

# RBWM's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment: Demographics

January 2026

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## Introduction

This report presents an overview of population demographics of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, using most recent available data, including ONS mid-year population estimates, ONS population projections and data from the Census 2021. It also identifies key factors that impact on inequalities.

The analysis of health needs and population changes are outlined in four sub-sections of this chapter. These are:

- Local Area Profile: A detailed examination of the geographical and socio-economic characteristics of the area.
- Demography: An analysis of the population structure, including age, gender, and ethnic composition.
- Population Projections: Forecasts of future population changes and trends.
- Inequalities: An exploration of deprivation and access to services.

## Summary

- RBWM is a densely populated and affluent urban unitary authority in Berkshire.
- Over 30% of RBWM residents are from minority ethnic groups. At a ward level, larger proportions of minority ethnic groups reside in Boyn Hill, Datchet, Horton & Wraysbury, Riverside and St Mary's.
- The population is projected to grow by 5.4% from 2026 to 2047, where the largest increase will be for those aged 65+ with a projected increase of 34.2%.
- New housing developments in St. Mary's ward and Oldfield ward are underway and may bring additional residents to the area.
- The borough receives a high number of tourists and students from the UK and abroad.

## **RBWM local area profile**

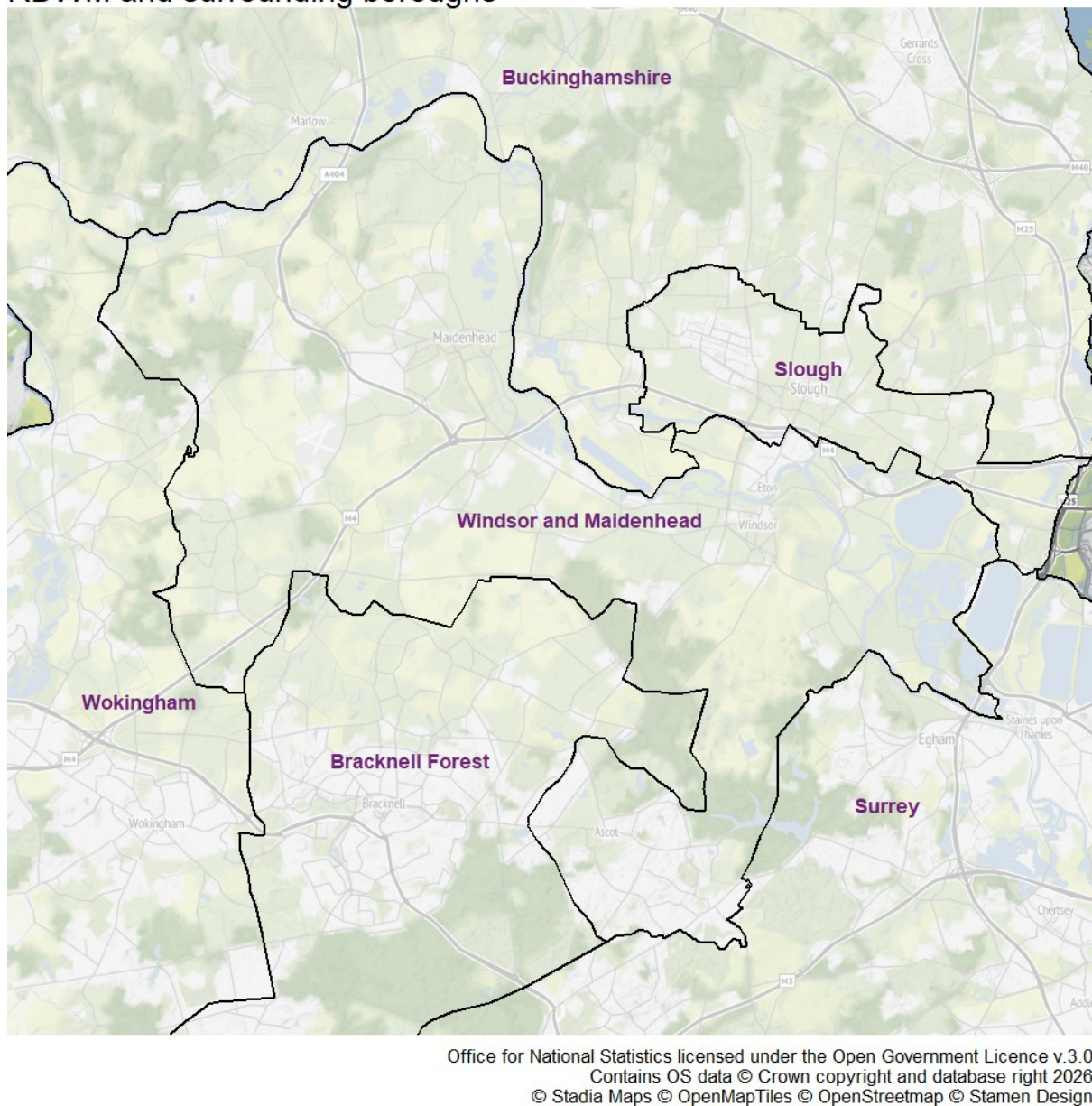
### **About the area**

RBWM is a unitary authority in Berkshire, Southeast England, at the heart of the Thames Valley. The borough is centred on the town of Windsor, with other major settlements in Maidenhead and Ascot. There are several smaller, often rural villages surrounding these main centres of population. The authority covers an area of some 196 square kilometres (19,649 hectares)<sup>1</sup>.

The river Thames runs through the borough along with the M4 motorway and A404 (M). Nearby are the M25, M40, M3 motorways and Heathrow Airport. Several rail lines pass through the borough including services to London Paddington and Waterloo. Branch lines also serve many of the borough's parishes and towns.

Neighbouring boroughs include Bracknell Forest and Wokingham to the southwest, the new Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority to the north, Slough to the northeast and Surrey to the south and east.

## RBWM and surrounding boroughs



**Figure 1:** Map showing RBWM footprint and surrounding boroughs.

Figure 1 provides a map showing the main settlements in the borough, main highways, and the surrounding local authorities.

### Residential-based area classifications

The 2021 residential-based area classifications explore geodemographic classification for each of RBWM's Output Areas. This identifies areas of the country

with similar characteristics. Output areas are made up of between 40 and 250 households and usually have a resident population between 100 and 625.

Supergroups are the highest level of classification used to group areas with similar characteristics. These classifications are based on socio-economic and demographic data from the census.

### **1: Retired professionals**

Typically married but no longer with resident dependent children, these well-educated households either remain working in their managerial, professional, administrative or other skilled occupations, or are retired from them – the modal individual age is beyond normal retirement age. Underoccupied detached and semi-detached properties predominate, and unpaid care is more prevalent than reported disability. The prevalence of this Supergroup outside most urban conurbations indicates that rural lifestyles prevail, typically sustained by using two or more cars per household.

### **2: Suburbanites and Peri-Urbanites**

Pervasive throughout the UK, members of this Supergroup typically own (or are buying) their detached, semi-detached or terraced homes. They are also typically educated to A Level/Highers or degree level and work in skilled or professional occupations. Typically born in the UK, some families have children, although the median adult age is above 45 and some property has become under-occupied after children have left home. This Supergroup is pervasive not only in suburban locations, but also in neighbourhoods at or beyond the edge of cities that adjoin rural parts of the country.

### **3: Multicultural and Educated Urbanites**

Established populations comprising ethnic minorities together with persons born outside the UK predominate in this Supergroup. Residents present diverse personal characteristics and circumstances: while generally well-educated and practising skilled occupations, some residents live in overcrowded rental sector housing. English may not be the main language used by people in this Group. Although the typical adult resident is middle aged, single person households are common and marriage rates are low by national standards. This Supergroup predominates in Inner London, with smaller enclaves in many other densely populated metropolitan areas.

#### **4: Low-Skilled Migrant and Student Communities**

Young adults, many of whom are students, predominate in these high-density and overcrowded neighbourhoods of rented terrace houses or flats. Most ethnic minorities are present in these communities, as are people born in European countries that are not part of the EU. Students aside, low skilled occupations predominate, and unemployment rates are above average. Overall, the mix of students and more sedentary households means that neighbourhood average numbers of children are not very high. The Mixed or Multiple ethnic group composition of neighbourhoods is often associated with low rates of affiliation to Christian religions. This Supergroup predominates in non-central urban locations across the UK, particularly within England in the Midlands and the outskirts of west, south and north-east London.

#### **5: Ethnically Diverse Suburban Professionals**

Those working within the managerial, professional and administrative occupations typically reflect a wide range of ethnic groups, and reside in detached or semi-detached housing. Their residential locations at the edges of cities and conurbations and car-based lifestyles are more characteristic of Supergroup membership than birthplace or participation in child-rearing. Houses are typically owner-occupied and marriage rates are lower than the national average. This Supergroup is found throughout suburban UK.

## **6: Baseline UK**

This Supergroup exemplifies the broad base to the UK's social structure, encompassing as it does the average or modal levels of many neighbourhood characteristics, including all housing tenures, a range of levels of educational attainment and religious affiliations, and a variety of pre-retirement age structures. Yet, in combination, these mixes are each distinctive of the parts of the UK. Overall, terraced houses and flats are the most prevalent, as is employment in intermediate or low-skilled occupations. However, this Supergroup is also characterised by above average levels of unemployment and lower levels of use of English as the main language. Many neighbourhoods occur in south London and the UK's other major urban centres.

