed Forces Covenant. This is a promise by the nation to ensure those who serve or have served in the UK Armed forces, and their families, are not disadvantaged because of this service.

This topic paper provides information on the UK armed forces veteran community from the 2021 Census, by population and household, for Wales, Ceredigion and for smaller geographical areas, such as, Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs) and Electoral Wards.

This topic paper looks at three different population groups that have previously served in the UK armed forces (veterans):

- those who have served in the UK regular armed forces,
- those who have served in the UK reserve armed forces and
- those who’ve served in both the regular and reserve UK armed forces.

The veteran population refers to usual residents aged 16 years and older who have previously served for a minimum of one day in the UK armed forces. The non-veteran population refers to usual residents aged 16 years and over who have not previously served, or those who are still currently serving, in the UK armed forces.

2.0 Findings

2.1 Wales

On the 21st of March 2021, 4.5% of Wales’s population reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces, equivalent to 115,000 residents aged 16 years or older. This is almost 1 in 22 people aged 16 years and over in Wales. As reflected in Figure 1 overleaf, the percentage of UK armed forces veterans was higher in Wales compared to England (3.8%, 1.7 million).

Figure 1: Percentage of the population aged 16 years or over that previously served in the UK armed forces.

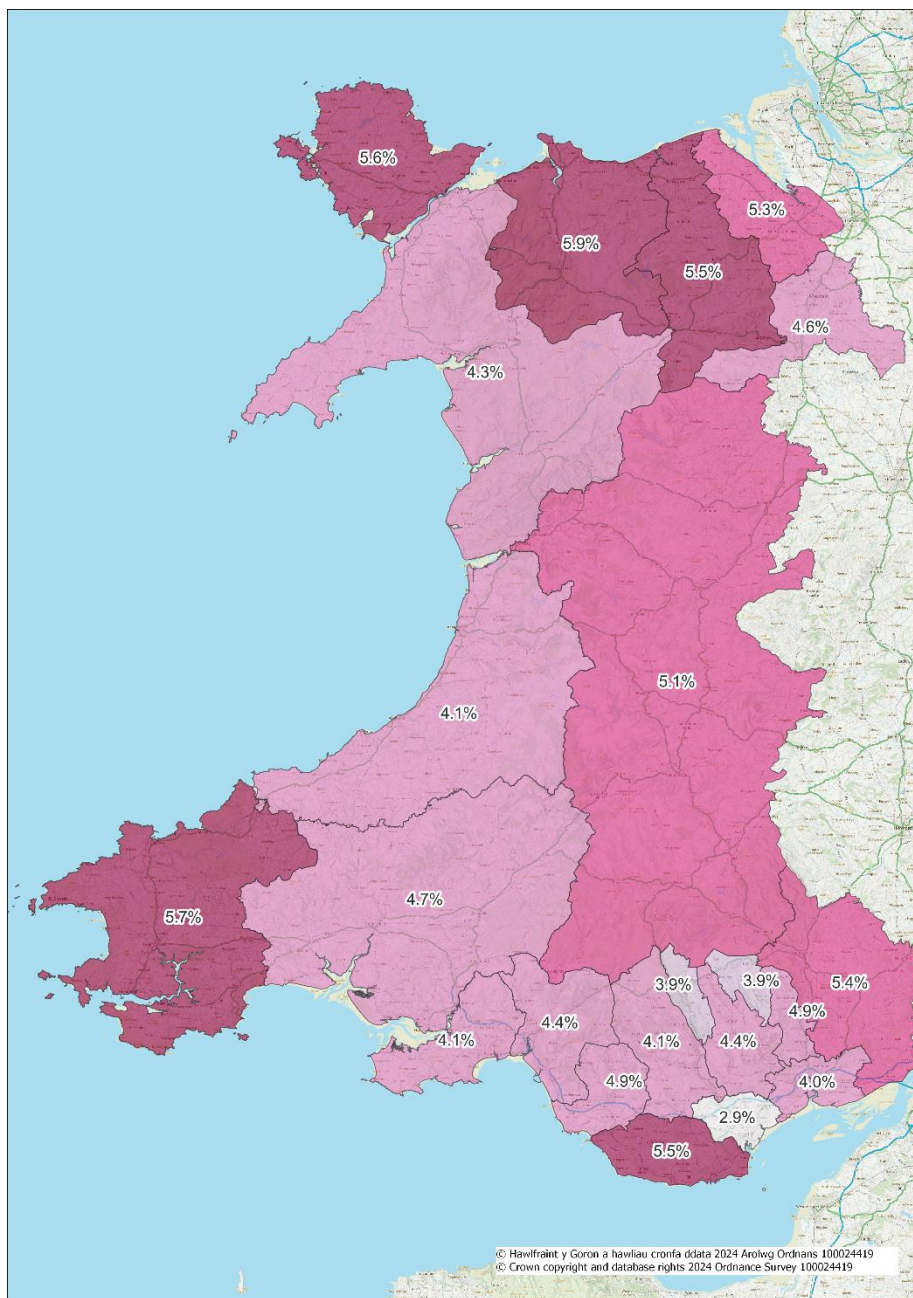


(Source: ONS (2022): 2021 Census)¹

Across Wales, the percentage of the population aged 16 years and over that previously served in the UK armed forces varied slightly between local authorities. The local authority in Wales with the highest proportion of veterans was Conwy (5.9%, 5,650 residents), whilst the local authority with the lowest percentage of veterans was Cardiff (2.9%, 8,590 residents) (refer to Figure 2 overleaf). The data highlights that the local authority areas with the highest proportions of veterans tend to be those areas where there are existing military establishments. This suggests that in the main, veterans tend to remain in the same area once they leave the service.

¹ ONS (2022). Census 2021 – TS071 Previously served in the UK armed forces. Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2088&geog=ladu2021>

Figure 2: Percentage of people that have served in any UK armed forces by Welsh Local Authorities.

