

# Thorney Island Briefing

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## Glossary

This briefing uses various acronyms and unusual terms to summarise the population of Thorney Island and service personnel stationed there. This glossary lists these acronyms and unusual terms, alongside a definition.

Term	Definition
Armed Forces Covenant (AFC)	Aims to ensure that those who serve or who have served in the Armed Forces, alongside their families, are treated fairly <sup>1</sup> . Any organisation in the public, private or third sector can voluntarily implement the principles of the Covenant or sign a pledge. However, specified organisations e.g., local authorities, certain state schools etc are legally obligated to abide by the 'Covenant Legal Duty' (see below) <sup>2</sup> .
Built up area (BUA)	A type of geography based on the physical built environment, such as cities, towns, and villages <sup>15</sup> . BUAs are classified into five categories based on their population size: minor, small, medium, large, or major.
Continuity of Education Allowance	Allowance for service families to support with boarding school fees, minimising disruption to their child's education <sup>3</sup> .
Covenant Legal Duty	The Armed Forces Act 2021 introduced a legal requirement for public bodies responsible for healthcare, education and housing to pay 'due regard' to the principles of the AFC. This has been in force since November 2022 <sup>2</sup> .
Families Continuous Attitude Survey (FamCAS)	An annual survey from the Ministry of Defence (MoD) which aims to gather information on the views and experiences of service families <sup>4</sup> .
Quarterly Service Personnel Statistics	Quarterly publication from the MoD which looks at the number of service personnel leaving and joining the Armed Forces <sup>5</sup>
Service Family Accommodation (SFA)	Accommodation for service personnel who are married or have children <sup>6</sup> .
Service Pupil Premium (SPP)	Funding for schools to provide additional support to children from service families
Single Living Accommodation (SLA)	Accommodation for single or unaccompanied service personnel <sup>7</sup> .
Workday population	Estimate of the population during the workday – this includes residents who work in the area (aged 16+) or live in the area but do not work.

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<sup>1</sup> [Home - Armed Forces Covenant](#)

<sup>2</sup> [About the Covenant - Armed Forces Covenant](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Continuity of Education Allowance - Army Families Federation](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Tri-service families continuous attitude survey: 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Quarterly Service Personnel Statistics: 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Living in service family accommodation Q&A - Shelter England](#)

<sup>7</sup> [nff.org.uk/single-living-accommodation/](https://nff.org.uk/single-living-accommodation/)

## Purpose of Briefing

The purpose of this briefing is to provide a summary of the population on Thorney Island with data taken from the 2021 Census, which was released by the Office for National Statistics in August 2023. This briefing aims to supplement the [coastal inequalities framework](#), which provides an overview of the population, health and wellbeing of seven coastal towns in West Sussex.

The source data used for this briefing is provided below:

- [Towns and cities, characteristics of built-up areas, England and Wales: Census 2021](#)
- [Coastal communities, characteristics of built-up areas, England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

Information taken from the coastal communities' dataset, such as general health of residents, disability status and carer status, was provided as an age standardised proportion which allow for a fairer comparison across areas with different population sizes and age structures<sup>8</sup>.

In addition, this briefing will provide a summary of the service personnel stationed at Thorney Island as of April 2024, based on Quarterly Service Personnel Statistics and Families Continuous Attitude Survey (FamCAS) data<sup>9</sup>.

## Key Takeaways

- Thorney Island has a different age and sex profile to surrounding coastal towns within West Sussex with a much younger (median = 27 years) and predominantly male population.
- The population in Thorney has grown by 54.5% from 1,100 (2001) to 1,700 (2021), with a population growth rate of 3% a year. It is important to note that population growth could be due to multiple factors (for example, changes in military, housing etc.) and may not be linear.
- 84.8% of Thorney Island residents privately rent or live 'rent free' – this is over seventy percentage points higher than the group average for minor BUAs in England (13%). This could be indicative of the subsidised Service Family Accommodation (SFA) and Single Living Accommodation (SLA) provided to service personnel. Further information is provided in the [Household Tenure](#) section of this briefing.
- Majority of Thorney Island residents reported being in very good (71.1%) or good (26.6%) health. The age standardised proportion of residents in very good health was twenty-five percentage points higher than the group average for minor coastal BUAs (47.5%).

## Thorney Island

Thorney Island (known as the village of West Thorney) is a peninsula (portion of land nearly surrounded by water but connected to the mainland on one side<sup>10</sup>) in Chichester Harbour located on the West Sussex coast<sup>11</sup>. In 1935, the Royal Air Force used Baker Barracks on Thorney Island (located on the southern side of the island) as a fighter station and base for the Coastal Command during the Second

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<sup>8</sup> The ONS used broad age groups to produce age-standardised proportions (ASPs; 0 to 15, 16 to 64 and 65+ years) for built up areas (BUAs). By using broad age groups, data could be published for BUAs with small populations. However, ASPs for BUAs with different age structures within the 16-64 age bracket (most notably), may not fully control for the effect of age.

<sup>9</sup> [UK Tri-Service Families Continuous Attitude Survey Results 2024](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Definition of peninsula - National Geographic](#)

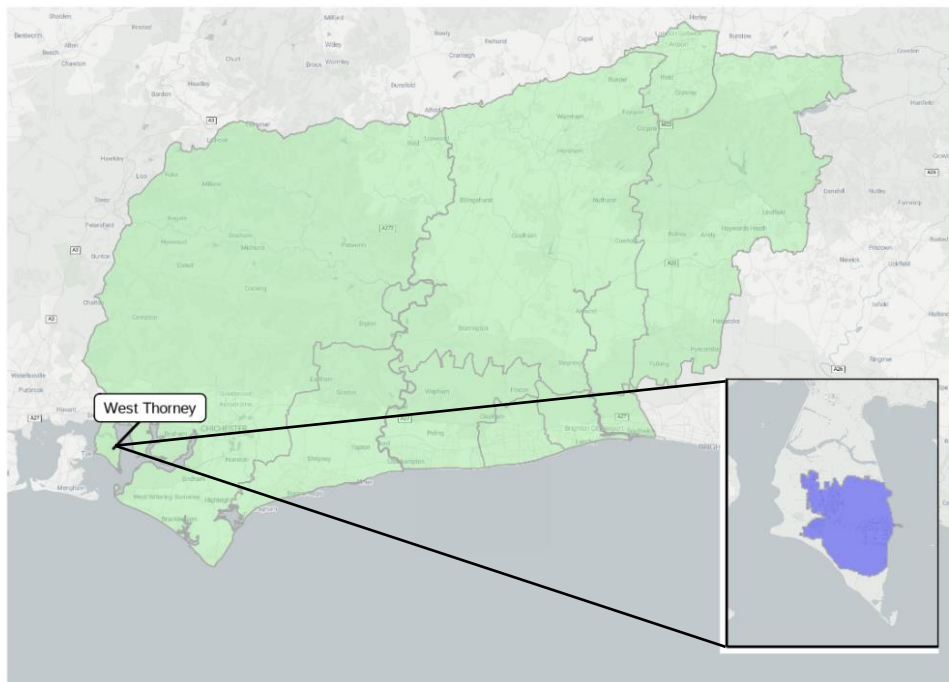
<sup>11</sup> [Thorney Island Flagship Site - Freshwater Habitats Trust](#)

World War<sup>12</sup>. Baker Barracks were then taken over by the Army in 1984 and currently has the only regular armed forces base in West Sussex, where military personnel from the MoD Centre of Specialisation for Joint Ground Based Air Defence Units, 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Regiment RA currently reside.

*Figure 1: Location of West Thorney in West Sussex*

### **West Thorney Built-Up Area (BUA, 2022)**

Shown in the context of West Sussex upper-tier local authority boundary (lower-tier boundaries in grey)



ONS Open Geography  
Contains Ordnance Survey data

### **Accessing Thorney Island**

There is one main road which connects Thorney Island to Emsworth, the nearest town. Bus services include the Stagecoach 700 bus route, with frequent connections to Chichester and Portsmouth, and Bourne Community Bus, a free service for residents which connects Thorney Island to Havant and Emsworth on Tuesday, Thursdays and Fridays<sup>13</sup>. The nearest train station is in Emsworth, which enables connections to Chichester, Brighton, Portsmouth, London and beyond. Public access is limited to the coastal footpath around the island<sup>12</sup>. As of November 2024, the coastal path on the East side of the island is closed for repair and due to be open in June 2025<sup>14</sup>.