## **7: Semi- and Un-Skilled Workforce**

Living in terraced or semi-detached houses, residents of these neighbourhoods typically lack high levels of education and work in elementary or routine service occupations. Unemployment is above average. Residents are predominantly born in the UK, and residents are also predominantly from ethnic minorities. Social (but not private sector) rented sector housing is common. This Supergroup is found throughout the UK's conurbations and industrial regions but is also an integral part of smaller towns.

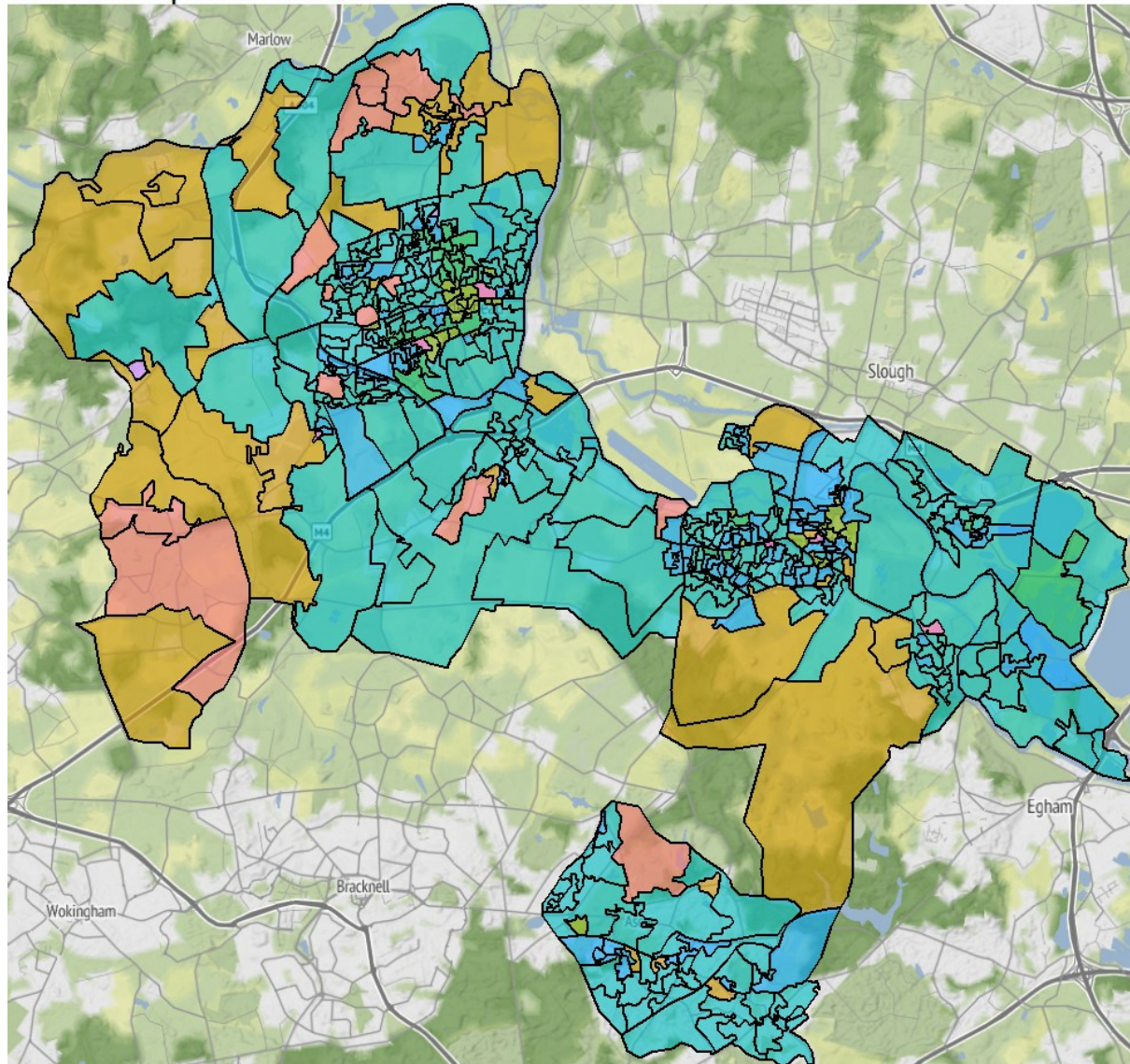
## **8: Legacy Communities**

These neighbourhoods characteristically comprise pockets of flats that are scattered across the UK, particularly in towns that retain or have legacies of heavy industry or are in more remote seaside locations. Employed residents of these neighbourhoods work mainly in low-skilled occupations. Residents typically have limited educational qualifications. Unemployment is above average. Some residents live in overcrowded housing within the social rented sector and experience long-term disability. All adult age groups are represented, although there is an overall age bias towards elderly



people in general and the very old in particular. Individuals identifying as belonging to ethnic minorities or Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups are uncommon.

### RBWM output area classification



#### Classification supergroup

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #f08080; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 1 - Retired Professionals                       | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #40e0d0; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 5 - Ethnically Diverse Suburban Professionals |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #f4a460; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 2 - Suburbanites and Peri-Urbanites             | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #4682b4; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 6 - Baseline UK                               |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #90ee90; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 3 - Multicultural and Educated Urbanites        | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #9370db; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 7 - Semi- and Un-Skilled Workforce            |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #3cb371; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 4 - Low-Skilled Migrant and Student Communities | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ff69b4; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 8 - Legacy Communities                        |

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**Figure 2:** Map showing RBWM's output area classification supergroups.

There are 458 output areas in RBWM. The most common supergroup in RBWM is Ethnically Diverse Suburban Professionals with 241 out of 458 of output areas being described as such. The least common supergroup is Semi- and Un-Skilled Workforce with 2 out of 458 of output areas.

**Table 1:** Table showing the counts and percentage for RBWM's output area by classification supergroups.

Supergroup classification	Count	Percentage
Ethnically Diverse Suburban Professionals	241	52.6%
Baseline UK	102	22.3%
Suburbanites and Peri-Urbanites	33	7.2%
Low-Skilled Migrant and Student Communities	32	7.0%
Multicultural and Educated Urbanites	28	6.1%
Retired Professionals	14	3.1%
Legacy Communities	6	1.3%
Semi- and Un-Skilled Workforce	2	0.4%
Total	458	100.0%

## Demography

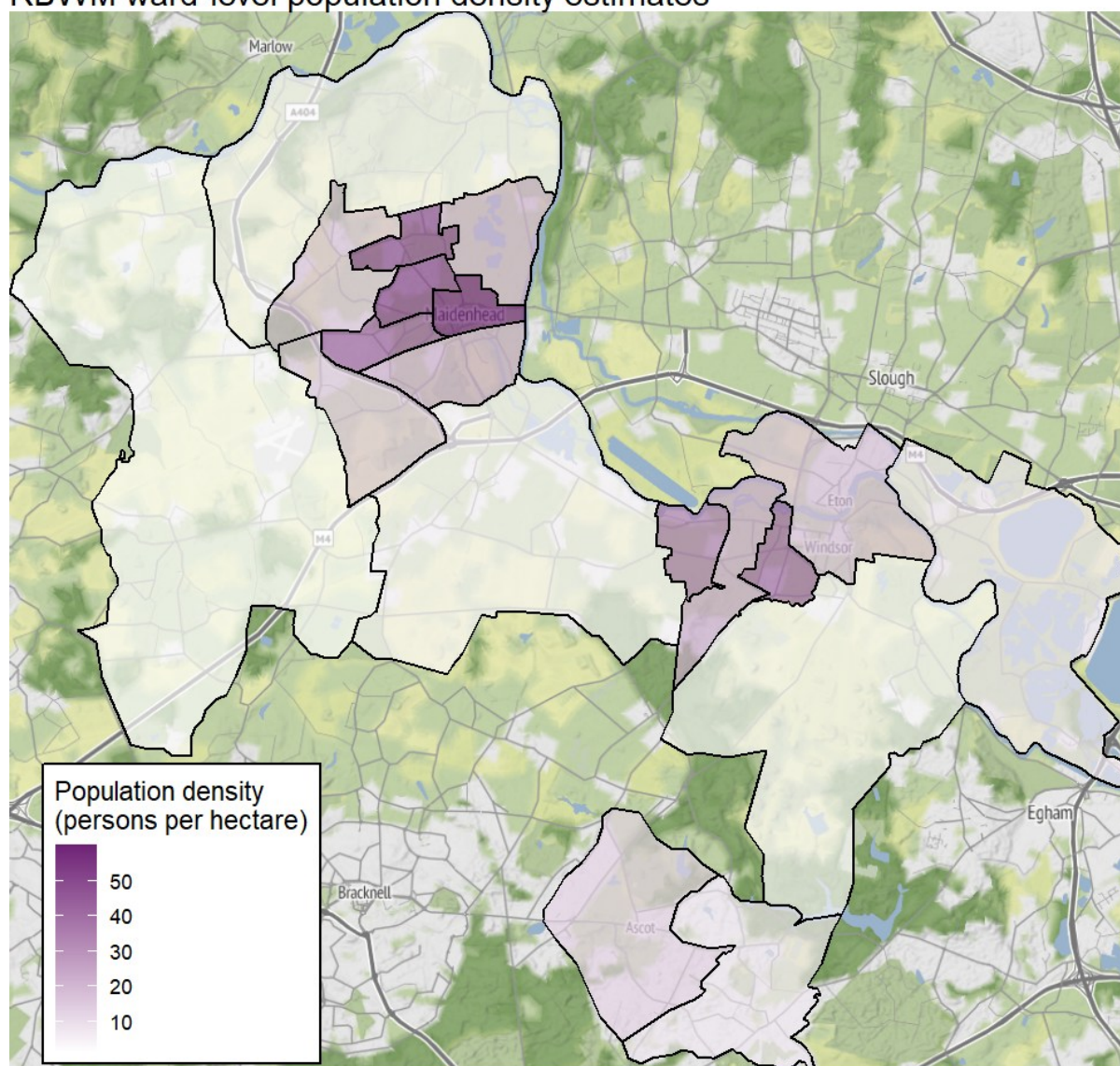
### Population size and density

The ONS estimates that in 2024 there were 158,943 residents in RBWM. This equates to a population density of 8.1 persons per hectare, which is higher than the figure of 5.1 persons per hectare for the South East region, and 4.5 persons per hectare for England as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