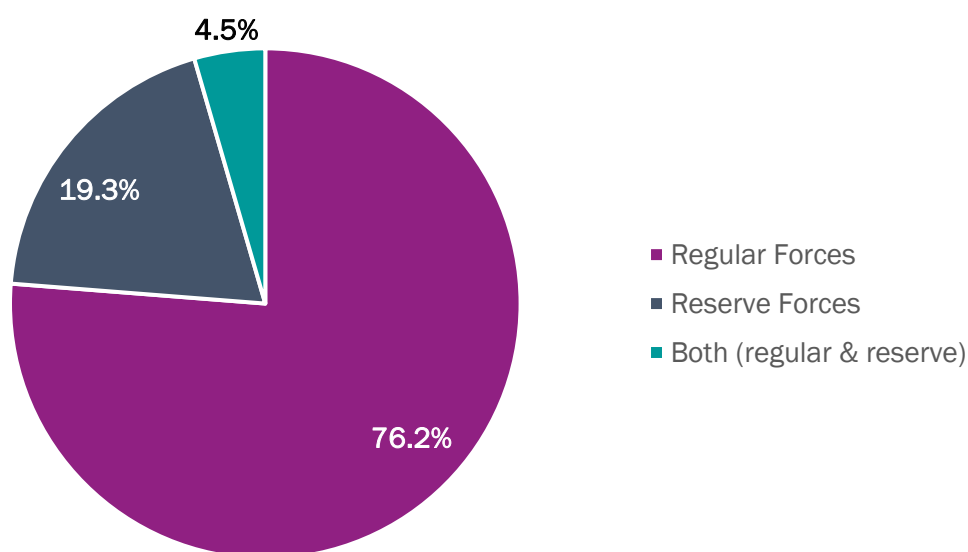


(Source: ONS (2022): 2021 Census)²

As reflected in Figure 3 below, of the UK armed forces veteran population in Wales in 2021 (115,000), 76.4% (88,000 people) previously served in the UK regular armed forces, 19.3% (22,000 people) previously served in the UK reserve armed forces, and 4.5% (5,000 people) said they served in both the regular and reserve UK armed forces.

² ONS (2022). Census 2021 – TS071 Previously served in the UK armed forces. Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2088&geog=ladu2021>

Figure 3: Percentage of veterans by force across Wales.



(Source: ONS 2022: 2021 Census)³

2.2 Ceredigion

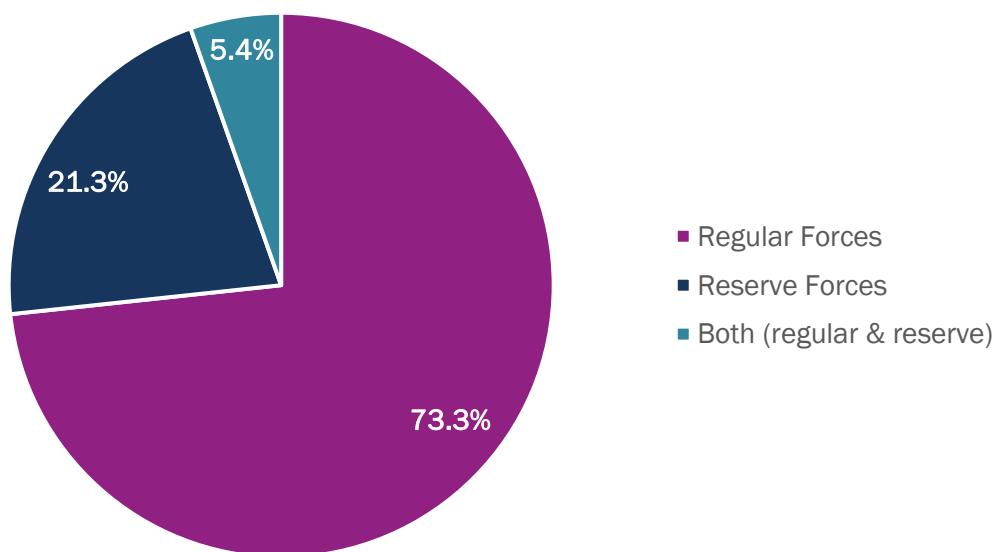
2.2.1 Veteran population

In 2021, 2,525 people in Ceredigion reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces (4.1% of usual residents aged 16 years and over). This equates to 1 in 24 people aged 16 years or older that have previously served in the UK armed forces. This is slightly lower than the national average (4.5% of the population aged 16 years and over, 115,000), but higher than it was in England (3.8%, 1.7 million). Across Wales, Ceredigion was the local authority with the 5th lowest percentage of veterans, joint with Rhondda Cynon Taff and Swansea.

Of the UK armed forces veterans in Ceredigion, just under three quarters (73.3%/1,850 people) previously served in the UK regular armed forces, under a quarter (21.3%/540 people) noted that they served in the UK reserve armed forces and the remaining 5.4% (140 people) served in both the regular and reserve UK armed forces (refer to Figure 4 below). These proportions of veterans are similar to the national figures, as shown in Figure 3 above.

³ ONS (2022). Census 2021 – TS071 Previously served in the UK armed forces. Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2088&geog=ladu2021>

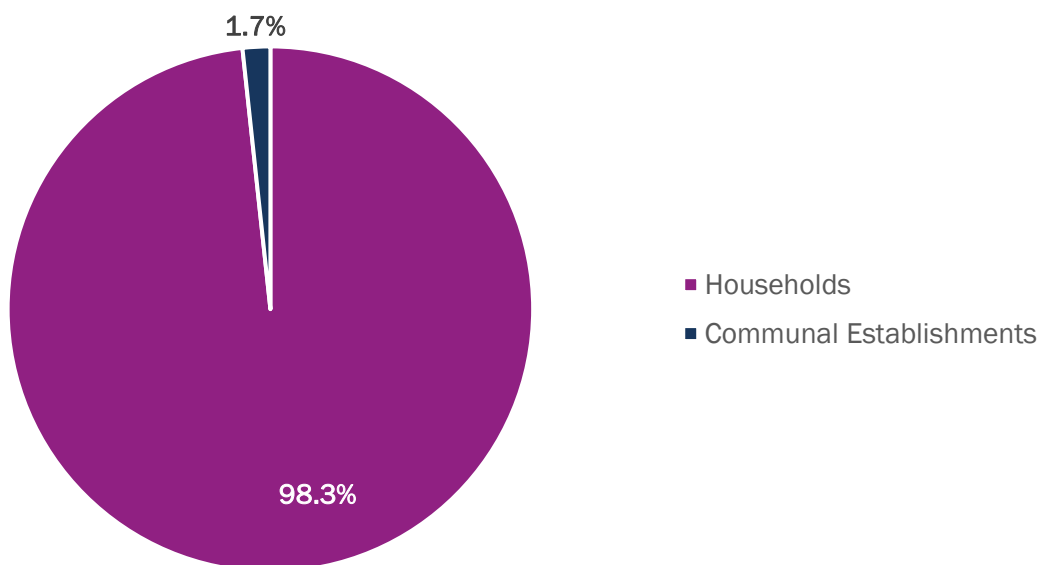
Figure 4: Percentage of veterans in Ceredigion serving in the regular, reserve or both UK armed forces services.



(Source: ONS 2022: 2021 Census)⁴

Of the UK armed forces population in Ceredigion, 98.3% (2,480) lived in households and 1.7% (40) lived in communal establishments (*communal establishments include residential care homes, university halls of residence, boarding schools, and prisons*).

Figure 5: Percentage of UK armed forces veterans living in households or communal establishments.