### **Built-up Areas**

The first section of this briefing will explore the characteristics of Thorney Island as a built-up area (BUA), based on data from the 2021 Census. Thorney Island is classified as a minor BUA, which is

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<sup>12</sup> [Access Opportunities on the Defence Estate - Thorney Island, West Sussex](#)

<sup>13</sup> [About – Bourne Community Bus](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Unavailable Public Rights of Way routes - West Sussex County Council](#)

defined as having a population of between 0-4,999 and an approximate settlement type of hamlet or village<sup>15</sup>.

## Resident Populations

While defined by the ONS as a BUA, there is one key feature which distinguishes Thorney Island from all the other BUAs within West Sussex – it is populated almost entirely by serving military personnel from the MoD Centre of Specialisation for Joint Ground Based Air Defence Units, 12th Regiment RA, 16th Regiment RA, and their families.

According to Census 2021 data, 1,730 residents live on Thorney Island. However, it is important to acknowledge that there are military personnel who live off the Island and commute in for work. In addition, service personnel are often posted to new locations, with many families choosing to accompany them, therefore, the population on Thorney Island can be variable.

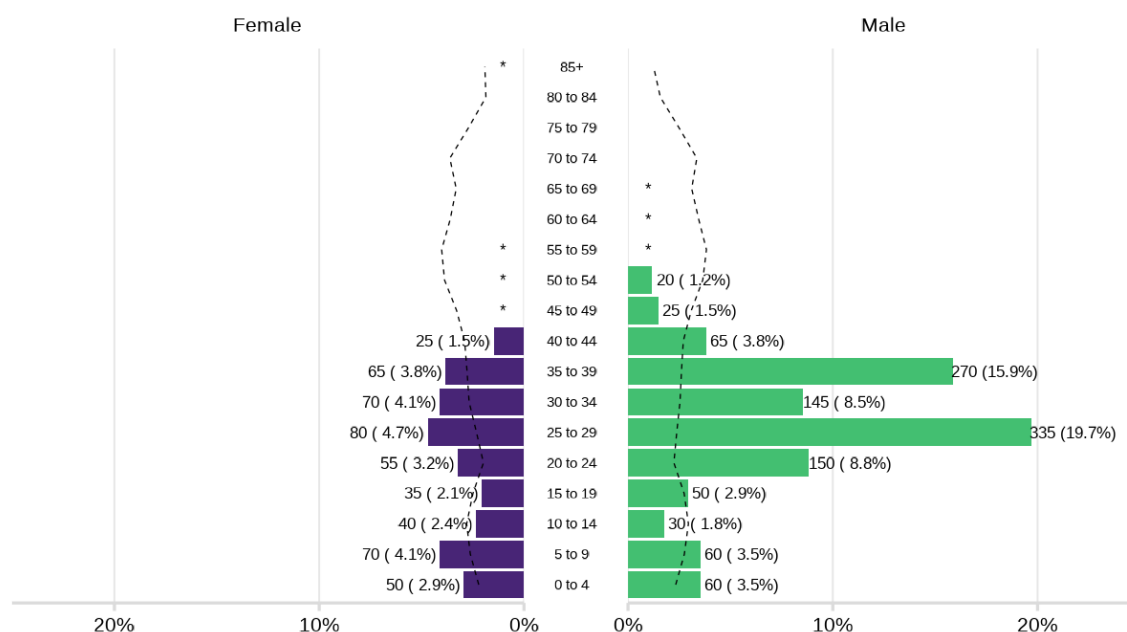
## Resident Demographics

### Age and Sex

At the time of the 2021 Census, Thorney Island had a younger population with a median age of 27 years, much lower than the average median age for minor BUAs in England (48 years). The greatest proportion of residents in Thorney Island were males aged 25-29 (n = 335; 20%) and 35-39 (n = 270; 16%). However, when presenting the population of residents for Thorney Island, there was missing data for certain age bands. This is because the population and household counts have been rounded to the nearest 5 and any counts below 10 were suppressed. Suppressed data is denoted with a \* in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Population pyramid of usual residents in Thorney Island, Census 2021

The dashed line indicates the average population for minor BUAs in England.



Source: Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government License.

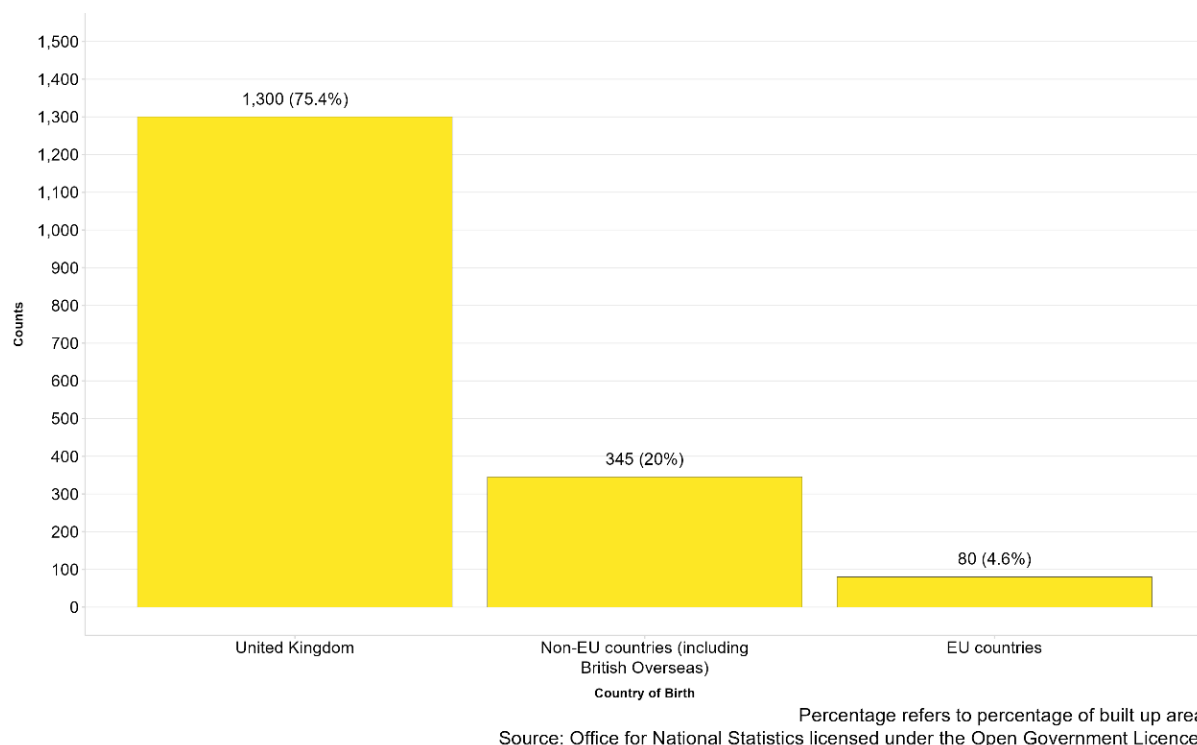
\*Indicates counts between 1 and 9. Counts (proportions) are not displayed where there were no residents in that category.

<sup>15</sup> [Towns and cities, characteristics of built-up areas, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

### Birth Country

The majority of Thorney Island residents were born in the UK (75.4% - Figure 3). The proportion of residents who were born outside of the UK (24.6%) was higher than the group average for minor BUAs (6.4%). 20% of residents were born in non-EU countries and 4.6% born in EU countries.

Figure 3: Percentage of usual residents by country of birth in Thorney Island, Census 2021



At the time of the 2021 Census, the proportion of residents who were born in the UK ranged from 73.2% (Crawley) to 91.9% (Adur) across the lower-tier local authorities (LTLAs) within West Sussex. A figure for the birth countries of residents across the lower-tier local authorities within West Sussex is available in Appendix B.

### Access to public services – the Armed Forces Covenant

In terms of healthcare, education, housing, and employment, all members of the armed forces, including the families and children of service personnel, are protected by the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC)<sup>16</sup>. The Covenant serves to ensure that

*“Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services”<sup>17</sup>*

This means that those who are currently receiving secondary care or are on an NHS waiting list should not have to re-start their clinical journey when they move to a different base. Similarly, accommodations are made to the school’s admissions system to allow the children of service personnel to change schools outside of the normal term or academic year start periods, spaces permitting.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/about-the-covenant/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/about-the-covenant/covenant-in-depth/>

According to the recent Tri-Service Families Continuous Attitude Survey (FamCAS)<sup>9</sup>, just under a third (29%) of service families have never heard of the AFC. Of those that have heard of the Covenant, only 53% claim to know anything about it. This lack of awareness may result in individuals becoming disadvantaged. This is reflected by the FamCAS finding that only around 46% were easily able to maintain GP treatment following a move. This is reduced to around a quarter when considering hospital and specialist services (28%), dental treatment (25%), or mental health services (31%).

