

Diversity

Introduction

What is "diversity"? There are many definitions available, but they all cover the same fundamental issues. These include the recognition of differences, respecting those differences, and appreciating the fact that different perspectives are valuable and can bring real benefits to an organisation or society in general. There are six commonly recognised "strands" to diversity:

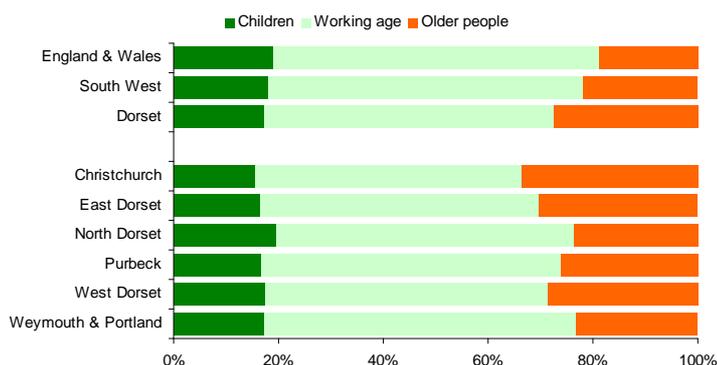
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Disability
- Gender
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation

Each of these strands is considered below. The aim here is to give a snapshot of the local situation and to present an overview of the nature and range of the diversity of the County's resident population.

Age

The data graphed below is taken from the 2006 mid year estimates of population produced by the Office for National Statistics.

Age Structure of Population (2006)



Older people (men aged 65+, females 60+) make up a higher proportion of Dorset's population than is found nationally. In the County 27.5% of the population is of retirement age compared to 18.8% in England and Wales. Wide variations are to be found within the County - Weymouth and Portland having the smallest proportion (23.1%) and Christchurch having the highest (33.6%).

This relative over representation of older people is reflected in the lower proportion of children in the County. The proportion of Dorset's population that are under 16 is less than the

national average. Proportionally children are most under-represented in Christchurch (15.8%), whilst only North Dorset (19.5%) has a percentage greater than the figure for England and Wales (19.1%). The proportion of the local population that is of working age is below the national and regional average in all six of Dorset's districts.

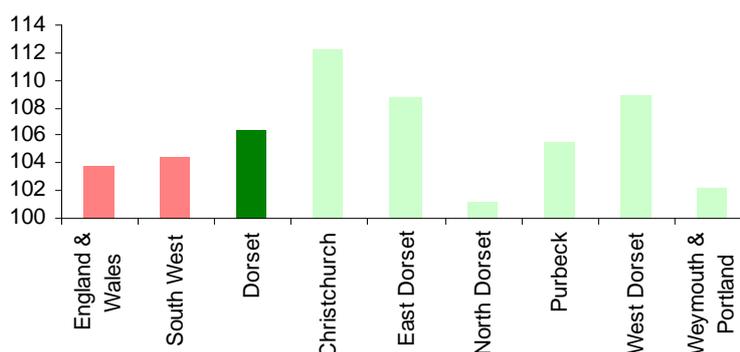
Data sources available: Mid-Year Estimates ONS supplied annually at the end August (latest 2006)
Patient Register Data, 2006 Family Health Service Agency (FHSA)—
supplied annually—gives age and gender, with postcode.

Gender

Current information on the gender split within the population can be gathered from the same data source as that for age. The 2006 mid year population estimates show that females outnumber males in the country as a whole.

This split may be described in terms of the number of females in a location per hundred males. The adjacent graph shows this information for each of Dorset's districts.