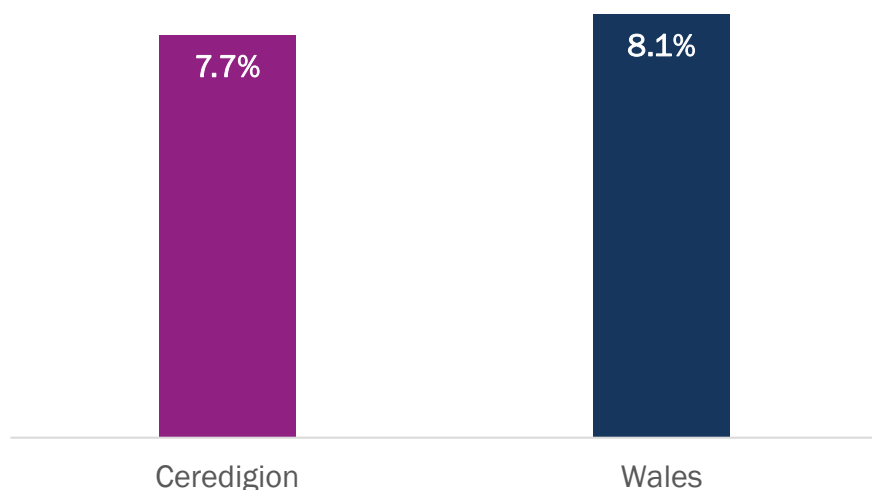


⁴ ONS (2022). Census 2021 – TS071 Previously served in the UK armed forces. Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2088&geog=ladu2021>

(Source: ONS 2022: 2021 Census)⁵

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) also used the answers to this question to calculate the number of households that included one or more veterans. In 2021, 2,370 households in Ceredigion had at least one person who had previously served in the UK armed forces (7.7% of all households in Ceredigion). This is slightly lower than the national average (8.1%/108,699 of all households in Wales).

Figure 6: Percentage of households with at least one person who had previously served in the UK armed forces.



(Source: ONS 2022: 2021 Census)⁶

The majority of households in Ceredigion included one veteran only (2,260 households), which is the equivalent to 95.3% of all households with at least one veteran. Around, 100 households (4.5%) included two veterans, and the remaining 5 households included three or more veterans.

2.2.2 Sex and Age

The data from the 2021 Census provides information on the sex and age of Ceredigion residents who have previously served in the UK armed forces.

The age and sex structure of the veteran population differed substantially to the non-veteran population, with the veteran population being much older and mainly male. Of the total UK armed forces veteran population in Ceredigion, 85% (2,159) were men (compared with 48% of the non-veteran male population) and 15% were women (compared with 52% of the non-veteran population). Over half (68%, 1,710) of the veteran population were over 60 years old (compared with 32% of non-

⁵ ONS (2022). Census 2021 – TS073 Population who have previously served in the UK armed forces in communal establishments and in households. Available at:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2090&geog=ladu2021>

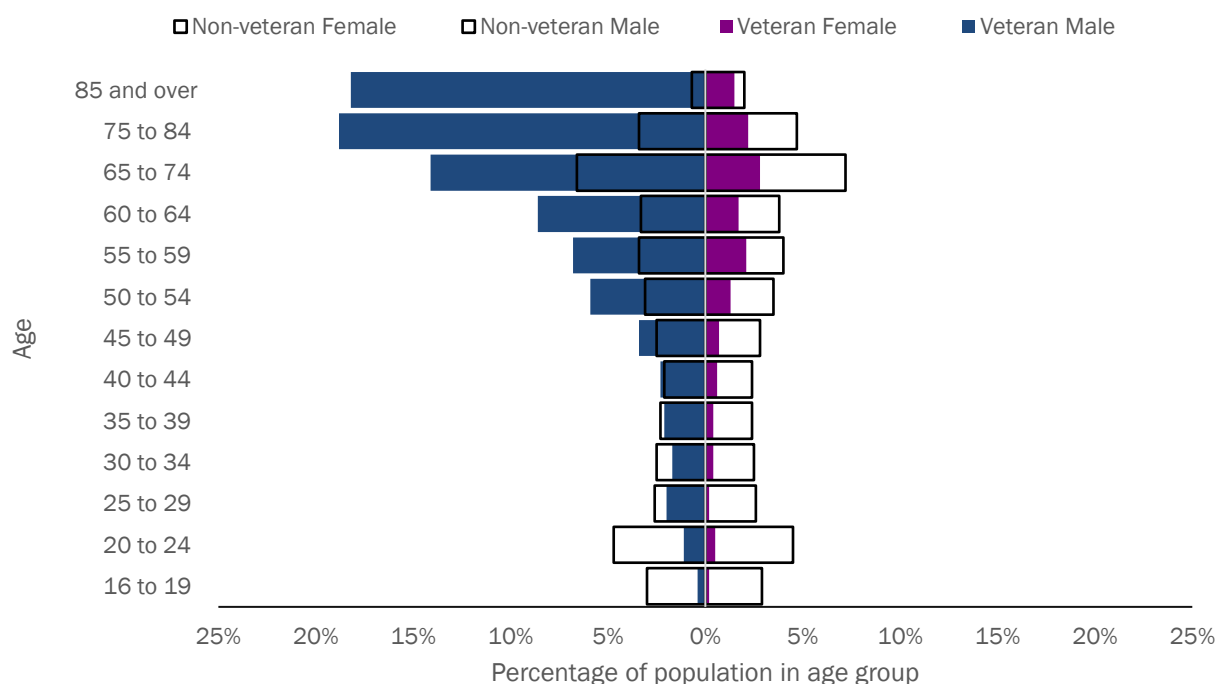
⁶ ONS (2022). Census 2021 – Number of people in household who have previously served in UK armed forces. Available at:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2089&geog=ladu2021>

veteran population). This is unsurprising considering the impact of the War Service (1939 to 1948) and National Service (1939 to 1960, with the last national servicemen discharged in 1963). Furthermore, as serving personnel reach retirement age, they tend to leave the forces and become veterans. Of course, there are other reasons that people may decide to leave the armed forces and become veterans such as disability or health problems preventing them from continuing or simply that they decide to peruse another career / lifestyle.

Figure 7 below outlines the percentage of the age and sex structure of veterans and non-veteran population in Ceredigion during 2021.