Dentists and GP practices which commission NHS services have a duty to consider the Covenant when developing, delivering, and reviewing policies which may affect the Armed Forces community<sup>18</sup>. Dentist and GP practices can demonstrate they meet the principles of the Covenant by voluntarily signing a 'Covenant pledge'. GPs can also be awarded a 'Veteran friendly' accreditation which lasts for three years.

In addition to healthcare access, all service families are entitled to apply for a Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA), once their child is 8 years old or over. The purpose of this allowance is to assist with boarding school fees to achieve continuity of education for their children<sup>19</sup>. To be eligible for the CEA, families claiming need to remain living together, be likely to move within the next four years and ensure that the child will stay at their chosen school until the end of their educational stage e.g., primary, secondary<sup>19</sup>. Based on recent FamCAS data, army families are more likely to have a child at an independent boarding school compared to other service personnel, with 14% of respondents claiming for CEA. Alongside the CEA, state schools, academies, and free schools in England with children of service families from reception to Year 11 can apply for Service Pupil Premium (SPP) funding<sup>20</sup>. This funding can be used to provide additional support and is worth £340 per child, as of August 2024<sup>20</sup>.

### General Health of Residents

At the time of the Census, residents were asked to self-report on their general state of health from 'very good' to 'very bad'. This assessment was not based on their health over any specified period. The majority of Thorney Island residents reported being in very good (71.1%) or good (26.6%) health based on age standardised proportions<sup>21</sup> (Figure 4).

Data on residents in very bad health or bad health was unavailable due to small counts. The proportion of residents who self-reported being in very good health was over twenty-five percentage points higher than the group average for minor coastal BUAs (47.5%).

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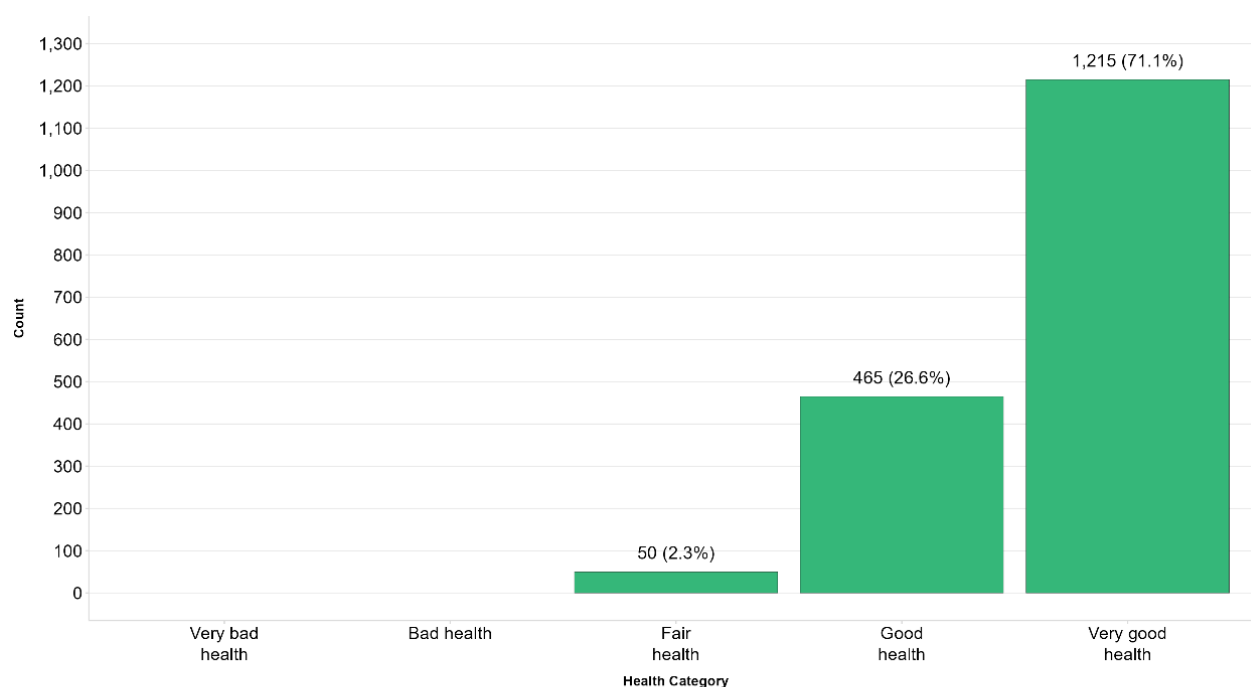
<sup>18</sup> [FAQs – The Covenant Legal Duty - Armed Forces Covenant](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Continuity of Education Allowance - Army Families Federation](#)

<sup>20</sup> [Service Pupil Premium: what you need to know - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>21</sup> Age-standardised proportions allow us to compare health outcomes fairly between populations living in different areas, as they account for differences in the population size and age structure<sup>21</sup>. However, to calculate the age-standardised proportions for small areas such as BUAs, the ONS used wide age brackets (0 to 15 years, 16 to 64 years, 65 years and above) which does not fully consider the age structure of Thorney Island. Therefore, care should be taken when interpreting this information.

Figure 4: Percentage of usual residents in Thorney Island by their general state of health, Census 2021



\* indicates missing data due to small counts for certain responses  
 Percentage refers to the age standardised proportion of residents  
 Source: Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence.

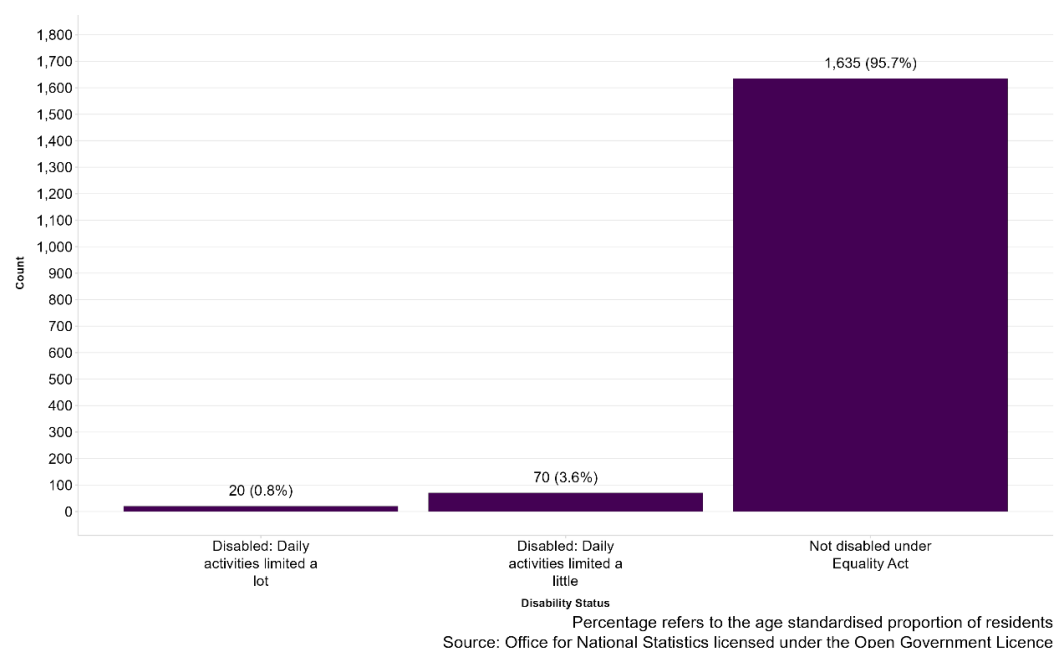
## Disability Status

Residents were asked to assess whether their ability to complete daily activities was limited by long-term physical, mental health conditions or illnesses. Residents who assessed their ability to complete daily activities as limited by either a little or a lot were considered disabled. This definition of a disabled person meets the standard for measuring disability and is aligned with the Equality Act (2010) <sup>22</sup>.

The majority of Thorney Island residents assessed themselves as not being disabled under the Equality Act (2010; 95.7% - Figure 5). The age standardised proportion of residents who self-assessed themselves as not being disabled was higher than the group average for minor coastal BUAs (80.9%). However, as noted when reporting on the general health of residents in Thorney Island, care should be taken when interpreting these age standardised proportions.

