



Fife results from Scotland's Census 2022

Key findings for Equalities

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Scotland's Census is the official count of every person and household in the country. There has been a census in Scotland every 10 years since 1801, except 1941. The 2021 census in Scotland was moved to 2022 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The answers people give to census questions help build up a picture of the population. Government and other service providers rely on census data to make important decisions.

This briefing summarises the key findings from the more detailed Equalities Topic report which focuses on what the census tells us about the Fife population and its households, particularly in relation to equality characteristics. These statistics help to show how Fife's people have changed over the last decade.

The Census shows some significant changes in Fife's population structure that have taken place over the last 11 years.

Population

- Fife's population is estimated at 371,781 as of Census Day 20 March 2022, an increase of 1.8% since 2011.

Age

- Fife's age structure continues to change, with fewer children (-2,552) and working age people (-6,821) than in 2011, and significant increases in its older population (+15,939).
- In the decades leading up to 2011, the proportion of children in the population was higher than for older people. Since 2011, older people have overtaken the number of children, and in 2022, this gap continues to increase at a faster rate.

Sex

- Females make up 51.6% of Fife's population, while males make up 48.4%, similar to the overall proportions for Scotland.
- There continues to be a generally higher proportion of males than females for those people aged 0-20, but by their early 20s females make up a higher proportion of the population, and for females aged over 85, they significantly outnumber males.

Households

- Fife has 169,573 households, an increase of 8,621 from 2011.
- The number of Fife households has increased at a faster rate (5.4%) than its population (1.8%) continuing the trend for smaller numbers of people in each household.
- While more than half of households in Fife are owner-occupied, there are now more households living in private rented rather than in social rented accommodation.
- The 50-64 and 65 plus age groups have both seen increases in private renting over the last ten years of around 4-6%.
- One in four Fife households do not have access to a car or van.

Living arrangements

- One of the biggest changes to household size is the increase in single person households, which are now almost as common as two person households.
- For people aged 55 and over, just under two-thirds (63.7%) live alone in Fife in 2022.
- Older people are more likely to live alone than younger people, with only 3.4% of those aged 16-24 living alone.
- In 2022 there were 40,620 households with dependent children in Fife, just under one in four households (24%), similar to Scotland. This is a decrease of 2,769 or 3% since 2011. This reflects the decrease in the number of children in Fife over this period.
- In 2022 there were 16,923 households containing one family with only non-dependent children in Fife accounting for 10% of households.
- There were 17,045 households containing lone parent families in Fife. This is around 1 in 10 households and is similar to the Scottish average.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

- The census shows a gradual shift from marriage or civil partnerships towards cohabiting.
- The number of cohabiting couples went up by 15.8% from 2011, while married or civil partnership couple households decreased by 9.6%.
- There were 68,398 households containing couples in Fife in 2022. This is a decrease of 2,723 (-3.8%) from 2011, and contrasts with Scotland which saw an increase of 4.5%.
- Those that said that they had 'never married' increased to 35.1%, from 31.6% in 2011.
- The percentage of people who were married decreased from 48.2% in 2011 to 45.7% in 2022.
- People who were separated reduced slightly by 0.9% from 2011, while the proportion of those divorced or widowed, remained stable over the decade.

Sexual orientation

- This was a voluntary question for people aged 16 and over, around 8% of people did not answer the sexual orientation question in Fife (similar to Scotland).
- 88% of people (aged 16 and over) identified as straight or heterosexual.
- There were 11,919 LGB+ people (4.0%) aged 16 and over, similar to Scotland.
- There are more LGB+ people in younger age groups than in older groups.

Trans status or history

- There were 1,294 trans people in Fife (0.4% 16 and over), similar to the Scottish average.
- Just under 44% of Fife trans people identify as 'non-binary', slightly lower than the Scotland figure of 45%.
- 17% of trans people identified as trans men, while 15% identified as trans women, and 15% did not specify their trans status or history, similar to the Scottish average.

Disability and health

- In 2022 in Fife, 289,322 (77.8%) said that their health was good or very good. This is a decrease from 2011 of 9,569 people.
- The number of people with a health problem that limited their day-to-day activities increased across all age groups from 2011 to 2022.
- There is a strong relationship between this measure of health and age, with older people more likely to have a health problem or disability that limits their activities than younger people.
- In 2022, 95,552 Fife people said that they had a health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities either a little or a lot, an increase of 21,306 over the decade, and an increase from one in every five people suffering from a health problem or disability in 2011, to one in four people in 2022.
- In 2022, the most common type of health condition reported in the census was a 'long-term illness, disease or condition'. This is described in the census as a condition that you may have for life, that may be managed with treatment or medication, and is not in one of the other health condition categories. It is a broad category that includes a range of conditions such as Arthritis, Cancer, Diabetes and Epilepsy.
- Nearly one in four people in Fife (23.4%) reported having a long-term illness/condition, higher than the Scottish average of 21.4% and has increased in Fife from 20.3% in 2011.
- Mental health is the second most commonly reported health condition. This has increased threefold to 11.9% in 2022, from 4.1% in 2011. This is driven by a large increase amongst younger people and is in line with the picture for Scotland as a whole.

Unpaid care

- In 2022, there were 44,222 unpaid carers in Fife (12.2%)
- The number of unpaid carers has increased across all age groups over the last decade in Fife and Scotland, with the largest increase in the 50 to 64 age group.
- Females (14.0%) provided higher levels of care than males (10.3%) across all age groups. The 50 to 64 age group showed the largest gap between females (24.5%) and males (17.1%) providing unpaid care.
- In 2022, more than half (54.8%) of all unpaid carers spent between 1 to 19 hours per week providing care support. A further one-quarter of unpaid carers spent more than 50 hours per week providing care. This is a similar picture for Scotland overall.

Qualifications

- 28.2% of people aged 16 and over in Fife had degree level qualifications or above, an increase from 23.8% in 2011. Fewer adults in Fife have a degree level qualification compared with Scotland overall (32.5%).
- The proportion of females with no qualifications continues to be lower than for males.

Economic activity

- In 2022 in Fife, there were 180,192 people that were classified as Economically Active. This is lower than 2011, when there were 184,453, a decrease of 4,262. This is despite an increase in Fife's population over the decade.
- In contrast, in 2022, there were 129,741 people that were classified as Economically Inactive. This is higher than the figure in 2011 of 116,348, an increase of 13,393 people.
- In 2022, more males (61.9%) were economically active compared to females (54.7%), but this is lower than in 2011, when there were 67.2% of males and 56% of females economically active.
- For age, and the extent to which people are economically active, there has been notable change over the last decade. Generally, those aged 16 to 50 have become less economically active, while those over 50 have become more economically active, even for those in post-retirement age groups (65 and over). In 2022, the highest levels of economic activity can be seen in the 50 to 59 age group, whereas in 2011, the highest levels were in the 40-49 age group.
- For people that are classified as economically inactive in Fife, with the exception of the youngest age group (16 to 19), and the 40 to 49 and 60 to 64 age groups, all other age groups have seen an increase in economic inactivity over the last decade. The highest levels of inactivity are in the over 65 age groups, which have seen a significant increase in numbers since 2011.
- For Fife, the industry sector employing the most people is health and social care, employing 25,080, (14.6% of the Fife workforce). This is followed by the wholesale and retail sector with 20,297 people (11.8%) and public administration 16,120 (9.4%).
- Depending on the industry sector, the sex and age profile of the workforce can vary considerably.
- Like occupation, the type of industry that females and males tend to work in varies across Fife. For females, the highest proportion work in Human Health and Social Work Activities (23.9%), and Education (13%), whereas males tend to work in Manufacturing and Construction each with 13.5%.

Ethnic Group

- The majority of Fife people identified their ethnic group or background as "White" (96.0%), although this has fallen from the previous census from 97.6%.
- "White Scottish" is the predominant group making up 84.6% of the white population, again falling from 87.8% in 2011.
- The percentage of people in Fife with a minority ethnic background increased from 2.3% in 2011 to 3.9% in 2022. This is lower than the Scottish average of 12.9%.

Country of Birth

- The percentage of people living in Fife that were born outside the UK increased from 2.8% to 4.2% between 2011 and 2022.
- The largest increases were from European Union (EU) Accession countries (0.8%), other EU countries (0.5%), the Middle East and Asian countries (0.4%), and the Americas and Caribbean countries (0.3%).

Pregnancy and Maternity

- While the Census doesn't ask directly about pregnancy and maternity, the trend over time is for a reduction in the number of children born in Fife.
- Compared with Scotland (45.4%), Fife (37.6%) has a lower proportion of births to parents that are married.
- Fife's (44.8) fertility rate is also lower than Scotland's (45.5), which is a driver of the trend of reducing household size.

National Identity

- The percentage of people who said "Scottish" was their only national identity increased from 63.8% in 2011 to 68.5% in 2022 (above Scottish average of 65.5%).
- School aged children (4-17) had the highest levels of Scottish identity, followed by those aged 25-34, with males and females showing similar levels for Scottish identity.
- Those who said that their only national identity was British increased from 7.9% in 2011 to 13.3% in 2022. Older age groups (65 and over) had highest levels of British identity.

Language

- In 2022, 94.6% of people in Fife said they speak, read and write English.
- Of the people in Fife aged 3 and over, 98.7% had no skills in Gaelic in 2022, a decrease from 99.3% in 2011.
- The percentage of people aged 3 and over in Fife with no skills in Scots language has decreased from 57.6% in 2011 to 49.1% in 2022.
- The 2022 Census included a new question on the use of BSL. Therefore, no comparable data is available for the previous censuses.
- For those aged 3 and over in the Fife population, 7,947 (2.2%) use British Sign Language (BSL), similar to the Scottish average. People in the 30 to 60 age groups have the highest levels of use of BSL, and twice as many females use BSL compared with males.

Religion and belief

- For the first time, 2022 Census figures show that the majority of people in Fife said that they had "No Religion" (61%), increasing from 46% in 2011. This is higher than the Scottish average of 51%.
- The Church of Scotland remains the largest religious group in Fife but saw the largest drop in numbers from 31% in 2011 to 19% in 2022.
- Other Christian religions have also reduced in numbers.

Armed Forces Veterans

- 16,131 Fife households currently contain at least one UK Armed Forces veteran.
- This is nearly 10% of all Fife households and higher than the Scottish average of 6.7%.

Conclusion

The report finds that the changing structure of Fife's population presents a number of challenges in relation to:

- **Demand for public services** with fewer children and fewer people of working age, and an older population that will continue to increase.
- **Housing need** with the continuing trend to smaller household size.
- **Cost of living** and **local economy** with more people living alone and increased economic inactivity among people of working age.
- **Health and wellbeing** with one in four people having a health problem or disability that limits their day-to-day activities a little or a lot, an increase in people reporting a long term health condition or illness (particularly mental health) and an increase in unpaid care for working age people.
- All of the above have implications for the **workforce**.

Further research will be undertaken in 2025 to understand how patterns of **migration** have changed over the last decade, and the implications of this for planning and delivering public services.

Census Outputs

These findings are a summary of a more detailed Equalities topic report, published in November 2024

[Equalities Report](#)

Fife Briefings are being produced on each of the topics as they become available dependent on the timetable for the release of data from Scotland's Census 2022.

Briefings that are now available include:

[Ethnic Group, National Identity, Language and Religion](#)

[Population and Household size](#)

[Armed Forces Veterans](#)

[Sexual orientation and trans status or history](#)

[Demography and migration](#)

[Housing](#)

[Education, Labour Market and Travel to work](#)

[Health, disability and unpaid care](#)

For the latest information on Scotland's Census 2022 for Fife, go to

[Census | KnowFife](#)