Females per 100 Males (2006)



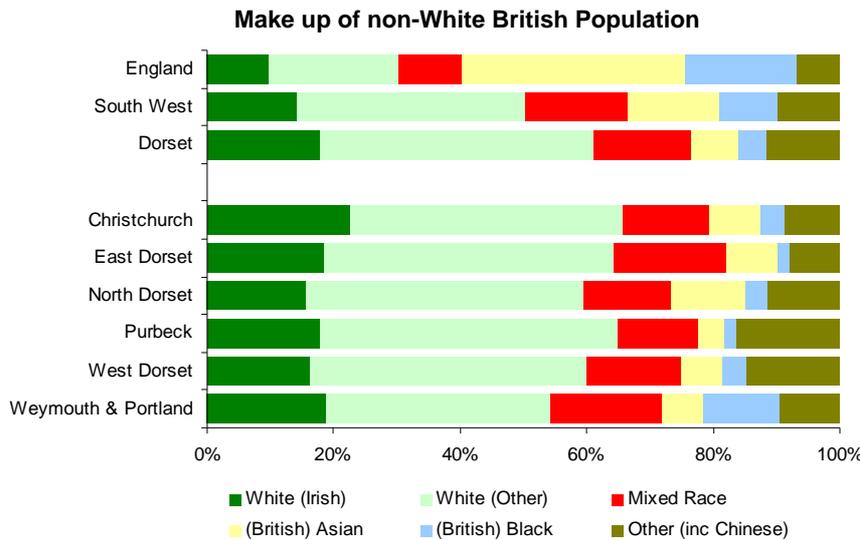
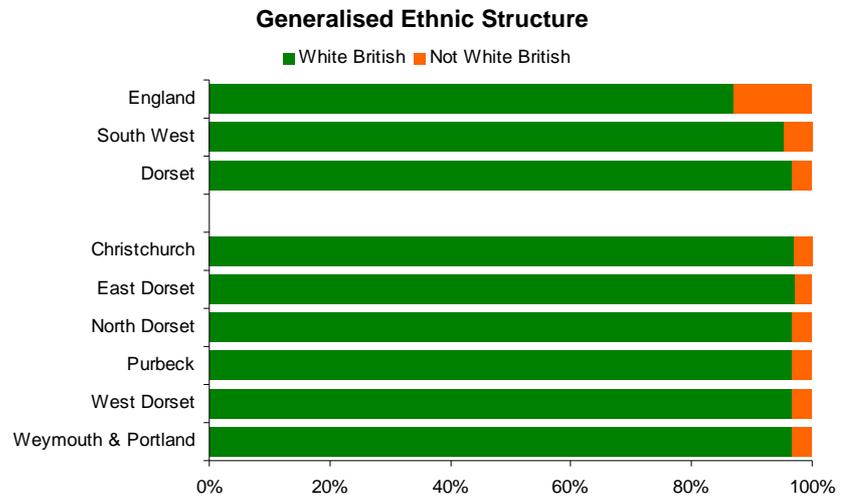
Gender continued

Nationally there are 104 females for every 100 males. The figure for Dorset is higher at 106, and is at its highest in Christchurch where there are 112 females to every 100 males. North Dorset has a population that is the most balanced between male and female which reflects that District's relatively youthful age profile.

Data sources available: **Mid-Year Estimates** ONS supplied annually at the end August (latest 2006)
Patient Register Data, 2006 Family Health Service Agency (FHSA)—supplied annually— gives age and gender with postcode.

Ethnicity

The 2001 Census provides the most recent and reliable information on ethnicity. Respondents were asked to classify themselves into one of sixteen ethnic groups. The graph below shows the proportions of respondents who recorded themselves as falling into either the "White British" category or "Not White British" category.



Dorset is less ethnically diverse than England. In 2001 3.2% of Dorset's population classed themselves as not being "White British" (i.e. from a black and minority ethnic (BME) group), lower than the proportion for England (13.0%). Figures for Dorset's districts range from 2.8% in East Dorset to 3.4% in North Dorset.

The diagram above illustrates the proportions of the ethnic groups which constitute the black and minority ethnic population in each of the relevant areas.