<sup>22</sup> [Disability, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/disability)

Figure 5: Percentage of usual residents in Thorney Island by disability status, Census 2021

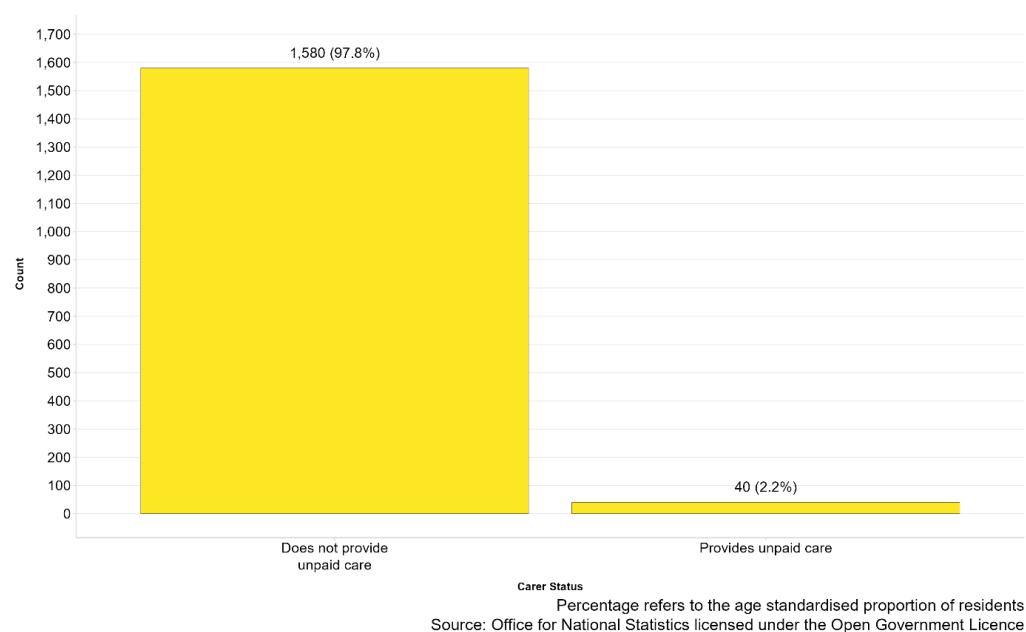


## Carer Status

In 2021, residents were asked whether they look after, give help or support to anyone who has long-term physical or mental ill-health conditions, illnesses, or problems related to old age<sup>23</sup>. This does not include any activities as part of paid employment and the help can be within or outside of the carer's household.

The majority of Thorney Island residents reported not providing unpaid care (97.8% - Figure 6), higher than the group average for minor coastal BUAs (89.5%).

Figure 6: Percentage of usual residents in Thorney Island by carer status, Census 2021

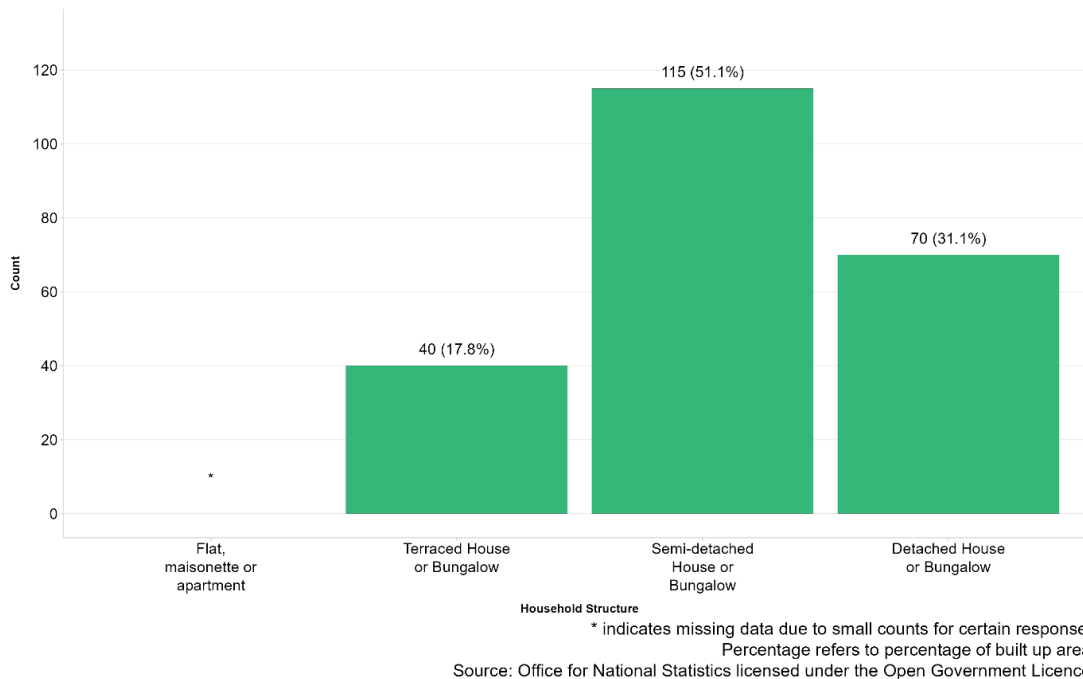


<sup>23</sup> [Unpaid care, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/unpaid-care)

## Accommodation Type

In 2021, more than half of the households in Thorney Island live in a semi-detached house or bungalow (51.1%) with 31.1% living in detached and 17.8% living in terraced properties (Figure 7). Data on households living in flats, maisonettes or apartments was unavailable due to small counts. The number of households living in semi-detached houses or bungalows (51.1%) was higher than the group average for minor BUAs (31.8%).

Figure 7: Percentage of households in Thorney Island by accommodation type, Census 2021

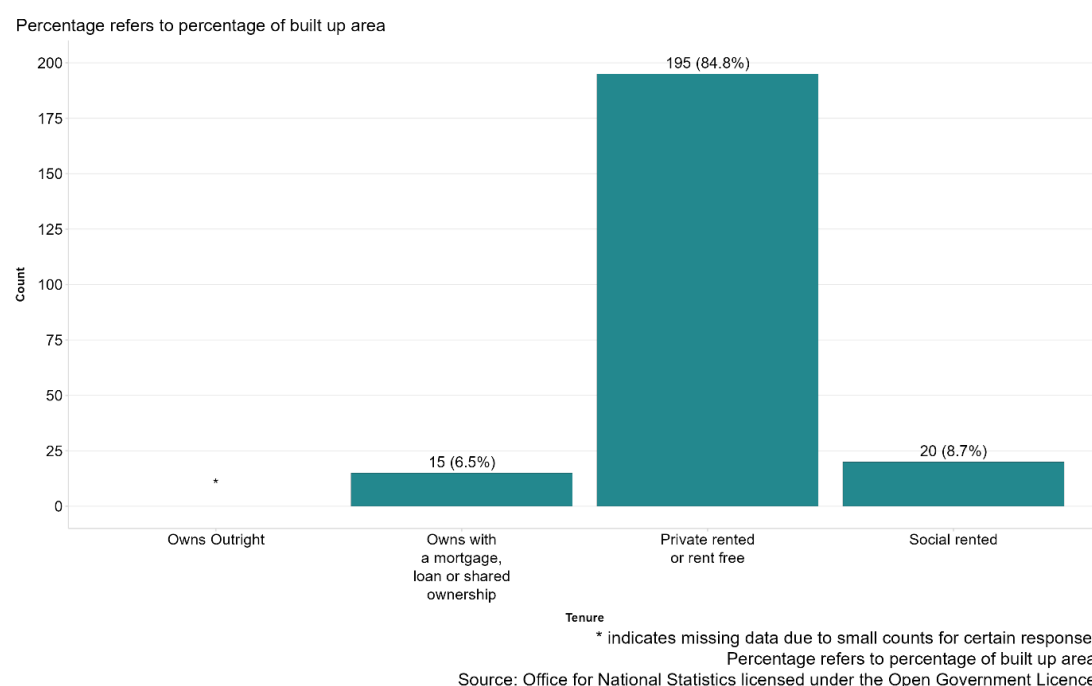


## Household Tenure

In 2021, the majority of households (84.8%) privately rent or rent their property for free. 8.7% of households rent their property from a council or local authority and 6.5% own their property with a mortgage, loan, or shared ownership (Figure 8)<sup>24</sup>. The number of households who privately rent or have their rent subsidised is more than seventy percentage points higher than the group average for minor BUAs (13%). Data on households who own their property outright was unavailable due to small counts and most likely due to privately owned properties being located offsite.