Figure 7: Age and sex structure of veterans and non-veterans in Ceredigion (2021)

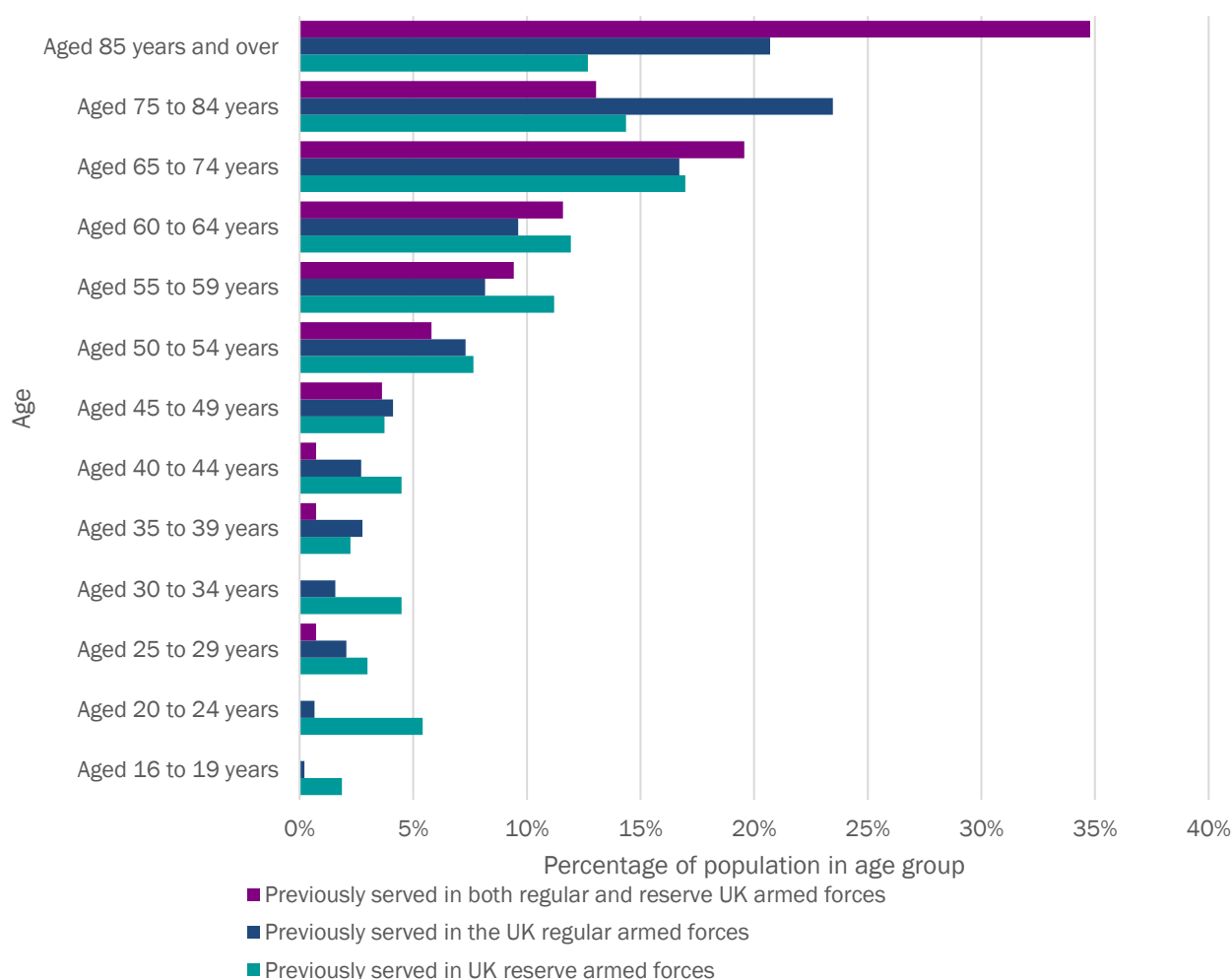


(Source: ONS (2023): 2021 Census)⁷

Figure 8 overleaf demonstrates the ages of Ceredigion veterans by the type of service fulfilled (UK regular armed forces, the UK reserve armed forces or both). *It should be noted that only those aged 16 years and over were permitted to answer this question and therefore there is not an age category for 16 years old and below.*

⁷ ONS (2022). Census 2021 – RM147 Veterans by age. Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2247&geog=ladu2021>

Figure 8: The percentage of Ceredigion veteran population in age group who served in UK regular armed forces, UK reserve armed forces and both regular and reserve UK armed forces.



(Source: ONS (2023): 2021 Census)⁸

As reflected in Figure 8 above, Ceredigion's regular and reserve veteran population showed some differences in relation to age, which is similar to the national picture. Overall, the population of those who had *only* served in the UK reserve armed forces were younger than the rest of the veteran population, whilst the population of those who had served in *both* the regular and reserve UK armed forces were older. Among those who had previously served in the UK reserve armed forces *only*, 44% were aged 65 years and older, compared with 61% of veterans in the UK regular armed forces and 67% of those that had served in both the regular and reserve UK armed forces. As referenced by the ONS (2023)⁹, this age pattern may reflect the fact that individuals are able to leave the reserves at any

⁸ ONS (2022). Census 2021 – RM147 Veterans by age. Available at:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2247&geog=ladu2021>

⁹ ONS (2023). Characteristics of UK armed forces veterans, England and Wales: Census 2021. Available at: [Characteristics of UK armed forces veterans, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/armedforcesveterans)

given time (unless mobilised), and those who have not served as a regular beforehand may join as a volunteer reservist whilst working full-time elsewhere.

As the 2021 Census in England and Wales was the first to ask people if they had previously served in the UK armed forces, comparisons with previous Census years are not possible. This said, the 2011 Census collected data on the number of working age veterans (between 16- and 64- years of age) in England and Wales. In Ceredigion it was estimated that 870 people were working age veterans in the 2011 Census. This amounts to 2.0% of the 16 to 64 age population in the County and is identical to the national percentage (2.0%).

The results from the 2021 Census suggest that the number of working aged veterans (aged between 16 and 64 years old) may have increased since the 2011 Census. According to the 2021 Census there were 1,069 veterans aged between 16 and 64 years old, this is a 22.8% increase since 2011. The working age veterans recorded in 2021 (1,069) accounts for 2.5% of the total 16 to 64 population in Ceredigion, which is higher than the proportion of veterans aged between 16 and 64 in 2011. However, in 2021, the percentage of working age veterans (2.5%) was lower than the national average (3.0%).