There are 19 wards in RBWM. The latest ward level population estimates from ONS is for 2024.<sup>2</sup>



### RBWM ward-level population density estimates



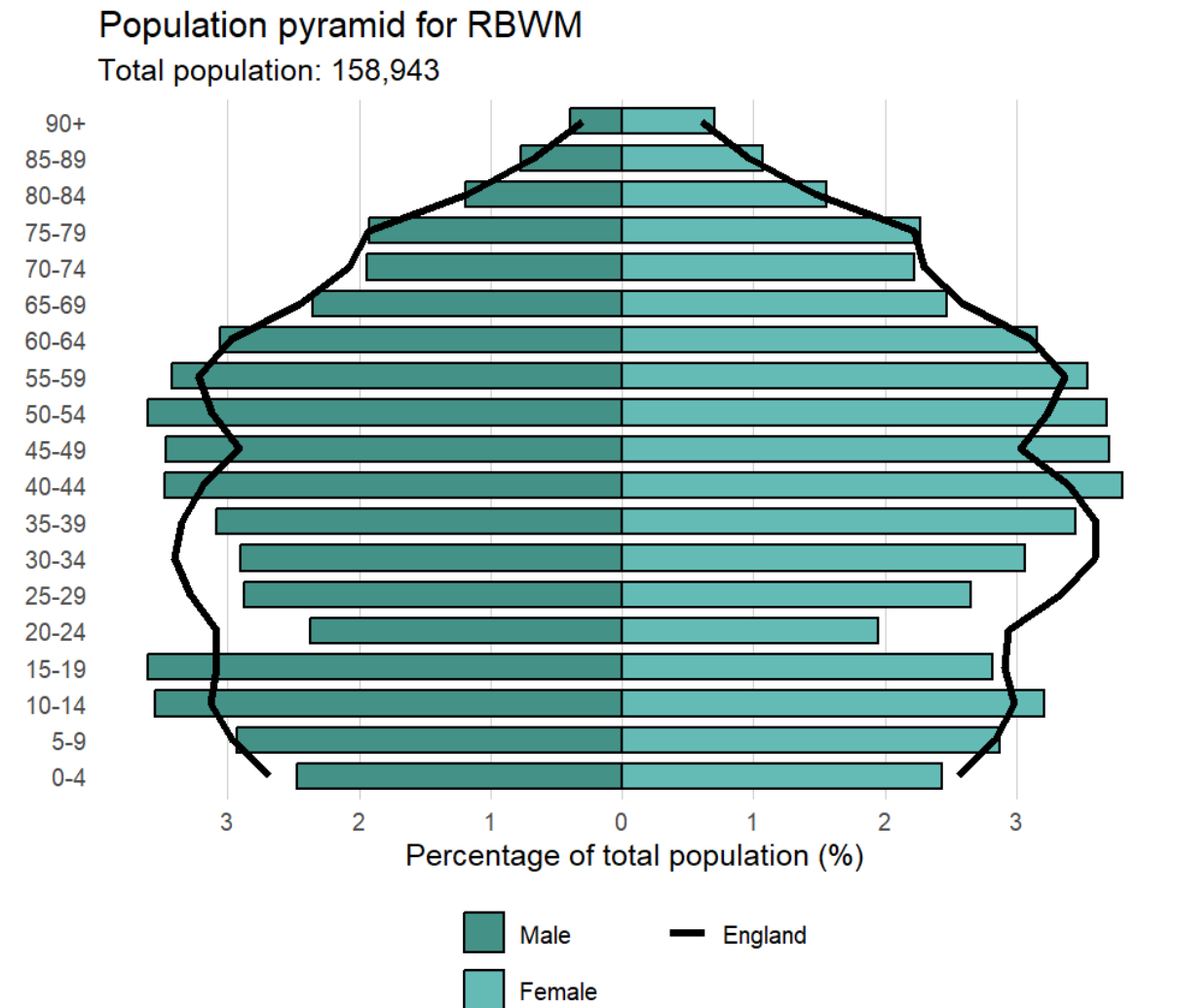
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**Figure 3:** Map showing RBWM's ward-level population estimates which are produced by ONS.

Figure 3 shows the population density for each ward across RBWM. The wards with the highest population density are St Mary's, Belmont and Furze Platt, with 60, 53.1 and 50.8 residents per hectare, respectively. The wards with the lowest population density are Hurley & Walthams, Bisham & Cookham and Old Windsor, with 1.4, 3 and 3, respectively.

## Age

RBWM's population has a median age of 42 years, which is older than England's median age of 40 years.



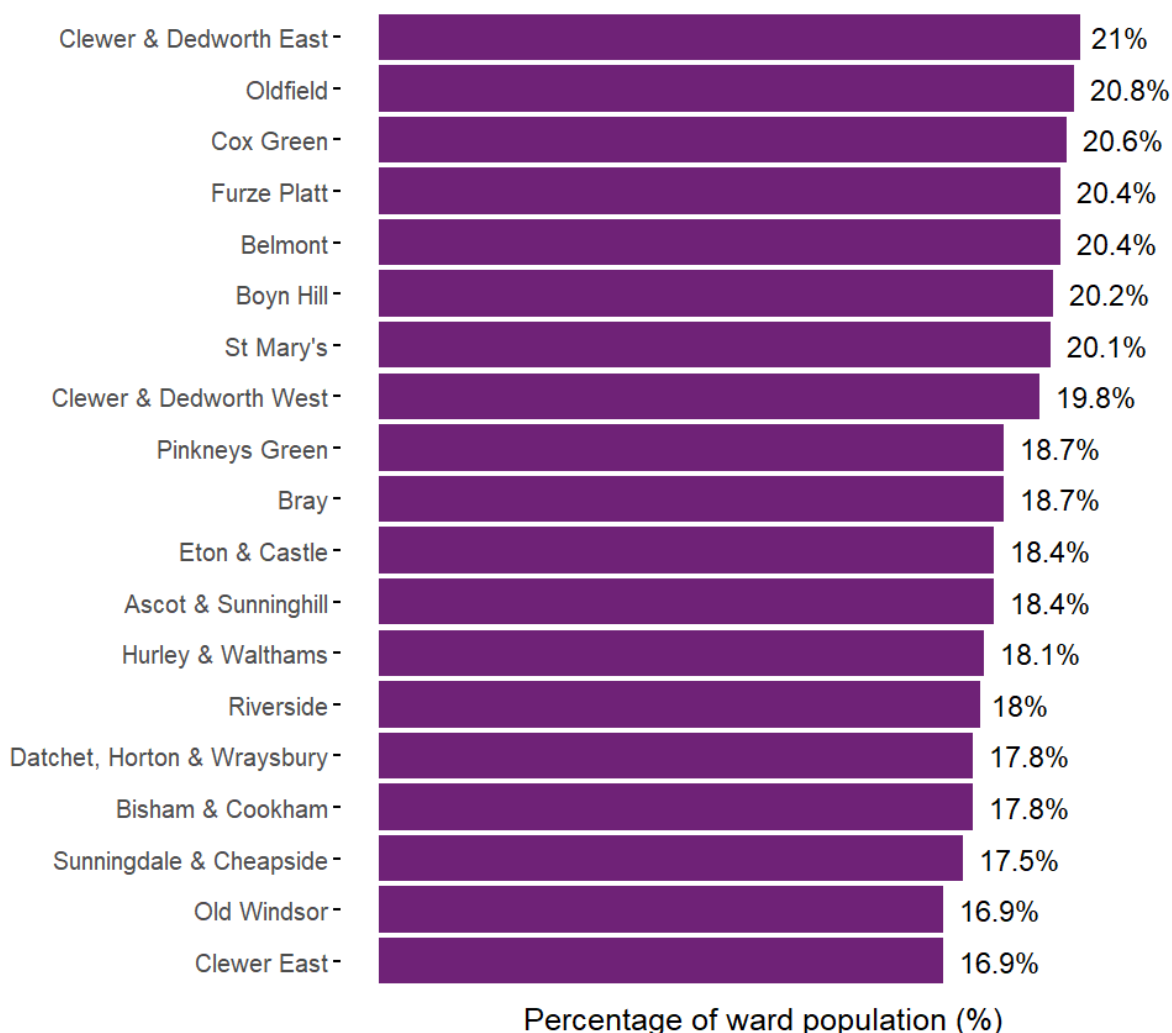
Source: Office for National Statistics, Mid-year population estimates 2024

**Figure 4:** Population pyramid for RBWM.

Figure 4 shows a population pyramid showing the age profile of RBWM. In RBWM 17.5% of residents are children aged under 15. This compares to 17.2% for England. 63.7% of RBWM's residents are aged 15-64, this compares to 64.1% in England. RBWM have 15.9% of residents that are aged 65 years and over, which compares to 16.2% seen nationally.