<sup>24</sup> [Tenure of household variable: Census 2021 - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

Figure 8: Percentage of households in Thorney Island by tenure, Census 2021



This higher number of households who privately rent or rent their property for free could reflect the demands of the occupation on both the personnel and their families. Many military personnel and their families live in subsidised accommodation, either at their workplace or nearby, due to the frequent moving around and limited choice surrounding where they live<sup>32</sup>. There are two main types of service accommodation: Single Living Accommodation (SLA) and Service Family Accommodation (SFA)<sup>25</sup>. Single Living Accommodation is provided to eligible single and unaccompanied personnel in the form of accommodation blocks inside military bases<sup>26</sup>. SFA is provided to eligible personnel who have at least six months to serve to live in with their families, where they are allocated a property within a ten-mile radius of their military base where possible<sup>29,27,28</sup>. The size of the property provided to eligible personnel and their families is determined by the rank of the officers and family size for other ranks<sup>29</sup>. Service personnel and their families are charged based on the type and either tier of accommodation (SLA) or band of property (SFA)<sup>30,31</sup>. These charges are at a daily rate and paid monthly in arrears<sup>30</sup>.

In 2020, the Ministry of Defence piloted a “Future Accommodation Model” which aimed to provide personnel with a greater choice of housing and opportunity to live in a private rental or buy their own home<sup>32</sup>. The model was piloted at three sites: HM Naval Base Clyde, Aldershot Garrison and RAF Wittering and ended in March 2023<sup>33</sup>. In September 2023, a new accommodation policy, the Modernised Accommodation Offer, was announced which included changes such as increased

<sup>25</sup> [House of Common \(2017\) Armed Forces Housing Briefing Paper](#)

<sup>26</sup> [Single Living Accommodation Lived Experience Survey: May 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>27</sup> [Service Family Accommodation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>28</sup> [MoD Tri-Service Accommodation Regulations Volume 5 May 2024](#)

<sup>29</sup> [Housing | The British Army \(mod.uk\)](#)

<sup>30</sup> [SFA Charges - Pinnacle Service Families](#)

<sup>31</sup> [Single Living Accommodation - UK - Army Families Federation](#)

<sup>32</sup> [Armed Forces Housing: The new accommodation offer](#)

<sup>33</sup> [End of Future Accommodation Model \(FAM\) pilot - overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

support for weekly commuters and first-time buyers.<sup>34</sup> In this new policy, accommodation will be offered based on need not rank and was due to be starting from March 2024<sup>35,36</sup>. In February 2024, the Minister for Defence People and Families announced that elements of the offer relating to SFA, such as moving to a needs-based allocation, have been paused and awaiting review<sup>37</sup>.

## Resident Qualification

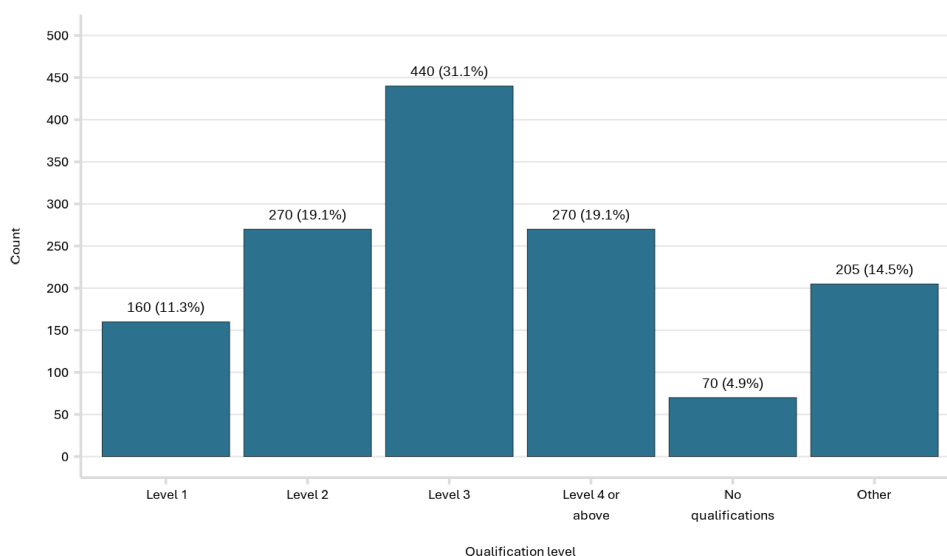
The data in the figure shows the proportion of residents in Thorney Island who have “up to” a specific qualification level. Table 1 provides examples of the distinct levels of qualifications.

*Table 1: Overview of the distinct levels of qualification*

Level	Examples of Qualification
1	1+ O level passes, 1+ CSE/GCSE any grades, NVQ level 1, Foundation GNVQ.
2	5+ O level passes, 5+ CSEs (grade 1's), 5+ GCSEs (grades A-C), School Certificate, 1+ A levels/AS levels, NVQ level 2, Intermediate GNVQ.
3	2+ A levels, 4+ AS levels, Higher School Certificate, NVQ level 3, Advanced GNVQ, ONC, OND, BTEC National etc.
4	First degree, Higher degree, NVQ levels 4 and 5, HNC, HND, Professional qualifications (for example teaching, nursing, accountancy).
Other	Vocational/Work-related Qualifications, Foreign Qualifications, includes any qualifications not mentioned above.

In 2021, a third of residents have a level 3 qualification (31.1%), 19.1% have either level 2 (GCSEs) or 4 qualifications (degree, higher apprenticeship or diploma) and 11.1% have level 1 qualifications (Figure 9)<sup>38</sup>.

*Figure 9: Percentage of usual residents in Thorney Island (16+) by qualification, Census 2021*



Source: Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence.

<sup>34</sup> [Modernised Accommodation Offer - Army Families Federation \(aff.org.uk\)](https://aff.org.uk/modernised-accommodation-offer)

<sup>35</sup> [Future Accommodation Model \(FAM\) - Army Families Federation \(aff.org.uk\)](https://aff.org.uk/future-accommodation-model-fam)

<sup>36</sup> [Discover My Benefits - RAF](https://www.raf.mod.uk/discover-my-benefits)

<sup>37</sup> [Defence accommodation policy - GOV.UK](https://gov.uk/defence-accommodation-policy)

<sup>38</sup> [What qualification levels mean: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://gov.uk/what-qualification-levels-mean)

## Comparison with West Sussex

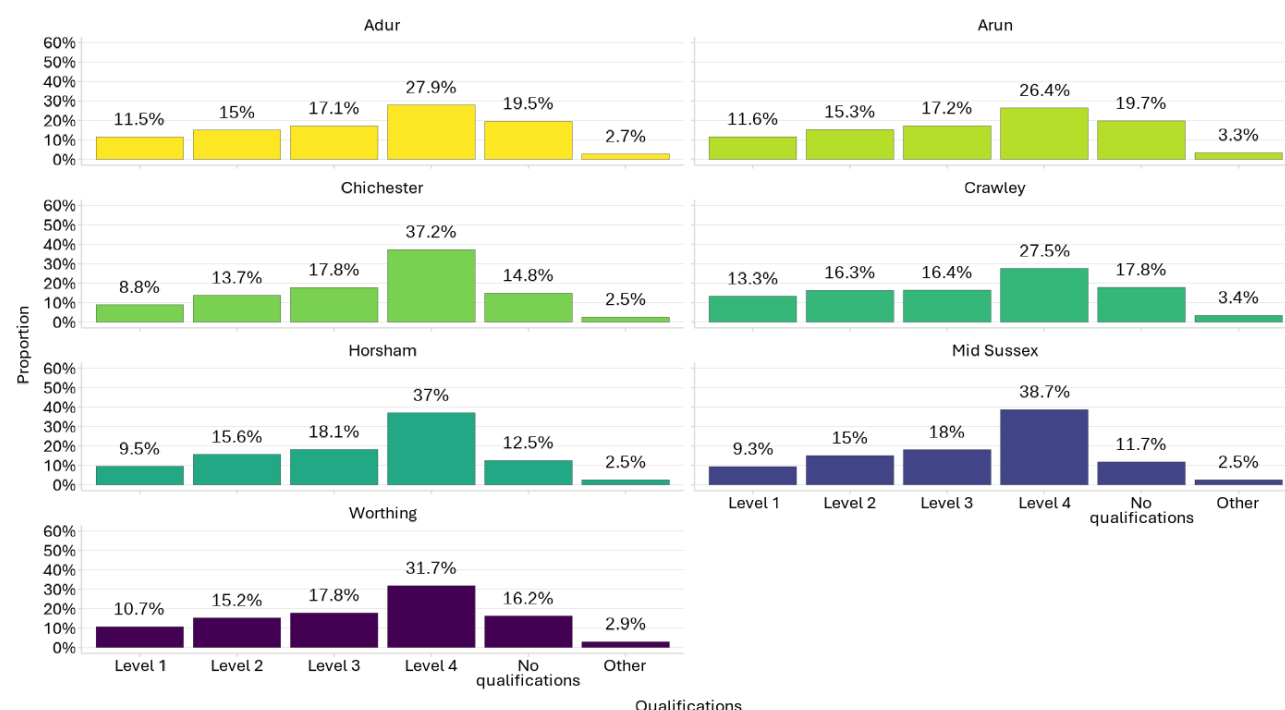
At the time of the Census, residents in Thorney Island had a higher percentage of level 3 qualifications (31.1%) compared to the lower-tier local authorities in West Sussex, which ranged from 16.4% to 18.1% (Table 2, Figure 10).