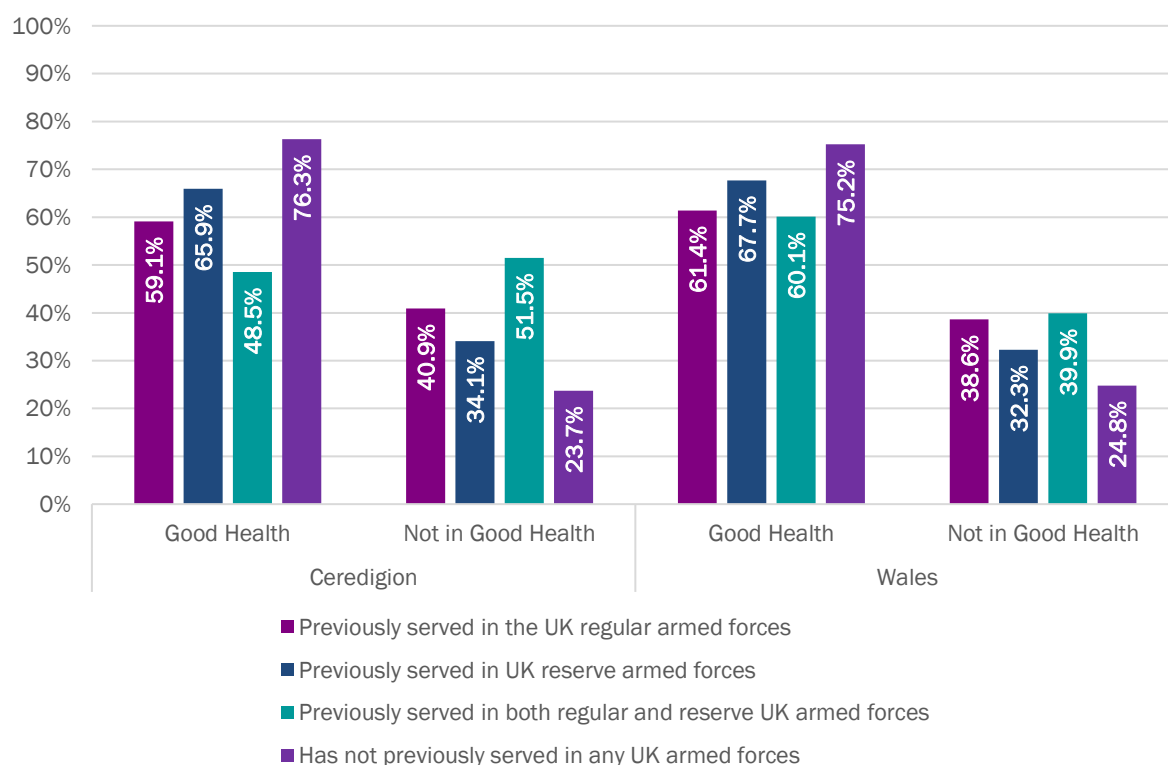
2.2.3 General Health

Veterans in Ceredigion reported poorer general health compared to those who have never served in the UK armed forces (refer to Figure 9 overleaf). However, it is important to consider that the veteran population is much older than the non-veteran population and is mostly male, which could have an impact on a person's assessment as health is typically related to age, and in some cases sex.

Across the type of service, the greatest percentage of veterans who reported that they were 'not in good health' were those who had previously served in *both* the regular and reserve UK armed forces (51.5%). Compared to under half (40.9%) of UK regular armed forces veterans and just under a third (34.1%) of UK reserve armed forces veterans reporting that they were 'not in good health'. However, all veterans (regardless of the type of service undertaken) reported poorer health (42.1%) compared to the non-veteran population in Ceredigion (23.7%).

Nationally, the general health of veterans in 2021 was slightly better than veteran health in Ceredigion, with 62.5% of all veterans reporting that their general health was 'good' across Wales, compared to 60.0% in Ceredigion. This difference is largely attributed to a higher proportion of veterans who had served in both the regular and reserve UK armed forces reporting poorer health in Ceredigion (51.5%) compared to the national average (39.9%), equating to a 11.6 percentage point difference between the local authority figure and national average.

Figure 9: Self-reported general health of veterans and non-veterans in Ceredigion (2021).



(Source: ONS (2023): 2021 Census)¹⁰

2.2.4 Disability

In Ceredigion, 37.5% (695) of UK regular armed forces veterans are disabled under the Equality Act. This is 1.9 percentage points higher than the Wales average of 35.6%. Approximately 30.0% of UK reserve armed forces veterans are disabled under the Equality Act, with the Welsh average being just slightly higher (30.4%). In Ceredigion, the percentage of those who are disabled under the Equality Act and have previously served in both the regular and reserve UK armed forces (45.3%) is much higher (8 percentage points) than the Welsh average of 37.3%.

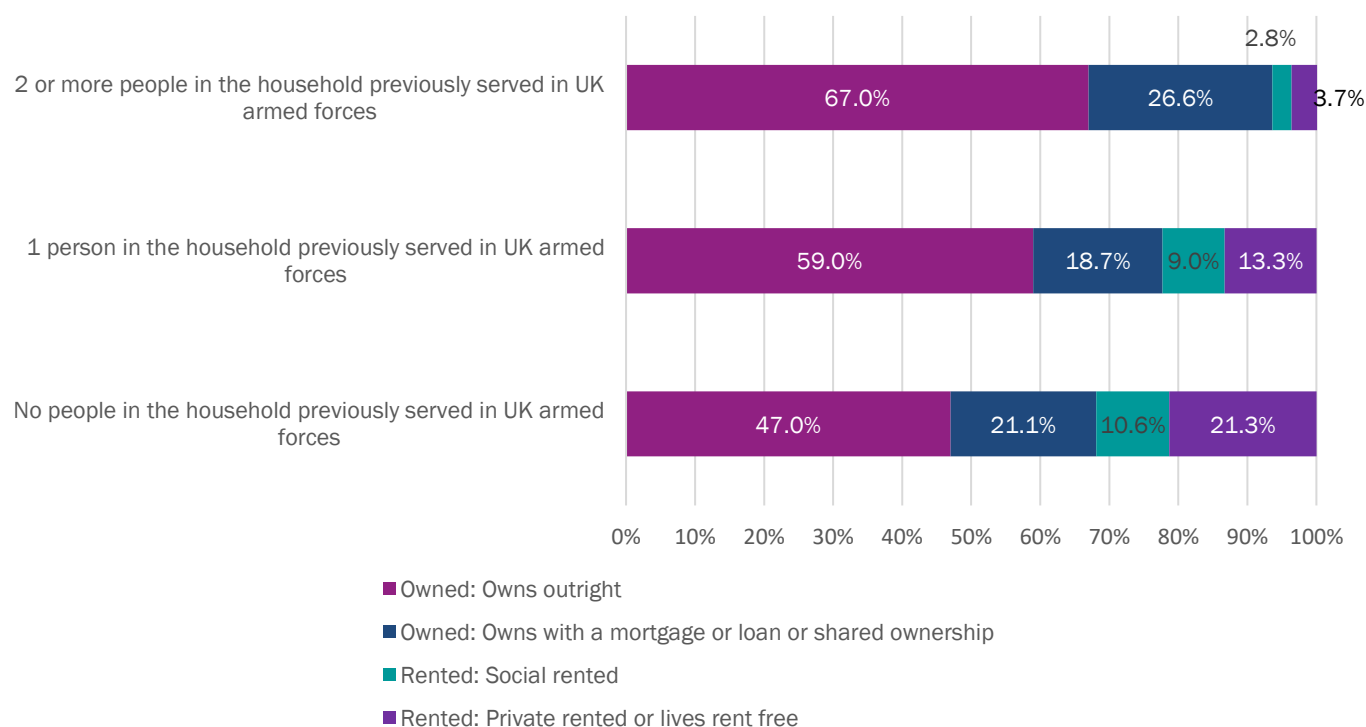
It is far more common for a veteran who has served in either the regular, reserve or both UK armed forces to be disabled under the Equality Act compared to those who have *not* previously served in the UK armed forces. This is because, those who serve with the armed forces are sometimes injured whilst serving, these injuries can often lead to life-limiting disabilities. Just under a quarter (24.1%) of those who have *not* previously served in the UK armed forces in Ceredigion are disabled under the Equality Act, which is lower than the percentages for veterans.