Figure 4 shows that RBWM have fewer residents aged between 20-39 compared to England. RBWM have a larger proportion of residents aged 40-64 compared to England.

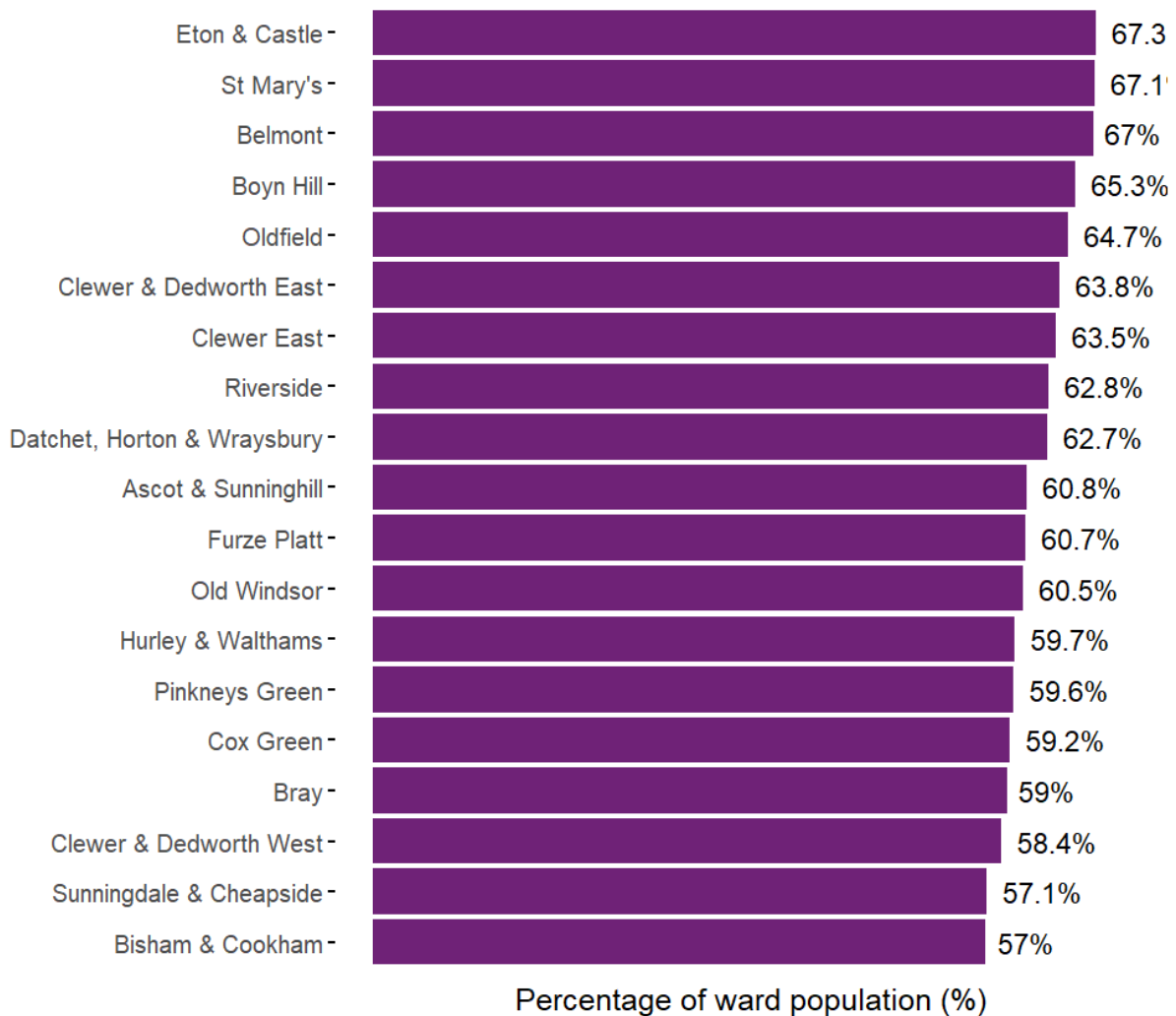
### RBWM ward population aged 0-15 years



**Figure 5:** Bar plot showing the proportion of the population that are aged 0-15 years within each ward.

We can see from figure 5 that Clewer & Dedworth East, Oldfield, Cox Green, Furze Platt, Belmont Boyn Hill and St Mary's all have a high proportion of children aged under 16 years with over 20% each.

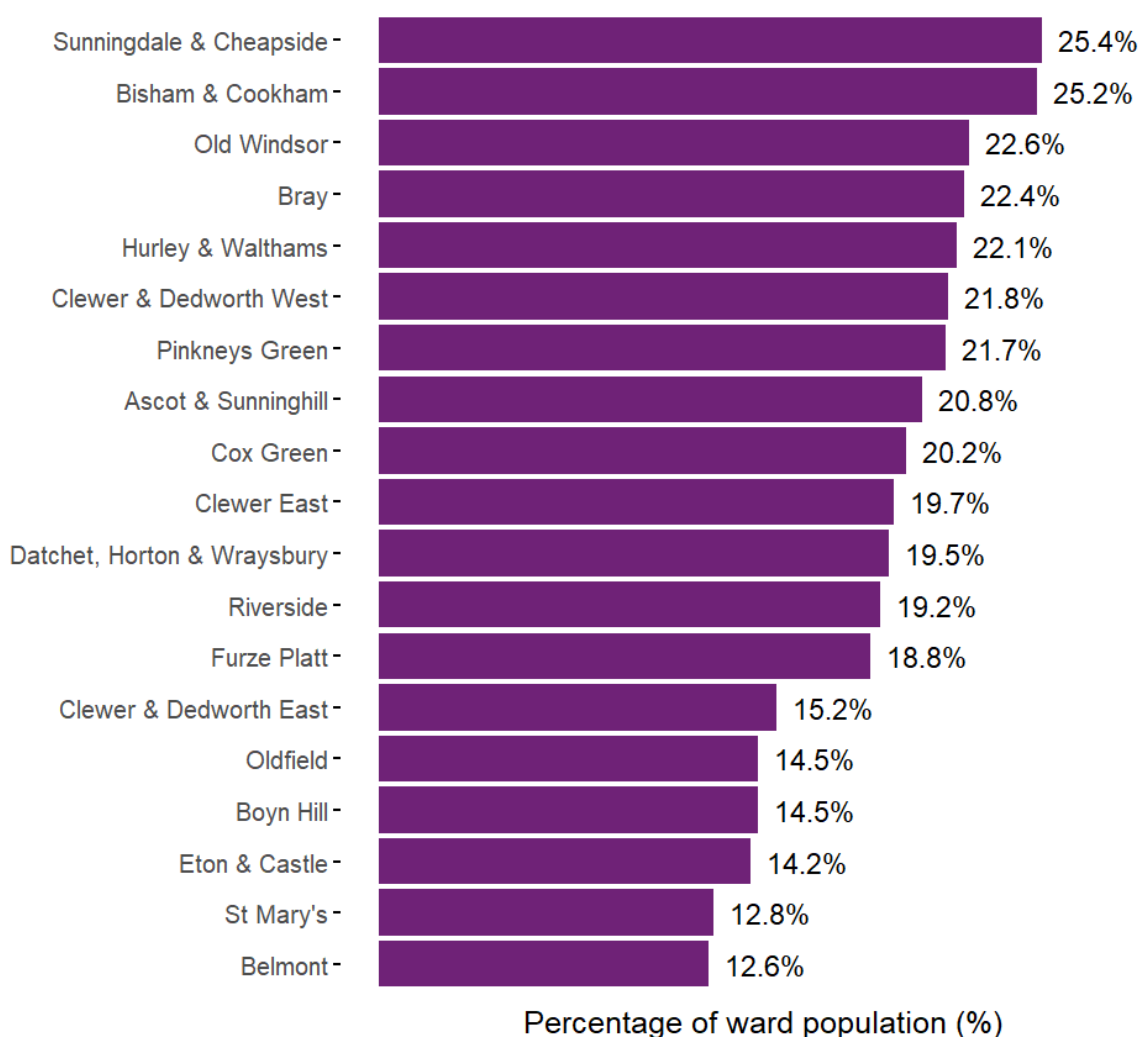
## RBWM ward population aged 16-64 years



**Figure 6:** Bar plot showing the proportion of the population that are aged 16-64 years within each ward.

Figure 6 shows us that that Eton & Castle, St Mary's and Belmont have the highest proportion of residents aged 16-64 of their overall population compared to all the other RBWM wards.