*Table 2: Percentage of usual residents (16+) by qualification level across the lower-tier local authorities within West Sussex*

Qualification Type	Adur	Arun	Chichester	Crawley	Horsham	Mid Sussex	Worthing
Level 1 and entry level qualifications	11.5%	11.6%	8.8%	13.3%	9.5%	9.3%	10.7%
Level 2 qualifications	15.0%	15.3%	13.7%	16.3%	15.6%	15.0%	15.2%
Level 3 qualifications	17.1%	17.2%	17.8%	16.4%	18.1%	18.0%	17.8%
Level 4 qualifications or above	27.9%	26.4%	37.2%	27.5%	37.0%	38.7%	31.7%
No qualifications	19.5%	19.7%	14.8%	17.8%	12.5%	11.7%	16.2%
Other	2.7%	3.3%	2.5%	3.4%	2.5%	2.5%	2.9%

*Source.* Census 2021 unrounded population and household estimates for England and Wales, by sex and single year of age. Census 2021 usual residents aged 16 years and over who have academic, vocational, or professional qualifications, as well as the number of schoolchildren and full-time students.

*Figure 10: Percentage of usual residents (16+) by qualification level across the lower-tier local authorities within West Sussex, Census 2021*



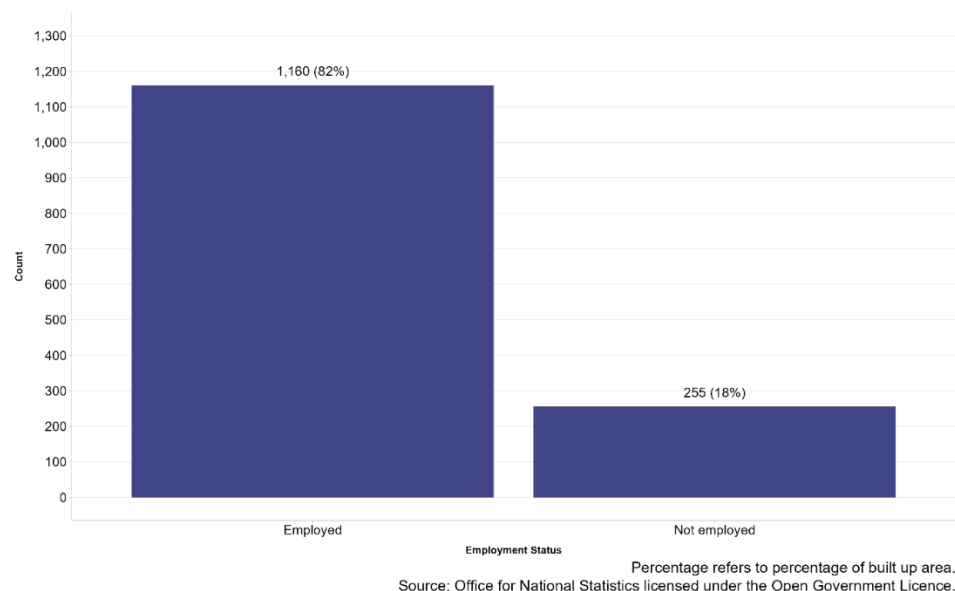
*Source:* Census 2021 unrounded population and household estimates for England and Wales, by sex and single year of age. Usual residents aged 16 years and over who have academic, vocational, or professional qualifications, as well as the number of schoolchildren and full-time students, Census 2021 data.

## Resident Employment Status

The majority of residents (82%) are in employment and 18% are unemployed, retired, studying, looking after home or family, or long-term sick or disabled (Figure 11). This percentage of residents in

employment is 26% higher than the group average for minor coastal BUAs (55.9%). However, this data should be interpreted with caution as this is not an age standardised proportion (unlike the comparison to coastal minor BUAs) and the population of Thorney Island is much younger, with a median age of 27 years.

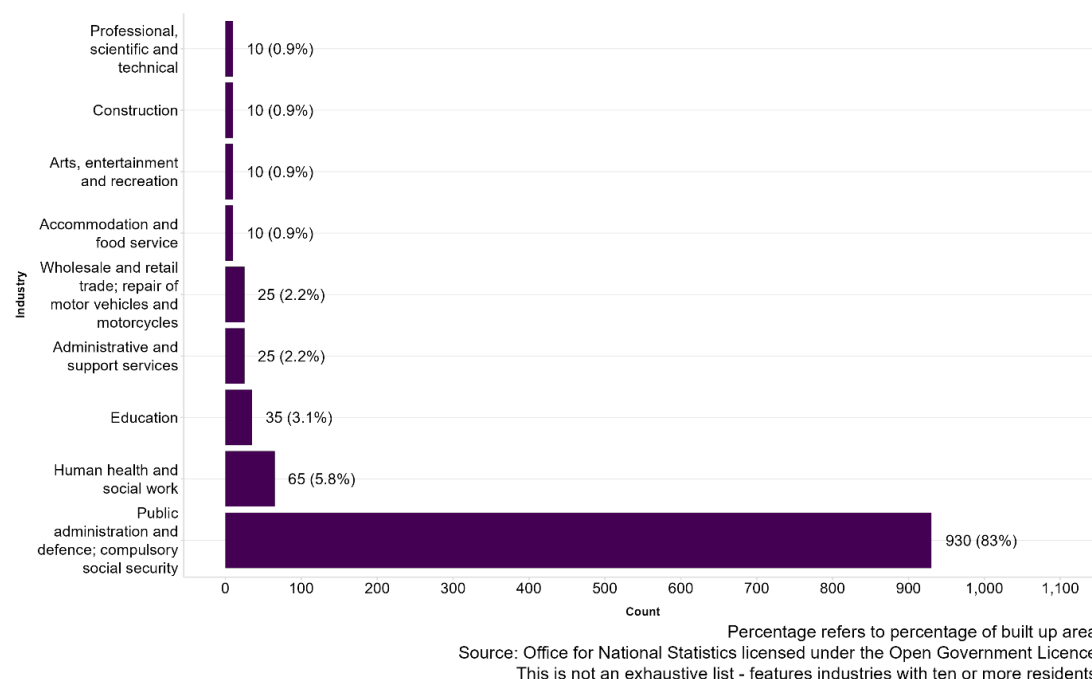
Figure 11: Percentage of usual residents in Thorney Island (16+) by employment status, Census 2021



## Residents by Industry

Residents aged 16 years and over were asked to provide information about their firm or organisation's main activity. Their responses were then coded and combined into high-level categories. The majority of residents (83%) are employed within the public administration and defence industry (Figure 12), which is a much higher proportion than the group average for minor coastal BUAs (6.8%). The data below include industries which ten or more residents (due to any counts below 10 being suppressed).