¹⁰ ONS (2022). Census 2021 – RM145 Veterans by general health. Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2245&geog=ladu2021>

2.2.5 Tenure

As reflected in Figure 10 below, households with veterans are more likely to own their homes compared to non-veteran households. Those households with two or more veterans are more likely to own their homes (93.6%), with 67.0% owning their home outright and just over a quarter (26.6%) owning their home with a mortgage, loan or shared ownership. Similarly, for those households with one person who has previously served in the UK armed forces, over a third (77.7%) own their homes, over half (59.0%) own their home outright and 18.7% own their own with a mortgage, loan or shared ownership. These figures are far higher compared to households without any veterans, under half (47.0%) own their home outright and 21.1% own their home with a mortgage, loan or shared ownership. These figures are far higher compared to households without any veterans, under half (47.0%) own their home outright and 21.1% own their home with a mortgage, loan or shared ownership.

Figure 10: Percentage of UK armed forces veterans by Tenure.



(Source: ONS (2023): 2021 Census)¹¹

In terms of renting, households with no UK armed forces veterans are more likely to be renting (private and social) than households with veterans present. In total, just under a third of households (31.9%) without any veterans rent, of which 10.6% households are within the social rented sector (10.6%) and 21.3% are within the private rented sector (21.3%). Of households with one person having previously

¹¹ ONS (2022). Census 2021 – RM142 Veteran households by tenure. Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2242&geog=ladu2021>

served in the armed forces, approximately one-fifth (22.3%) rent, with 9.0% of households in the social rented sector and 13.3% within the private rented sector. Whereas just 6.5% of households with two or more veterans are renting, 2.8% rent within the social rented sector whilst 3.7% rent within the private rental sector.

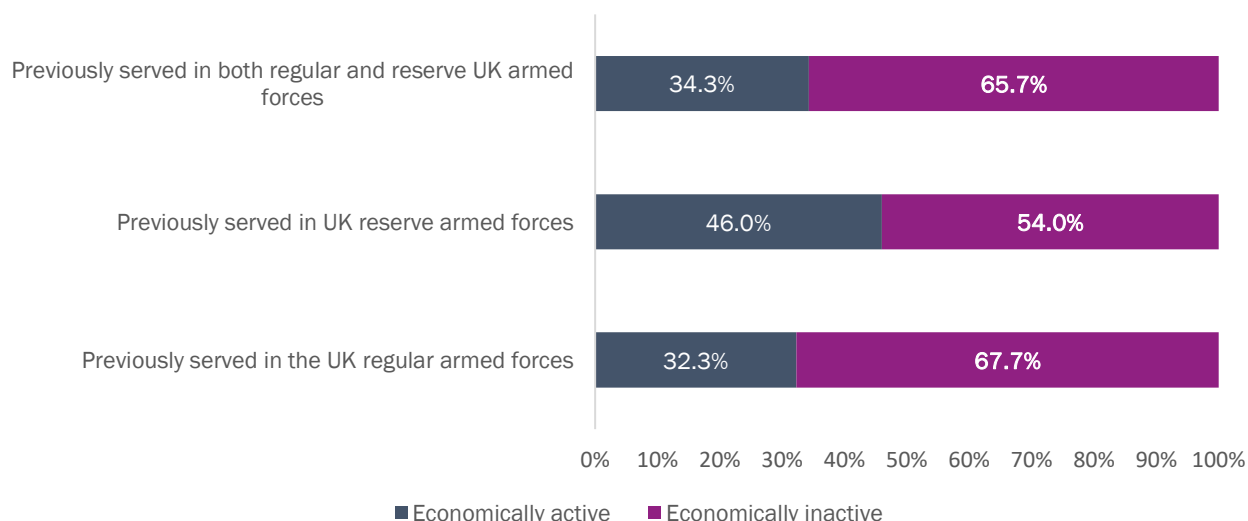
2.2.6 Economic Activity

The 2021 Census collected information on veterans by economic activity status. The majority of veterans are economically inactive¹², which is unsurprising given that they may have left the UK armed forces due to ill health or retirement.

The national picture is fairly similar to the situation in Ceredigion, however there are more economically active¹³ veterans across Wales. In 2021, over two-thirds (64.7%/ 1,635) of Ceredigion UK armed forces veterans were economically inactive, compared to 56.9% of UK armed forces veterans across Wales.

Furthermore, economic inactivity varies across the type of UK armed forces service that was fulfilled. As shown in Figure 11 below, those who have previously served in the UK regular armed forces are most likely to be economically inactive (67.7%), whereas UK reserve armed forces veterans are least likely to be economically inactive (54.0%). Although the proportion of UK reserve armed forces veterans that are economically inactive are the lowest across the types of service, it remains only slightly below the Welsh average of all services (56.9%).

Figure 11: Veterans Economic Status – Ceredigion.



(Source: ONS (2023): 2021 Census)¹⁴

¹² Economically inactive: is a person who is neither employed nor unemployed. This is because someone is retired, looking after family or home, or a student, among other reasons.

¹³ Economically active: a person who is in employment (employees and self-employed) or unemployed.

¹⁴ ONS (2022). Census 2021 – RM144 Veterans by economic activity status. Available at:

2.2.7 Occupation

Table 1 below shows the top 3 occupations of veterans according to the type of service fulfilled. There are some similarities in occupation across the type of service, both skilled trade occupations and professional occupations appear within the top three, however, the ranking varies slightly.

Skilled trades occupations are the most popular for those who have previously served in the UK regular armed forces (19.3%) and for those who have previously served in the UK reserve armed forces (21.3%). Whereas the most common occupation of those who have previously served in both the regular and reserve UK armed forces is process, plant and machine operatives (28.3%). Professional occupations are also common within the Armed Forces community, either being the second or third most popular occupation.

Table 1: Top 3 Occupations for veterans by Force.