## RBWM ward population aged 65 years and over



**Figure 7:** Bar plot showing the proportion of the population that are aged 65 years and over within each ward.

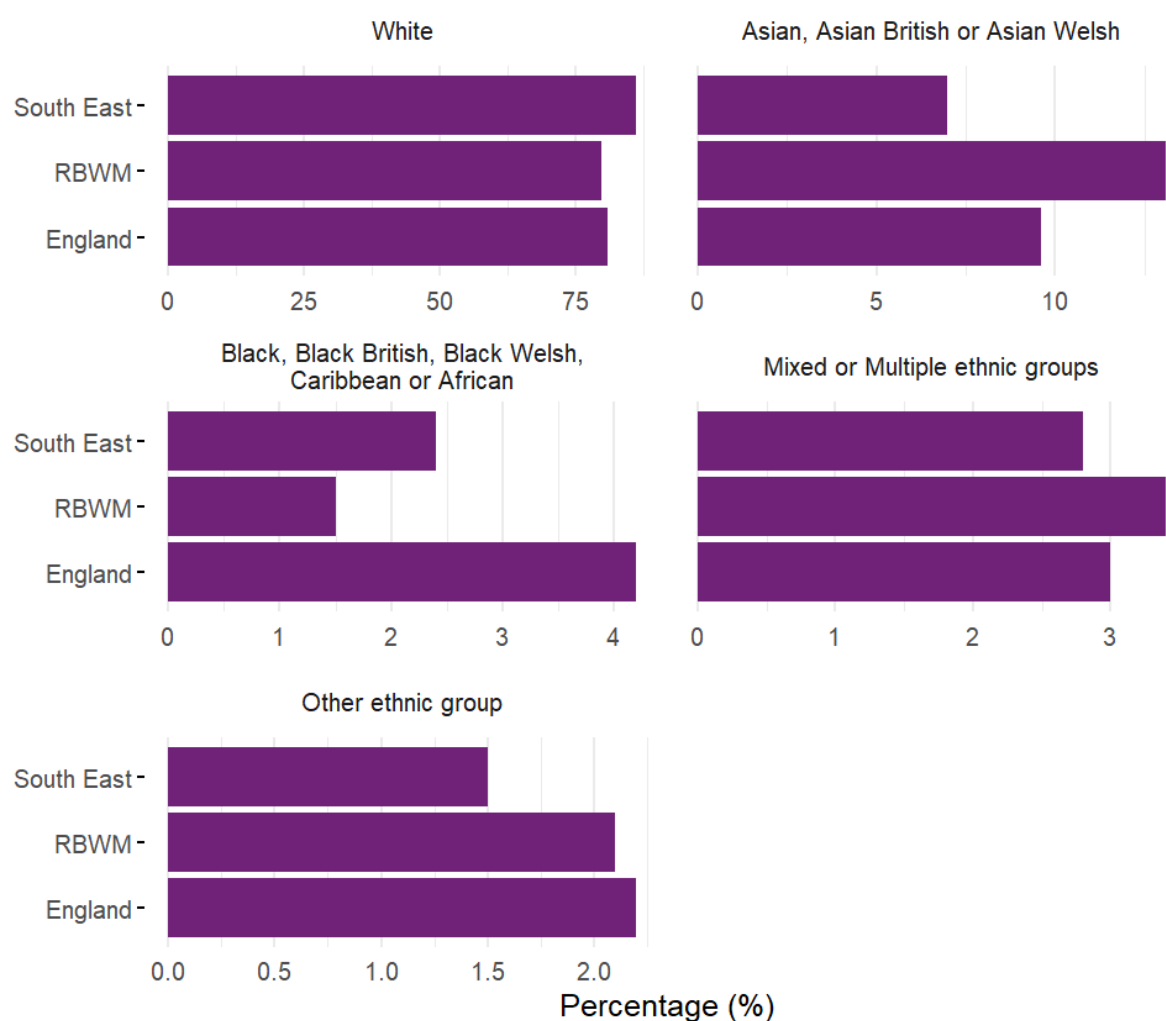
As shown in figure 7, we can see that Sunningdale & Cheapside and Bisham & Cookham have the highest proportion of residents aged 65 and over.

## Ethnicity and diversity

Cultural and language barriers can create inequalities in access to healthcare, which can negatively affect the quality of care a patient receives, reduce patient safety and patients' satisfaction with the care they receive.<sup>3</sup>

In the 2021 census RBWM had a total resident population of 153,497. Of this population 79.8% were described as 'White', which includes 'White British' as well as White Irish and White British/Irish Gypsy or traveller, and White Other. The next main ethnic group was Asian/Asian British at 13.1%.

## Ethnicity of the population

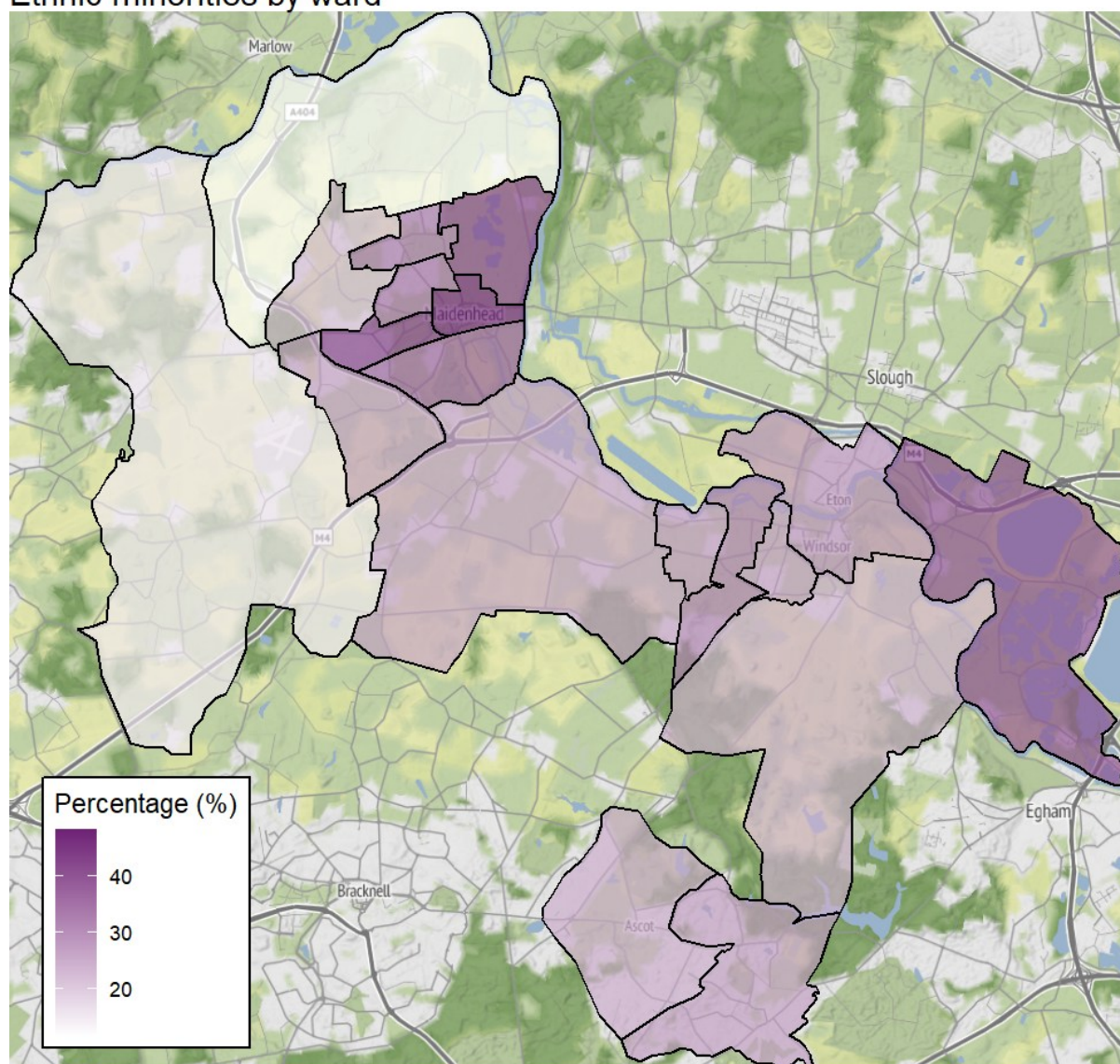


**Figure 8:** Bar plot comparing ethnicity as a percentage of the population for each ethnic group for RBWM, South East and England.

As a percentage of population, RBWM have fewer white residents when compared to the South East and England with 79.8% and 81% respectively. The next largest ethnic group in RBWM is Asian/ Asian British with 13.1%. This is higher than both the South East region and England with 9.6% and 7% respectively.



## Ethnic minorities by ward



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**Figure 9:** Map showing RBWM's minority ethnic groups (all ethnicities excluding White British) as a percentage of the population for each ward in RBWM

Ethnic minorities refers to all ethnic groups except the White British group. Ethnic minorities include White minorities, such as Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups.<sup>4</sup>

Wards Boyn Hill, Datchet, Horton & Wraysbury, Riverside and St Mary's have the highest percentage of population that are defined as being from an ethnic minority

group, all above 40%. Bisham & Cookham and Hurley & Walthams have the smallest proportion of ethnic minority groups, each below 15%.

## Culture and language

The Census 2021 estimates that 91.3% of residents aged 3 years and over speak English as their main language. This is higher compared to England as a whole, which has 90.8%. The South East is higher than RBWM with 92.8%. The next largest main language in RBWM is Polish at 1.1% and Panjabi at 1%.