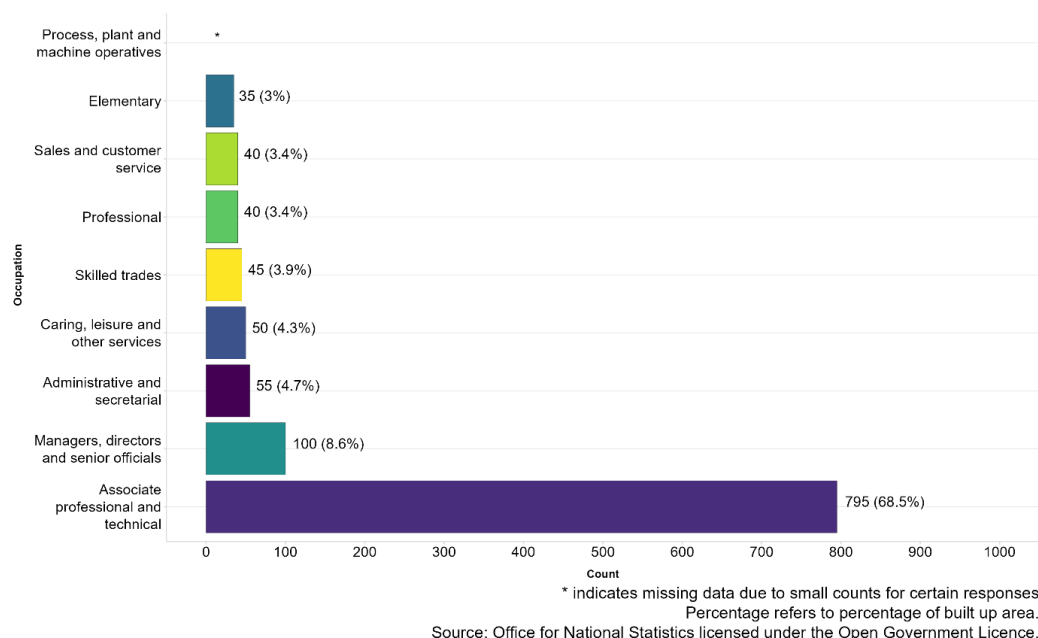
Figure 12: Percentage of usual residents in Thorney Island (16+) by industry, Census 2021



## Residents by Occupation

Residents aged 16 years and over were asked for their full job titles for their main job (or previous main job) and the main activity of their employer. Their responses were then coded using the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC; 2020) and combined into nine high-level categories based on the skill level and content of the job. The majority of residents are employed within an associate professional and technical occupation category (Figure 13). This category includes ‘Protective Service Occupations’ such as Non-commissioned officers and other ranks within the military, police officers (sergeants and below) and prison officers<sup>39</sup>. Occupations within this category will often have an associated high-level vocational qualification, often involving a substantial period of further study<sup>40</sup>. According to the Ministry of Defence Service Leaders Report 22-23<sup>40</sup>, individuals aged 30-39 or over 40 who left the UK armed forces were more likely to report employment in associate professional and technical occupations than those aged under 30 within six months of leaving. Data on residents employed as process, plant and machine operatives were unavailable due to small counts.

Figure 13: Percentage of usual residents in Thorney Island (16+) by occupation, Census 2021



## Service Personnel

To provide additional context alongside the 2021 Census data, which focuses specifically on Thorney Island being a minor built up area (BUA), this section will provide an overview of the population of service personnel stationed at Baker Barracks as of April 2024. This is based on Quarterly Service Personnel Statistics and FamCAS data. The stationed location refers to where the personnel work and not necessarily where they live<sup>42</sup>.

Approximately 1,210 of the residents of Thorney Island are currently service personnel, belonging to either the MoD Centre of Specialisation for Joint Ground Based Air Defence Units, 12<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> Regiment RA.

<sup>39</sup> [HESA - Experts in higher education data and analysis](#)

<sup>40</sup> [Career Transition Partnership 2022-23 Bulletin \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>41</sup> [HESA - Experts in higher education data and analysis](#)

<sup>42</sup> [Annual location statistics: 1 April 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

This population of service personnel is predominantly male (88%), and significantly younger when compared to the general population (mean age = 30). The overall length of military service within this population ranges from 0 to over 24 years and around 36% of the population are currently married or in a civil partnership. Around 20% (n = 240) of the personnel are from an ethnic minority group, with many belonging to the Fijian and Nepalese community within Baker Barracks. Perhaps most importantly, service personnel are often posted to new locations, with many families choosing to accompany them. Therefore, the population on Thorney Island can be transient.

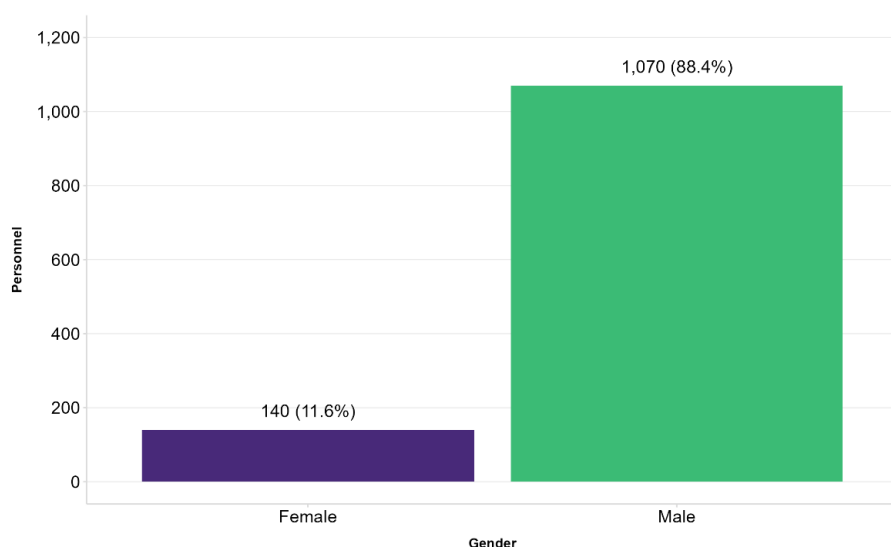
#### Officer/Other Rank Comparisons - The 'ranks divide'

Around 10% of the personnel on Thorney are commissioned officers (n = 110). FamCAS, which gathers information on the views and experiences of spouses and civil partners of service personnel, has highlighted a clear divide between military officer and other ranks in several key areas:

- Almost three quarters of service spouses (71%) are married to ranks other than officers. However, this likely represents the difference between the number of officers and those of other ranks. Furthermore, 90% of spouses are female and 62% aged under 40. This is likely a reflection of the much older age profile of those married in the general population compared to service families.
- In terms of educational attainment, officer spouses are almost twice as likely to have been educated to undergraduate level or higher (77% vs 43%).
- Officers are almost four times as likely (21% vs 6%) to have a child at an independent boarding school than other ranks. Therefore, officer families are more likely to be claiming Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA).
- Officer families are more likely to own their own home than other ranks.
- Officer spouses have a greater awareness of the AFC, with 87% having at least heard of it. This compares to 64% among other rank spouses.

Regardless of rank, all spouses that responded to the FamCAS survey believed that being part of the Armed Forces Community had an impact on their lives. This reported impact was frequently negative with respect to their careers (57%), children (49%), and income (35%). However, the impact of belonging to a military family was considered to be positive regarding pride in the service (78%) and job security (69%).

*Figure 14: Number and percentage of service personnel stationed at Thorney Island by gender, 2024*



Source: MoD UK armed forces quarterly service personnel statistics

## Education

There is one primary school on Thorney Island which takes pupils from 4-11 years. The primary school is state-funded and maintained by the local authority. For the academic year 2023/24, the school has 208 pupils - 111 (53.4%) of the pupils are female and 97 (46.6%) are male. The school was inspected by Ofsted in June 2023 and awarded an overall 'good' rating.

*Table 3: Percentage of pupils by key stage*

Key Stage	Count	%
Reception pupils (year R)	24	11.5%
Key stage 1 pupils (years 1 and 2)	57	27.4%
Key stage 2 pupils (years 3 to 6)	127	61.1%

## Free school meals

Under the Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) programme, all pupils in government funded schools are entitled to receive free school meals if they are in reception, year 1 or year 2<sup>43,44</sup>. If pupils are in year 3 and above, they are eligible to receive free school meals if their family receive certain benefits (such as universal credit and income support), asylum support or have no recourse to public funds<sup>45</sup>. For the academic year 2023/24, 7.7% of pupils were known to be eligible for free school meals. 5.8% of pupils were eligible and claiming/taking up free school meals.

## Ethnicity and First Language

For this briefing, 'ethnic minorities' refer to all ethnic groups except White British. For the academic year 2023/24, 79.3% of pupils were White British and 21.7% from a minority ethnic background. 96.2% of pupils' first language is known or believed to be English.

## Health Services

For service personnel and permanent staff on base, Thorney Island Medical Centre provides primary care, occupational health and rehabilitation services<sup>46</sup>. Outside of routine hours, online consultations are available until 6:30pm and then service personnel and permanent staff are diverted to NHS 111.

There are two GP surgeries and pharmacies in Southbourne and Emsworth within a 30-minute car journey<sup>46</sup> of Thorney Island. Figure 15 provides a map of the GP surgeries (indicated in green) and pharmacies (indicated in purple) within 30 minute drive to Thorney Island.