	Previously served in the UK regular armed forces		Previously served in UK reserve armed forces		Previously served in both regular and reserve UK armed forces	
1	Skilled trades occupations	19.3%	Skilled trades occupations	21.3%	Process, plant and machine operatives	28.3%
2	Associate professional and technical occupations	14.6%	Professional occupations	16.6%	Skilled trades occupations	17.4%
3	Professional occupations	14.4%	Managers, directors and senior officials	12.3%	Professional occupations	13.0%

(Source: ONS (2023): 2021 Census)¹⁵

2.2.8 UK Armed Forces population by Ward

Data on veterans in Ceredigion is available at Electoral Ward level. This is the lowest level of data available on this topic. In Ceredigion there are a total of 34 electoral wards. Electoral wards do vary in size both geographically and by population, with 5,154 residents being the largest population (Aberystwyth Morfa a Glais Electoral ward) and 1,133 residents being the lowest population (Penbryn electoral ward).

In terms of veterans, the Aberporth and Y Ferwig electoral ward is the area with the largest population of people who have previously served in the UK armed forces. In the Aberporth and Y Ferwig electoral

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2244&geog=ladu2021>

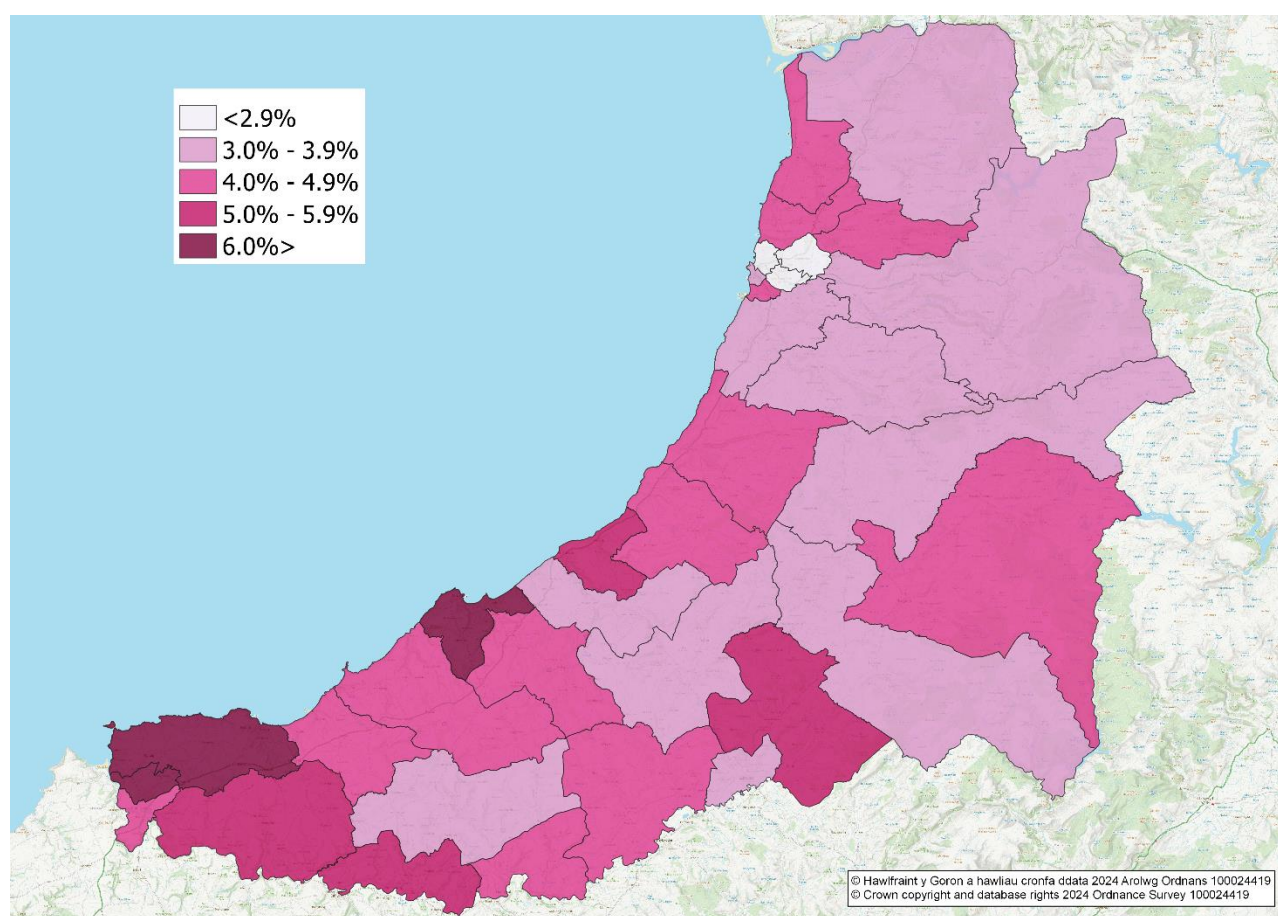
¹⁵ ONS (2022). Census 2021 -RM146 Veterans by occupation. Available at:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2246&geog=ladu2021>

ward, 6.7% of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces which is equivalent to 190 residents. Second to this is the Mwldan electoral ward (located in Cardigan) which sees 6.5% of it's population having previously served in the UK armed forces, which is equivalent to 101 residents. Considering the existing military base in Aberporth (MOD Aberporth) and the armed forces history routed within both Cardigan and Aberporth, the higher proportion of veterans within these areas is to be expected. This suggests that in the main, that veterans tend to remain in the same area once they leave the service.

The two electoral wards with the lowest percentage of veterans residing in them are the Aberystwyth Morfa & Glais electoral ward (2.1%) and the Faenor electoral ward (2.2%).

Figure 12: Percentage of UK armed forces veterans by Electoral Ward.



(Source: ONS (2023): 2021 Census)¹⁶

¹⁶ ONS (2022). Census 2021 – TS071 Previously served in the UK armed forces. Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2088&geog=ladu2021>