In England the largest black and minority ethnic group is "(British) Asian" – a group that represents 35.2% of that subset. In Dorset the largest black and minority ethnic group is "White Other" (43.2%) followed by "White Irish" (18.0%). In all of Dorset's districts "White Other" forms the largest ethnic minority group.

Data sources available: **2001 Census** ONS - carried out every 10 years.

Religion

The 2001 Census again provides the best source of information on religious affiliation.

England is largely a Christian country with a majority (71%) of respondents stating that they followed that religion. In Dorset the figure was higher at 78%.

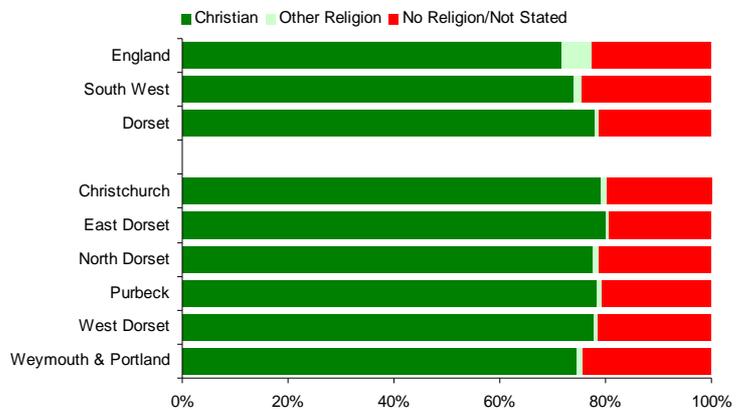
Within the County a further 21% either refused to give an answer or expressed no religious belief. Less than 1% of Dorset residents expressed an affiliation to a non-Christian religion (the figure for England was 5.7%).

Of these in Dorset, Buddhists formed the largest proportion (23.3%), followed by Muslims (21.4%) and Jews (14.5%). This is in contrast to the national figures of 4.8%, 51.8% and 8.7% respectively.

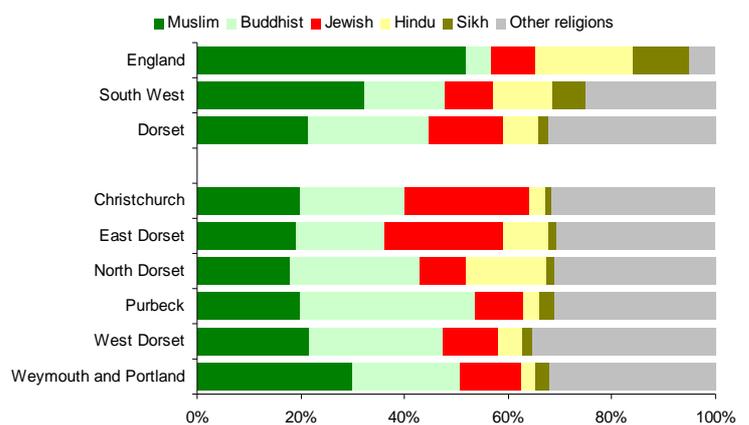


Data sources available: 2001 Census ONS, carried out every 10 years.

Generalised Religious Affiliation (2001)



Affiliation to Non Christian Religions (2001)



Disability

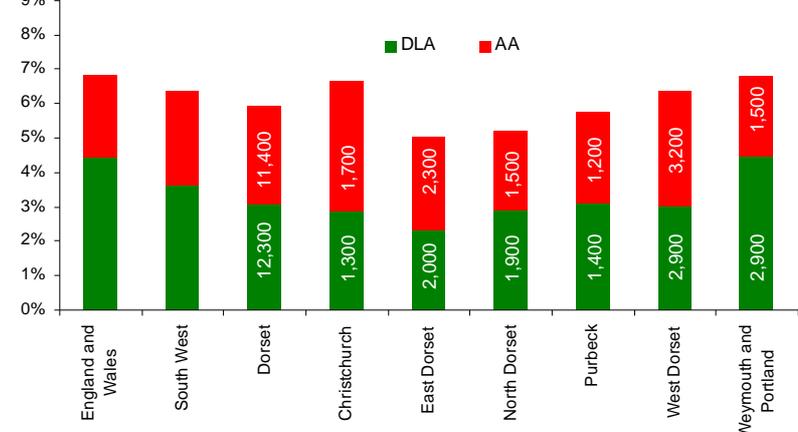
Gathering accurate information on disability is difficult, not least because it is often personal perception that dictates whether an individual regards themselves as disabled or not.

However, the level of claiming of two disability-related state benefits can give an indication of the prevalence of disability amongst the population.

The Chart shows the proportion of the population that were claiming Disability Living Allowance (under 65s) or Attendance Allowance (over 65s) as at February 2005.

All districts within Dorset have a smaller proportion than nationally of their population claiming the two allowances. Weymouth and Portland has the highest proportion (6.8%), East Dorset the lowest (5.1%). As a consequence of the County's older population, rates of claiming of Attendance Allowance are higher in Dorset than nationally.

Percentage of the population claiming Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance



Note: Bars on the graph shows percentages, but actual numbers are on the individual bars

Data sources available: Disability Living Allowance and Disability Allowance, Department of Work and Pensions, Feb 2005 available annually, at District level.

Sexual Orientation

Of all of the six strands of diversity, sexual preference is the hardest to measure.

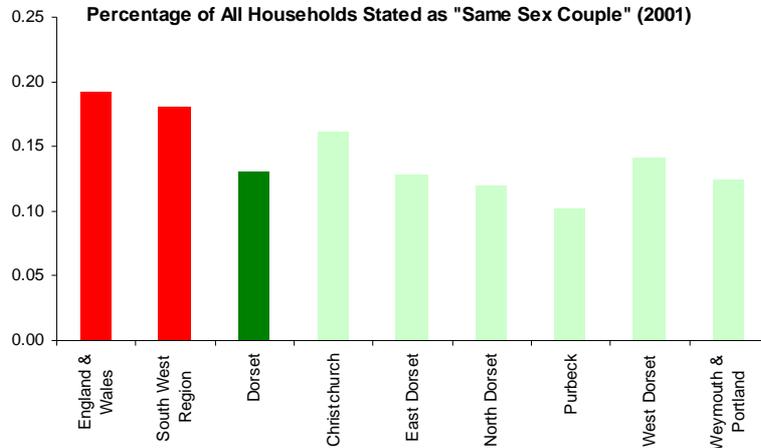
The 2001 Census asked a question regarding the relationship between adults living in the same household.

In Dorset 58% of all people aged over 16 were married, the national figure was 51%.

The survey also recorded returns from 0.13% of all Dorset respondents that said that they lived as same sex couples, lower than the national average of 0.19%.

These figures cannot be regarded as comprehensive, but do provide a relative indication of instances of residents who regard themselves as living as a same sex couple.

Percentage of All Households Stated as "Same Sex Couple" (2001)



Data sources available: 2001 Census ONS, carried out every 10 years.

Conclusions

Dorset has...

- ...a greater proportion of older people and smaller proportions of children and working age residents than the national average.
- ...a higher ratio of women to men than is seen nationally, partly as a consequence of the County's age structure.
- ...a far lower proportion of residents from minority ethnic groups than for England as a whole
- ...a largely Christian population, only 1% of residents state that they follow a non Christian religion. Chief amongst this group are Buddhists.
- ... levels of disability amongst the under 65s that are lower than the national average, but amongst the older population this relationship is reversed.
- ...less than the national and regional averages of residents classing themselves as being in a same sex relationship and a greater proportion of people who are married than is seen nationally.

Note: Dorset in this bulletin refers to the Dorset County Council area and excludes Poole and Bournemouth.

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