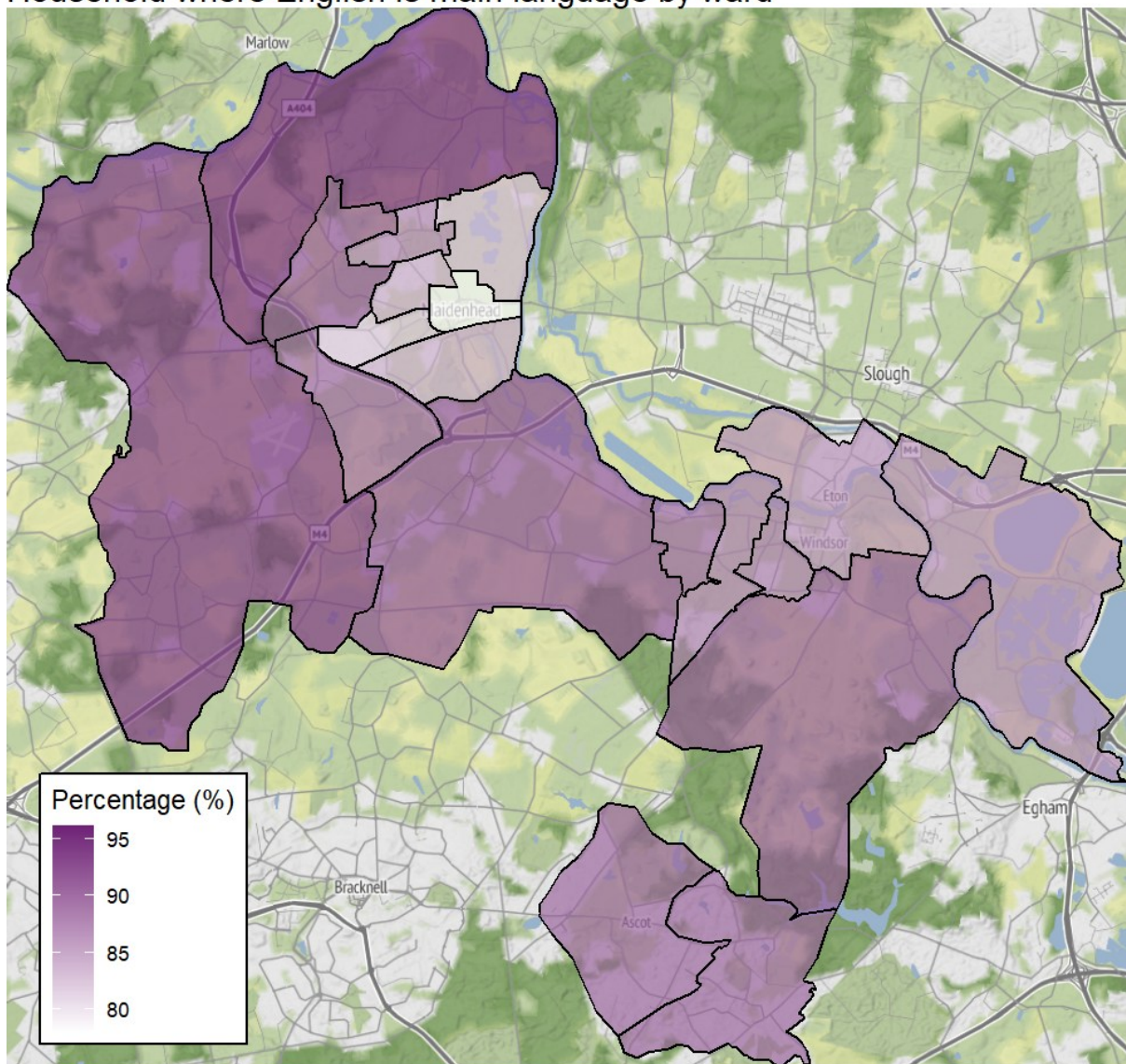
**Table 2:** Table showing the counts and percentage for RBWM's output area by classification supergroups.

Household language	RBWM	South East	England
Total: All households	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
All adults in household have English as a main language	88.4%	91.4%	89.3%
At least one but not all adults in household have English as a main language	5.7%	3.6%	4.3%
No adults in household, but at least one person aged 3 to 15 years, has English in England or English or Welsh in Wales as a main language	1.4%	1.2%	1.4%
No people in household have English as a main language	4.5%	3.8%	5.0%

Table 2 shows Census 2021 estimates that classify households in England and Wales by the combination of adults and children within a household that have English (English or Welsh in Wales) as a main language. The table shows that RBWM have a lower percentage of households where all adults in household have English as a main language (88.4%), compared to 91.4% in the South East and 89.3% in England. The table also shows that RBWM have a higher percentage of households where at least one but not all adults in household have English as a main language (5.7%), when compared to the South East (3.6%) and England (4.3%).



## Household where English is main language by ward



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**Figure 10:** Map showing households where all adults in household have English as a main language as a percentage of households for each ward in RBWM.

Figure 10 shows a choropleth map of RBWM. The map is broken down into wards and filled according to their percentage of where all adults in household have English as a main language.

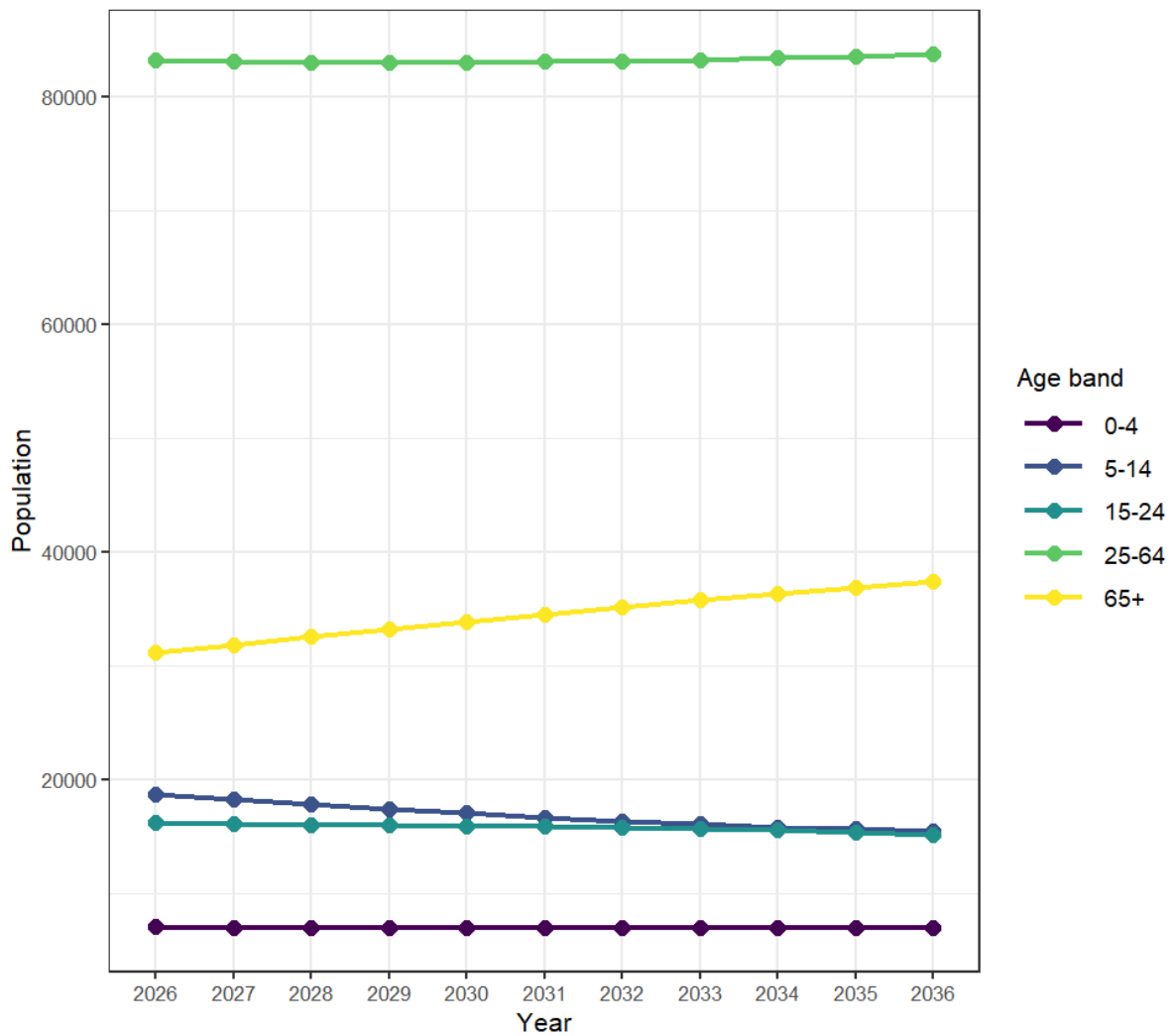
St Mary's has the lowest percentage of households where all adults in household have English as a main language at 78%, which is lower compared to RBWM's overall percentage of 88.4%. Bisham & Cookham have the highest percentage at 96.1%.

## **Population projections**

ONS produced subnational population projections for England. These projections indicate potential future population size of English local and health authorities. As of the time this document was produce the population projections are 2022-based.<sup>5</sup>

ONS's population projections show that from 2026 to 2036 the population is expected to grow by 6.4%, from 156,356 in 2026 to 158,760 in 2036.<sup>5</sup>

### Population projections 2026-2036



**Figure 11:** Trend plot showing population projections by age band from 2026 to 2036.

Figure 11 shows that most of the population increase from 2026 to 2036 is expected those aged 65+, which is estimated to increase by 20.1%. This is from 31,149.13 to 37,401. The projected increase for the population aged 65+ for South East England is 20.4% and 19.7% for England.<sup>5</sup>

## Future residential development and housing requirements in the borough

RBWM's Borough Local Plan sets overall housing target for the Borough of 14,240 homes for the period 2013-2033. Housing developments are particularly prominent in St. Mary's ward and Oldfield ward.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 3:** Table showing the number of expected housing units by financial year

Financial year	Units
2025/26	1,400
2026/27	775
2027/28	775
2028/29	775
2029/30	775
2030/31	775
2031/32	775
2032/33	772

As shown in table 3, the largest number of units to be completed is 1,400 for 2025/26. Each following financial year has the requirement of 775 units to be completed up until 2032/33 where an expected 772 units are to be completed.<sup>6</sup>

## Inequalities

### Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation in England and is part of a suite of outputs that form the Indices of Deprivation (IoD). It follows an established methodological framework in broadly defining deprivation to encompass a wide range of an individual's living conditions. People may be considered to be living in poverty if they lack the financial resources to meet their

needs, whereas people can be regarded as deprived if they lack any kind of resources, not just income.<sup>7</sup>

The Indices of Deprivation 2025 provide a set of relative measures of deprivation for small geographical areas (Lower-layer Super Output Areas) across England, based on seven different domains of deprivation<sup>7</sup>:

- Income Deprivation
- Employment Deprivation
- Education, Skills and Training Deprivation
- Health Deprivation and Disability
- Crime
- Barriers to Housing and Services
- Living Environment Deprivation

Each of these domains is based on a basket of indicators. As far as is possible, each indicator is based on data from the most recent time point available.<sup>7</sup>

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025 combines information from the seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation.<sup>7</sup>

IMD deciles enable a comparison of deprivation in neighbourhoods across England. A decile of one, for instance, means, that the neighbourhood is among the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods nationally (out of a total of 33,756 neighbourhoods in England).

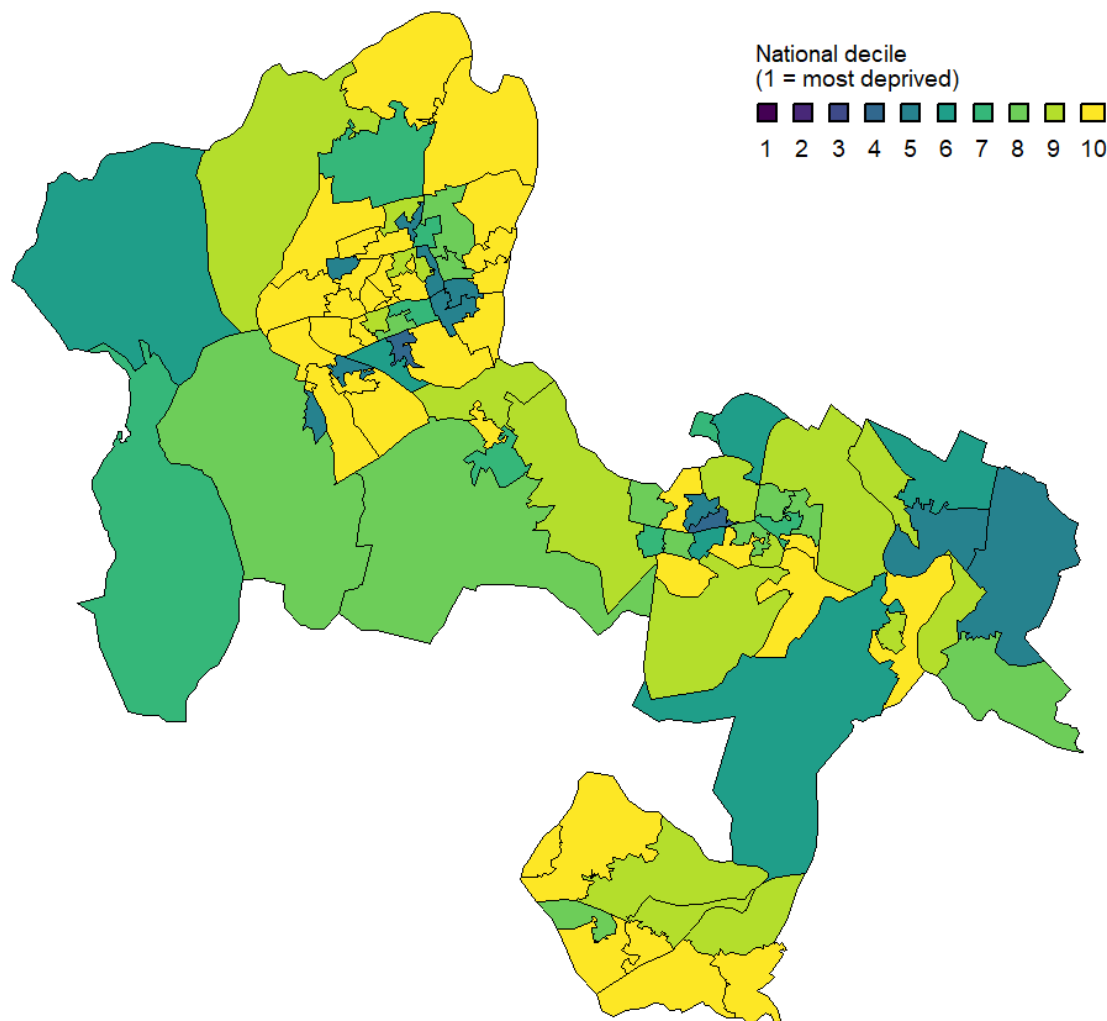
RBWM has 89 neighbourhoods, otherwise known as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). RBWM is ranked 152 out of 153 upper tier local authorities for their

average deprivation rank. This means there is considerably less deprivation in RBWM than in England as a whole. RBWM is also ranked 285 out of 296 local authority districts. Both ranks are based on local authorities as at 2024.<sup>7</sup>

### Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2025

All LSOAs in RBWM

Darker colours indicate higher levels of deprivation



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**Figure 12:** Thematic map showing IMD 2025 for all LSOAs in RBWM.

As shown by figure 12, RBWM does not have any LSOAs in the 30% (deciles 1, 2 and 3) most deprived LSOAs in the country. There are two neighbourhoods situated within Windsor and Maidenhead town centres that are notably more deprived than the rest of the Borough (deprivation decile 4).



## Homelessness

The levels of homelessness are generally lower than regional and national comparators. For the year 2023/24, 473 households owed a duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act. This is the number of households owed a prevention or relief duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act, during the financial year. Prevention duties include any activities aimed at preventing a household threatened with homelessness within 56 days from becoming homeless. Relief duties are owed to households that are already homeless and require help to secure settled accommodation. Although it is in principle possible, it is not likely that a household will be included in the numerator more than once per financial year. Applications are made on a household, rather than individual, basis and the timescales and nature of the process are such that it is not likely that a household will make more than one application in a year.<sup>8</sup>

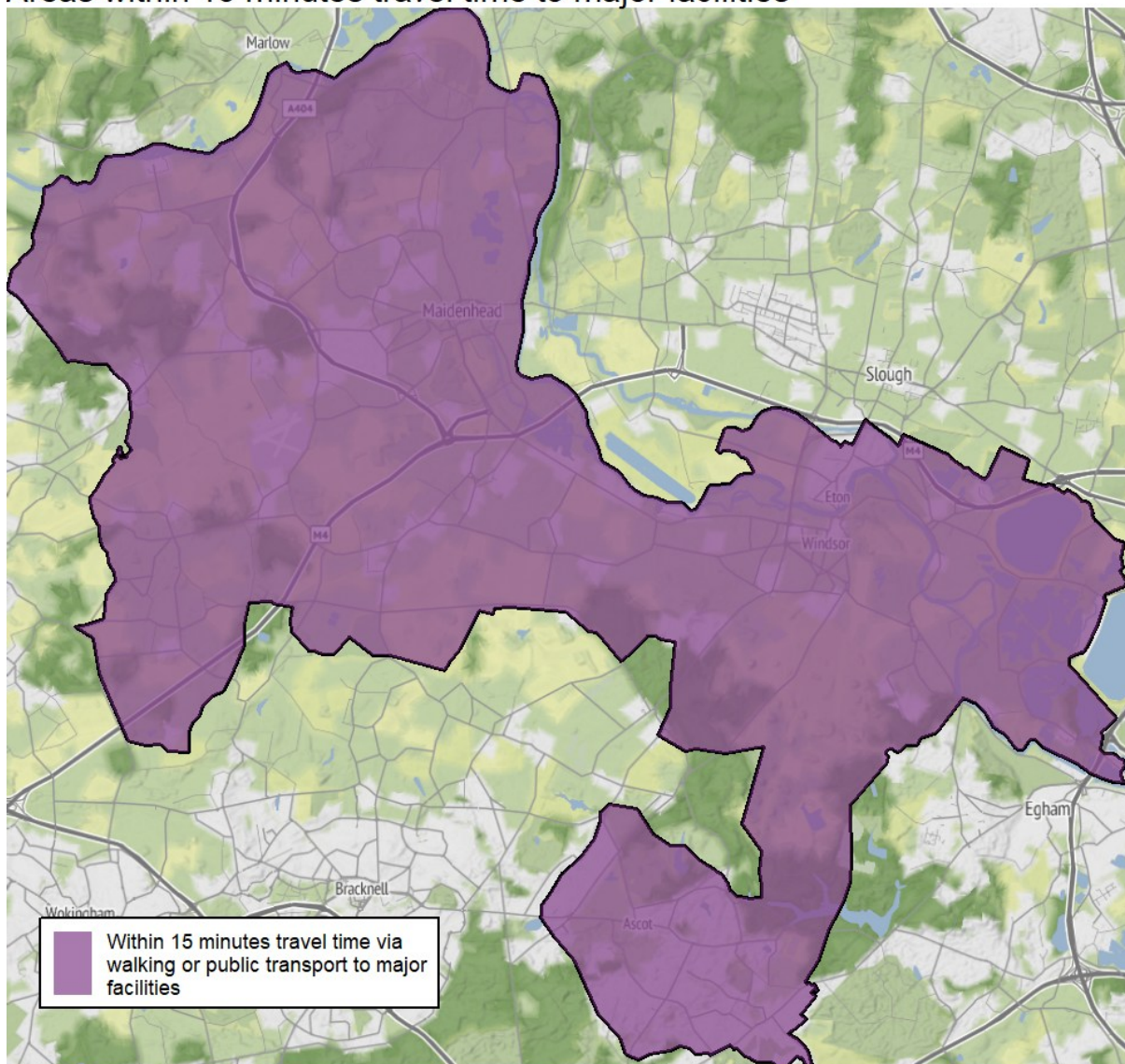
RBWM's rate of homelessness (households owed a duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act) is 7.5 per 1,000 estimated total number of households. This is statistically significantly lower when compared to the England average of 13.4 per 1,000 and the South East 11.3 per 1,000.<sup>8</sup>

306 households were living in temporary accommodation provided under homelessness legislation in RBWM, as of 30 June 2025. This is a rate of 4.8 per 1,000 households, and is similar compared England's rate of 5.4 per 1,000 households and statistically significantly worse compared to South East England's rate of 4.0 per 1,000 households.<sup>9</sup>

## Access to services and facilities

The Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions produce the Place-Based Carbon Calculator. Within this calculator data is available giving the location of areas within 15 minutes travel time by public transport or walking to main centres of population.<sup>10</sup>

### Areas within 15 minutes travel time to major facilities



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**Figure 13:** Map showing filled areas within RBWM that have access to main facilities within 15 minutes travel time by public transport or walking.

Figure 13 shows the areas in RBWM that are within a 15-minute walk or 15 minutes of travel time by public transport to major facilities. An estimated 93% of the population in RBWM live within 15 minutes travel time by public transport of major facilities.

Access to services in communities where there is high deprivation is important in addressing health inequalities.

## **Groups with specific needs**

### **Unpaid carers**

As at Census Day on 21 March 2021, the Census estimated that 10,775 usual residents (7.4%) aged 5 years and over in RBWM were providing unpaid care. In comparison, 8.7% of usual residents aged 5 years and over in England and 8.3% in the South East were providing unpaid care.<sup>11</sup>

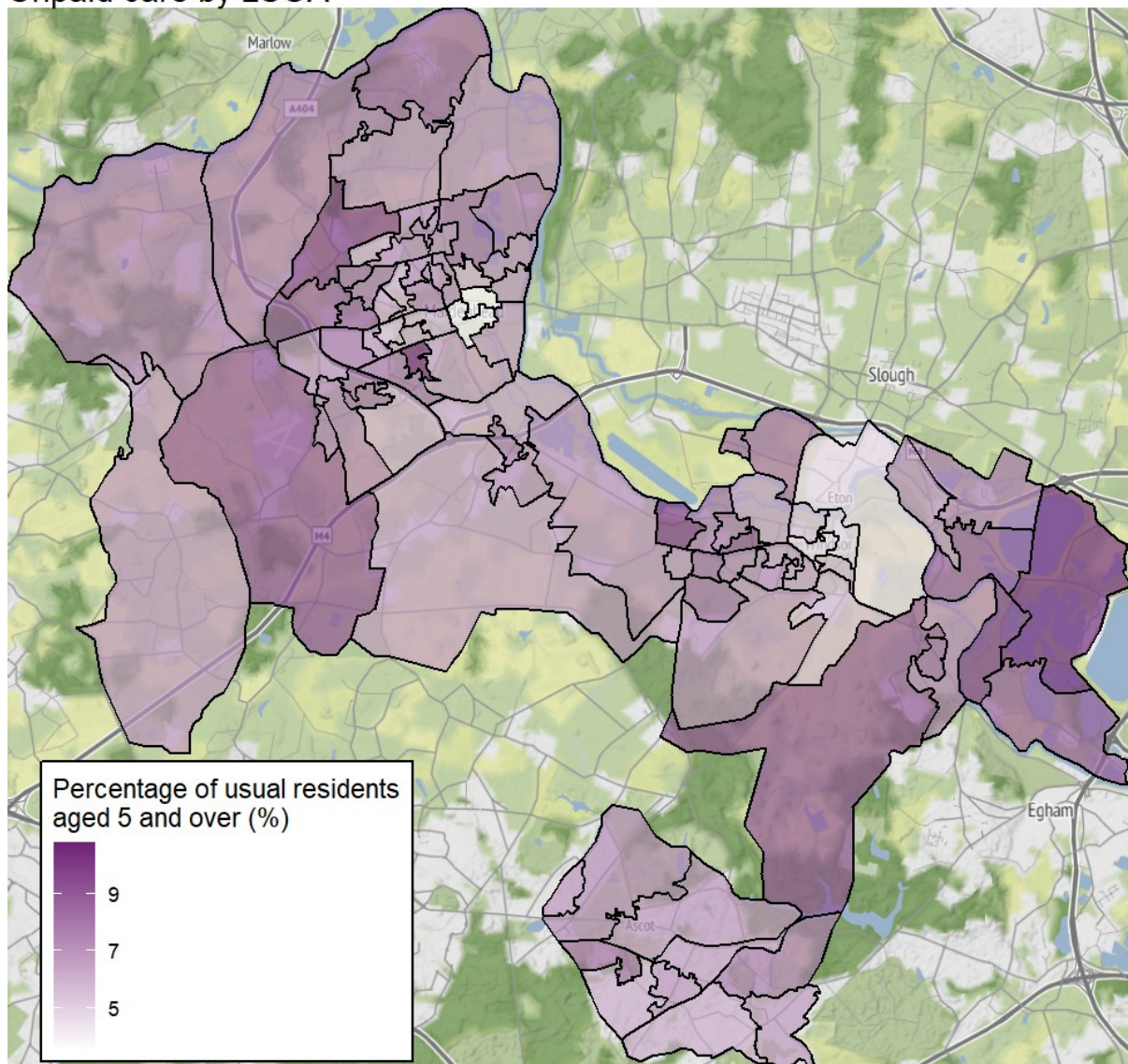
The age-standardised proportion of people providing 19 or less hours of unpaid care a week in RBWM was 4.2%. In comparison, 4.4% in England and 4.5% in South East were providing 19 or less hours of unpaid care a week.<sup>12</sup>

The age-standardised proportion of people providing 20 to 49 hours of unpaid care a week in RBWM was 1.3%. In comparison, 1.8% in England and 1.6% in South East were providing 20 to 49 hours of unpaid care a week.<sup>12</sup>

The age-standardised proportion of people providing 50 or more hours of unpaid care a week in RBWM was 1.9%. In comparison, 2.7% in England and 2.4% in South East were providing 50 or more hours of unpaid care a week.<sup>12</sup>



## Unpaid care by LSOA



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**Figure 14:** Map showing percentage of usual residents aged 5 and over that are classified as giving unpaid care.

Figure 14 shows how the percentage of usual residents providing unpaid care varies across the borough. At an LSOA level, the percentage varies between 3.5% to 10.8%.

## **Students**

Royal Holloway College of the University of London is situated at a campus in Egham in Surrey, very close to the boundary of the borough with Surrey to the southeast of Windsor town. The college has a total of 12,699 students.<sup>13</sup> Imperial College London also has a campus called Silwood Park campus, located in Sunninghill (Ascot).

## **Numbers of visitors (both home and overseas) to RBWM**

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan notes that Windsor is one of the major tourist attractions in South East England, experiencing very high levels of tourism and day visitor activity which make an important contribution to the local economy. Windsor Castle is an international tourist destination. In addition, Legoland Windsor is one of Britain's most popular paid for tourist attractions, and there are many other events which take place in the borough every year, most notably the Royal Ascot Race meeting, with around 300,000 people travelling to the racecourse at Ascot over the five days of racing. It is important to note that the effects of high visitor numbers on traffic congestion and pressures on local services and residents require careful management.<sup>14</sup>

A report commissioned by the borough on the economic impact of tourism in the area estimated that around 540,000 overnight tourism trips were made to RBWM in 2022 and of these trips domestic visitors made 64.6% of trips (349,000). It was also estimated that around 12.2 million day trips were made to RBWM in 2022.<sup>15</sup>

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