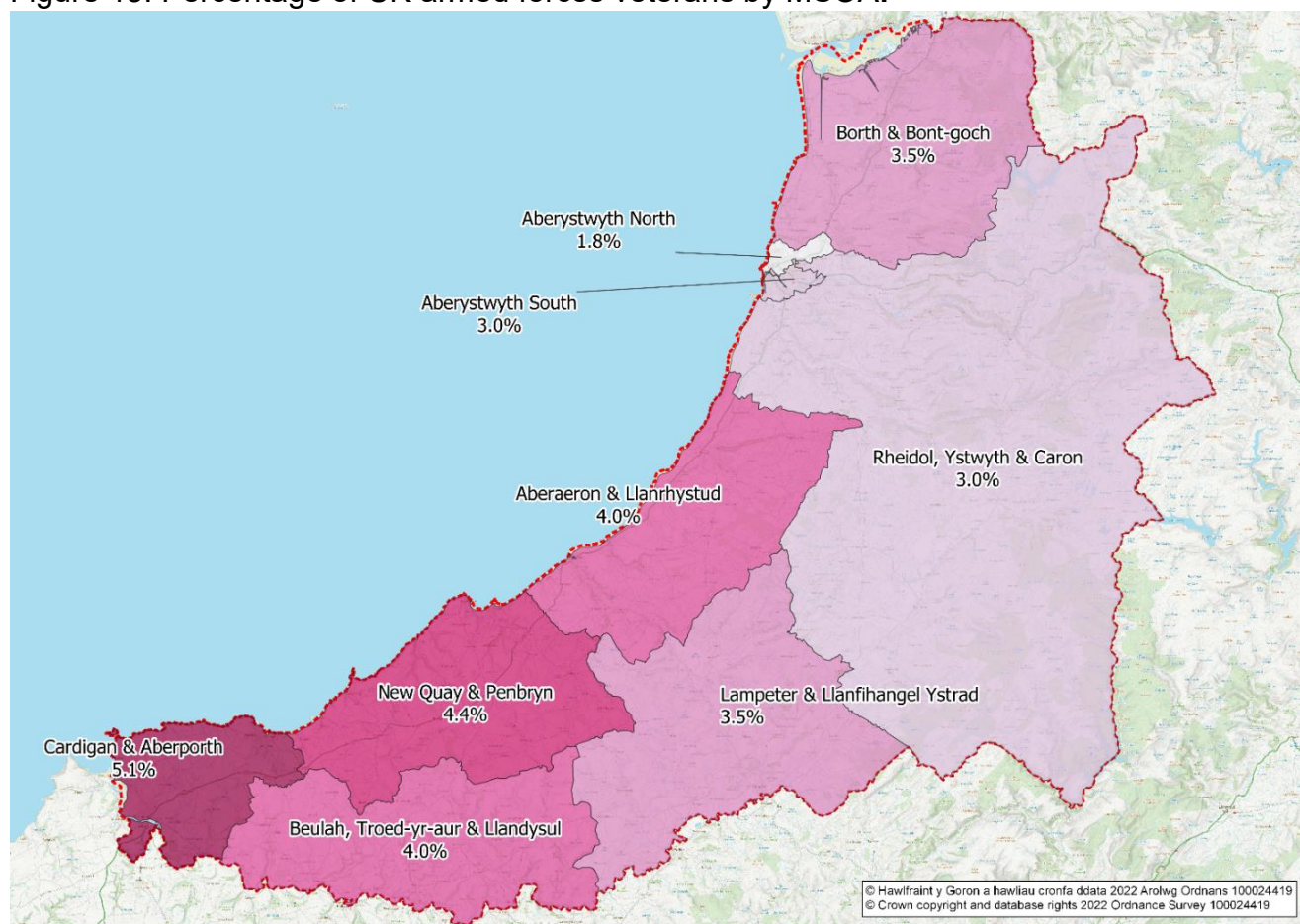
2.2.9 UK Armed forces population by Middle Super Output Area (MSOA)

Additionally, the 2021 Census collected data on veterans by MSOA (Middle Super Output Areas). These areas are larger than Electoral Wards (as referenced above) and contain between 5,000 and 15,000 residents. Ceredigion is made up of 9 MSOAs.

In 2021, 440 people in the Middle Layer Super Output Area – Cardigan and Aberporth reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces (5.1% of the population aged 16 years and over). This is above the Ceredigion average (4.1%) and national average (4.5%).

The Aberystwyth North MSOA has the lowest percentage of people who had previously served in the UK Armed Forces with just 1.8% of its population. It is unsurprising to see this number in Aberystwyth North when we consider that a vast majority of the population here is made up of students studying at Aberystwyth University.

Figure 13: Percentage of UK armed forces veterans by MSOA.



(Source: ONS (2023): 2021 Census)¹⁷

Table 2 overleaf shows the number of people in households who previously served in the UK armed forces by MSOA. The highest percentage of households with at least one person who previously served

¹⁷ ONS (2022). Census 2021 – TS071 Previously served in the UK armed forces. Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2088&geog=ladu2021>

in the UK armed forces is Cardigan & Aberporth MSOA (9.3%), which is unsurprising when we consider that this MSOA has the highest percentage of armed forces veterans in its population.

The highest number of households with 2 people who previously served in the UK armed forces is also Cardigan & Aberporth MSOA (0.6%) with New Quay & Penbryn MSOA just behind (0.5%).

Table 2: Percentage of people in households who previously served in UK armed forces.

MSOA	1 Person	2 People	3 or more people
Borth & Bont-goch	6.8% (220)	0.4% (14)	0.0% (0)
Aberystwyth North	4.8% (142)	0.1% (4)	0.0% (1)
Aberystwyth South	6.6% (180)	0.2% (5)	0.0% (0)
Aberaeron & Llanrhystud	8.0% (260)	0.3% (10)	0.0% (0)
New Quay & Penbryn	8.7% (248)	0.5% (14)	0.0% (1)
Lampeter & Llanfihangel Ystrad	7.2% (241)	0.4% (12)	0.0% (0)
Cardigan & Aberporth	9.3% (387)	0.6% (23)	0.0% (0)
Beulah, Troed-yr-aur & Llandysul	7.9% (266)	0.4% (12)	0.0% (0)
Rheidol, Ystwyth & Caron	6.3% (314)	0.2% (12)	0.0% (0)

(Source: ONS (2023): 2021 Census)¹⁸

3.0 Conclusion

The 2021 Census significantly improves a much-needed understanding of the UK armed forces community in Ceredigion and across Wales. The data provides an insight into the demographics of our veteran population, highlighting that the majority of our veterans are male and over the age of 60, reflecting the significant impact of War Service (1939 to 1948) and National Service (1939 to 1960). However, it also tells us that an increasing proportion of our veterans are working age (43% of the veteran population are now under 65).

Moreover, information from the 2021 Census suggests that there is a link between our veteran population and negative health outcomes. Veterans reported a poorer health compared to the non-veteran population, with the greatest proportion of those who previously served in *both* the regular and reserve UK armed forces reporting 'not in good health'. Furthermore, it is far more common for a veteran who has served in either the regular, reserve or both armed forces to be disabled under the Equality Act compared to those who have *not* previously served in the UK armed forces. Although these insights are unsurprising, they are important and highlight the need for enhanced prevention and early intervention to mitigate the continuation of these poorer outcomes of this population group in the future.

Positively, however, household ownership amongst veterans is the most common type of tenure.

¹⁸ ONS (2022). Census 2021 – TS071 Previously served in the UK armed forces. Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2088&geog=ladu2021>

However, it is worth noting that the majority of veterans are older and therefore have had greater opportunity to get onto the housing ladder.

This data and insight will help to ensure that the local authority, along with other service providers and charities, can continue to provide the best possible service to veterans and their families where it is needed the most.

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