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<sup>43</sup> [Universal infant free school meals | Education and learning | Hampshire County Council](#)

<sup>44</sup> [Free school meals | Healthy Surrey](#)

<sup>45</sup> [Eligibility \(years 3 and above\) | NRPF](#)

<sup>46</sup> [Thorney Island Medical Centre - CQC report February 2023](#)

Figure 15: Access to Pharmacies and Dispensing GPs in Thorney Island



### Workday Population

The workday population is an estimate of the population during the working day<sup>47</sup>. It includes everybody who works in an area (16+), wherever they usually live, and all residents who live in the area but do not work<sup>47</sup>. If there is not a fixed place of work and residents work from home, their home address is used for the workday population<sup>48</sup>.

The Census 2021 provides estimates for alternative populations, such as the workday population, for different geographies across England and Wales<sup>49</sup>. Data is available for the workday population and breakdown of workday population by industry at output at Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA) level. Thorney Island is situated within the Southbourne, Bosham and Thorney MSA (Chichester 009). At the time of the census, the workday population for Southbourne, Bosham and Thorney was 9,600 and 5,560 (57.9%) of the population were aged 16-64 years.

<sup>47</sup> [Workday population, England and Wales: Census 2021 - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics](#)

<sup>48</sup> [Workday population of Birmingham \(2011\)](#)

<sup>49</sup> . There are three small area geographies reported by the Census: Output Areas (OAs), Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) and Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs)<sup>49</sup>. Output areas are the smallest geographical area reported in the Census (between 40-250 households), lower layer super output areas (LSOAs) are made up of groups of 4-5 output areas and middle layer super output areas (MSOAs) are made of groups of 4-5 LSOAs

## Workday Population by Industry

The Census 2021 provides estimates for the characteristics of the workday population, such as their place of employment by industry<sup>50</sup>. This information can help us to determine the percentage of people working within the public administration and defence industry (which includes the administration, supervision, and operation of military defence)<sup>51</sup> and whether this is different to the usual resident population.

Of the workday population aged 16 years and over in Southbourne, Bosham and Thorney, 15.3% worked in public administration and defence compared with 11.6% of the usual resident population.

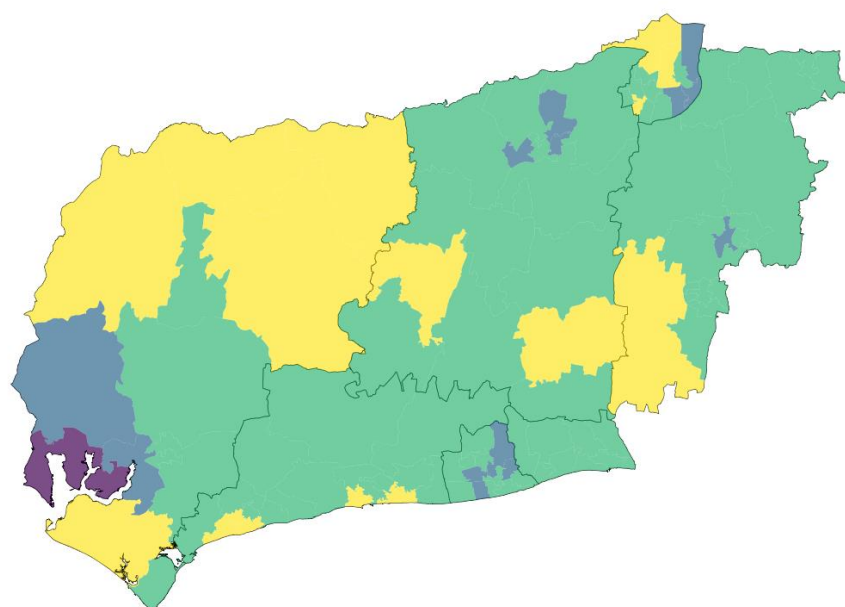
Southbourne, Bosham and Thorney had the highest proportion of the population working in public administration and defence across the MSOAs in West Sussex. Over half (5073; 52.8%) of the workday population in Southbourne, Bosham and Thorney aged 16 years and over were not in employment.

*Table 4: Percentage of usual residents and workday population (16+) in Southbourne, Bosham and Thorney by industry*

MSOA	Industry	Usual residents (number)	Usual residents (proportion)	Workday population (number)	Workday population (proportion)
Southbourne, Bosham & Thorney	Public administration and defence	1,117	11.6%	1,472	15.3%

*Figure 16: Percentage of usual residents (16+) working within the public administration and defence industry in West Sussex at MSOA level, Census 2021*

Fill colour indicates percentage by Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOAs) in West Sussex



Percentage ■ Less than 2% ■ 2-2.9% ■ 3-3.9% ■ Greater than 4%

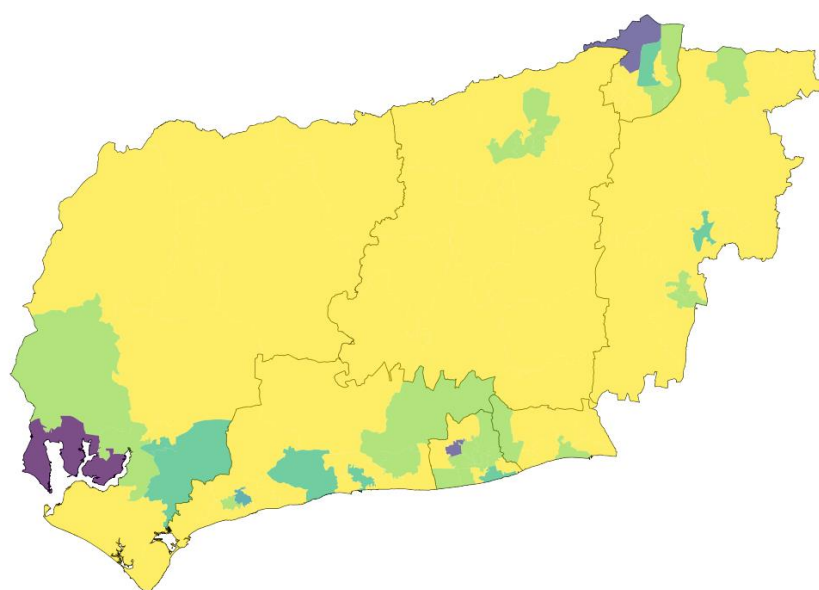
Contains Ordnance Survey data ©Crown copyright and database right 2024

<sup>50</sup> [Alternative populations, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>51</sup> [UK Standard Industrial Classification \(SIC\) Hierarchy](#)

Figure 17: Percentage of workday population (16+) working within the public administration and defence industry in West Sussex at MSOA level, Census 2021

Fill colour indicates percentage by Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOAs) in West Sussex



Percentage  
 Less than 2% 2-2.9% 3-3.9% 4-4.9% 5-5.9% Greater than 7%  
 Contains Ordnance Survey data ©Crown copyright and database right 2024

## Second address

The Census 2021 provides estimates of the number of people with an alternative address which they stay in for more than 30 days per year and the type of second address this is. This data is available at the Output Area (OAs), the lowest level of geographical area. Thorney Island comprises of three output areas. Across the three output areas, 0.9% reported using a “Armed forces base address”.

However, these figures should be interpreted with caution – instructions given to service personnel on how to respond to the census means that the recording of ‘Armed forces base address’ is likely to be substantially underestimated<sup>52</sup>.

Table 5: Percentage of usual residents by type of alternative address

Second address type	Percentage
Does not apply	74.1%
Armed forces base address	0.9%
Another address when working away from home	0.9%
Student's home address	0.3%
Another parent or guardian's address	14.1%
Partner's address	2.8%
Other	6.9%

<sup>52</sup> [Housing quality information for Census 2021 - Office for National Statistics](#)

## Appendix A

### Difference in workday populations and usual resident population within West Sussex

The table below shows us the difference between the workday populations in 2021 compared to all usual resident population for the lower-tier local authorities within West Sussex. The workday population in Chichester was 7.3% higher than the usual residents – this means there were 9,300 more people on a working day.

*Table 6: Difference in workday populations and usual resident population across the lower-tier local authorities within West Sussex*

Area	Usual residents (number)	Workday population (number)	Difference between usual resident and workday population (% of usual resident population)
Adur	64,544	61,519	-4.7
Arun	164,889	152,509	-7.5
Chichester	124,070	133,184	7.3
Crawley	118,493	122,962	3.8
Horsham	146,778	143,048	-2.5
Mid Sussex	152,568	150,091	-1.6
Worthing	111,338	110,370	-0.9

*Source.* ONS (2021) Alternative Populations, Census 2021 from the Office for National Statistics

## Appendix B

### Birth country of residents across West Sussex

Figure 18: Number and percentage of usual residents by country of birth across the lower-tier local authorities within West Sussex



Source: Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence.