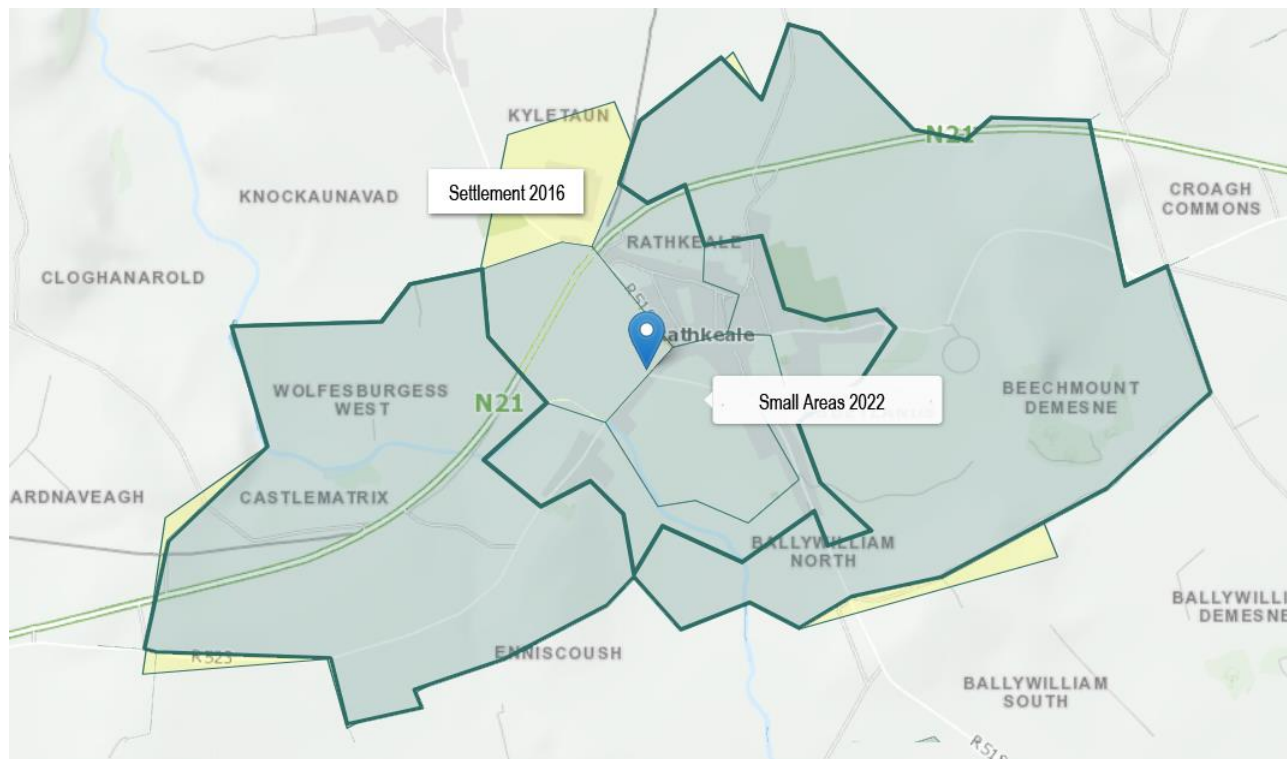


# Population Brief

Analysis of limited 2022 [CSO Census Data](#)  
by David Lamont | 16/11/2023

Statistically Speaking  
Opinion backed by research

**R**athkeale’s population data is important because it can be used by local organisations to justify applications for resources and by the agencies for considering such. Additionally, it can be used to market the town as part of any rejuvenation efforts. The analysis is also important because a superficial look incorrectly indicates that Rathkeale has shrunk. That is because the CSO has different area maps for the town in 2022 and 2016.



Adjusting for the minor difference in areas, the 2022 Census shows that Rathkeale’s population is stagnant at 1,408 people. Rathkeale is 5 times smaller than Newcastle West but 14% to 15% bigger than Croom, Askeaton and Adare. Patrickswell is notably smaller, but recently got a government housing investment. Foynes is also smaller but is a focus area for the Shannon Estuary Economic Taskforce Report.

Census Statistics	2022 Town	2022 Six Small Areas	2016 Settlement
Population (Total)	1,231 (½% of county)	1,408 (stagnant)	1,441 (100%)
Male   Female	560 (45%)   671 (55%)	649 (46%)   759 (54%)	755 (45%)   932 (55%)
Teenagers (2022 estimate for 13-14 ages)	113 (9%)	127 (9%)	160 (9%)
Home Buyers (35-39 ages group) <sup>1</sup>	78 (6%)	90 (6%)	133 (8%)
Voting population Adare-Rathkeale LEA <sup>2</sup>	-	5% of 15,324 max votes	-
Newcastle West Population	7,209 (grew)	5 times bigger than R	6,619 (100%)
Kilmallock Population	1,761 (grew)	20% bigger than R	1,668 (100%)
Croom Population	1,240 (grew)	14% smaller than R	1,159 (100%)
Askeaton Population	1,236 (grew)	14% smaller than R	1,137 (100%)
Adare Population	1,224 (grew)	15% smaller than R	1,129 (100%)
Patrickswell Population	848 (stagnant)	66% smaller than R	847 (100%)
Ballingarry Population	570 (grew)	2.5 times smaller than R	521 (100%)
Foynes Population	512 (stagnant)	2.75 times smaller than R	520 (100%)
Ardagh Population	273 (stagnant)	5 times smaller than R	266 (100%)

Rathkeale shrunk by 7% between the 2011 and 2016 Census so stability in 2022 is an improvement. Only 14 houses per year<sup>3</sup> are sold and there was no information about new houses, the most likely contributor to

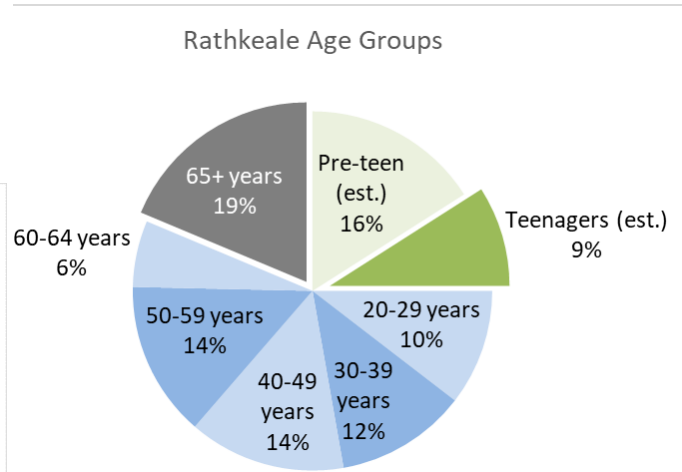
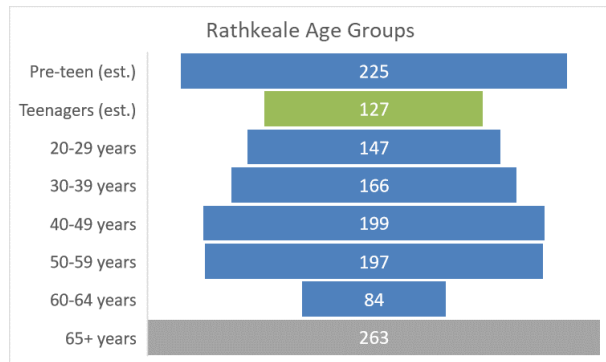
<sup>1</sup> “...median age of home purchasers in Ireland in 2021 was 39, up from 35 in 2010” - [Irish Times](#)

<sup>2</sup> The Adare-Rathkeale Local Electoral Areas (2022) has a population of 29,311 of which an estimated 15,324 are 18+ year of age.

<sup>3</sup> Average of PSRA Residential Sales in Rathkeale from 2019 through August 2023.

population growth. There is still time to meet the 2028 growth projections<sup>4</sup> in the Rathkeale Local Area Plan 2023-2029, especially if the proposed housing is completed and there are signs of Rathkeale’s rejuvenation.

Youth<sup>5</sup> represent 25% (352 people) of the 1,408 population. Working age adults were 56% (793 people) and those over 65 years of age were 19% (263 people.)



When it comes to Limerick City and County Council elections Rathkeale represents a maximum of 5% of the potential vote assuming all areas have the same percentage turnout<sup>6</sup>. Being slightly larger than Adare, Askeaton and Croom it should be an attractive centre of votes. National elections would include Newcastle West and Limerick City, making Rathkeale less significant.

The number of teenagers has fallen to 127 individuals from 160 but remains 9% of the population. With most of the Rathkeale Community Council resources<sup>7</sup> serving this age group there is an opportunity to become more inclusive.

The home buyer age group fell from 133 individuals (8% of the population) to 90 (6%.) The county shows 15,252 people<sup>8</sup> in this home buyer age group representing little change from 2016. With more amenities than other towns and soon to be at the elbow of the Foynes to Limerick motorway, Rathkeale may be an attractive option for those seeking rural homes.

**Bottom line:** In 2022 the government building of affordable homes prioritized to larger towns. The system helps the bigger get bigger and get more resources, perpetuating a disadvantage for smaller Rathkeale. Kilmallock, one of the recipients of government housing support, had ~200 more people (~67 families/ houses) than Rathkeale and developing the Ballywilliam estate could cut that by half. Other Limerick towns were Abbeyfeale, Newcastle West and Castleconnell.

<sup>4</sup> As determined by the Draft Limerick Development Plan, the assumed Rathkeale population growth allocation is an additional 403 persons to 2028 (+28% on the 2016 Census figure).

<sup>5</sup> The split between 10- to 14-year-olds is estimated and assumes an equal number per age.

<sup>6</sup> Voter turnout data was not available at the time of this analysis. Nor is the impact of Rathkeale migrant Traveller population.

<sup>7</sup> Below market or no-rent-paid property leases to Limerick Youth Service, Boxing Club, Scouting Ireland, An Foróige.

<sup>8</sup> 7% of the Limerick City and County Council population is between 35 and 39 years old.

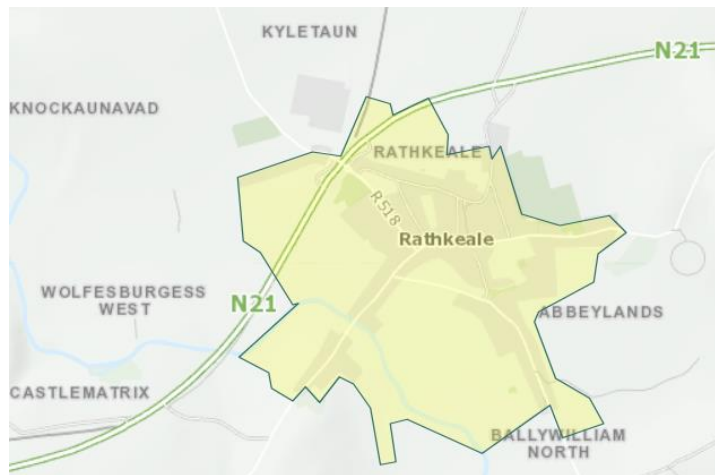
## Other Population Statistics

The following statistics are from the [2022 Census](#) and refer to the Town of Rathkeale, a smaller district than the 6 Small Areas referenced above for Population alone.

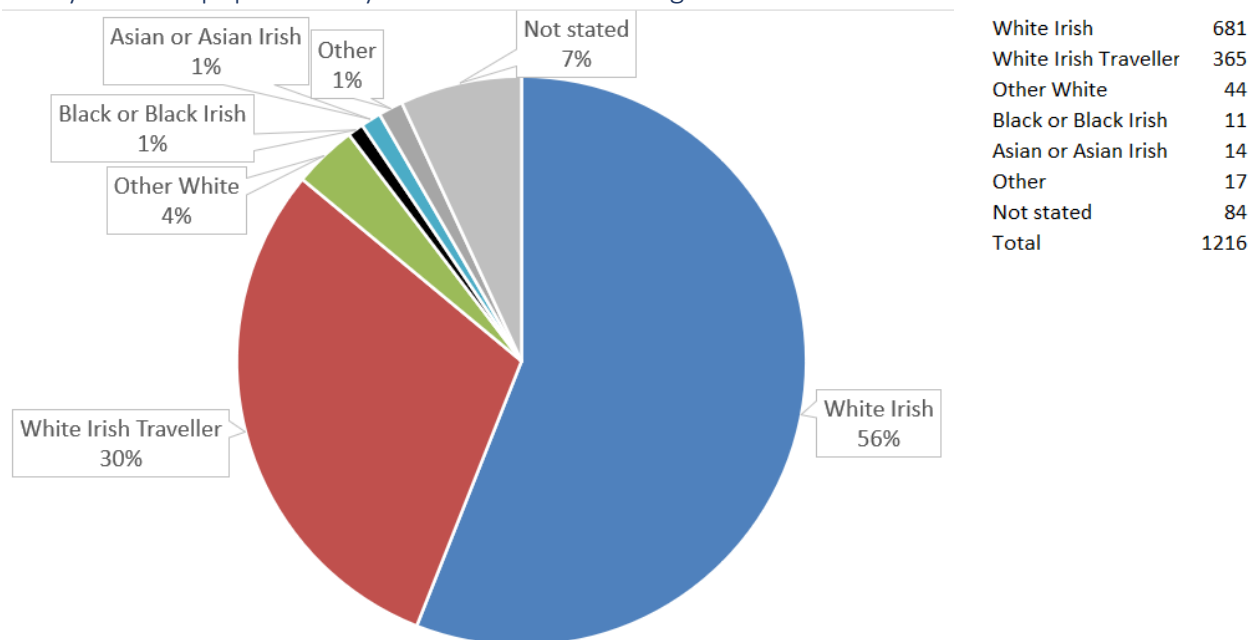
The Town area has a population of 1,231 of which 45% are male and 55% are female.

All the CSO Data for Rathkeale is documented here:

<https://rathkeale.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Census-of-Population-2022-All-Rathkeale-Data.pdf>



### Usually resident population by ethnic or cultural background



Comments: On Census Night, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022, Rathkeale’s Traveller population was 365 people (30%.) On April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016, it was 326 people (23%.) The geographical area of the 2022 Town and larger 2016 Settlement differ, as does total population in each area. However, most Travellers properties are within both areas.

Anecdotally, Travellers account for 50% of population over the November through March “Christmas Period.” The CSO refers to usually resident<sup>9</sup> persons but it is unclear how Rathkeale’s large migrant Traveller population answered the question or how many were present to do so.

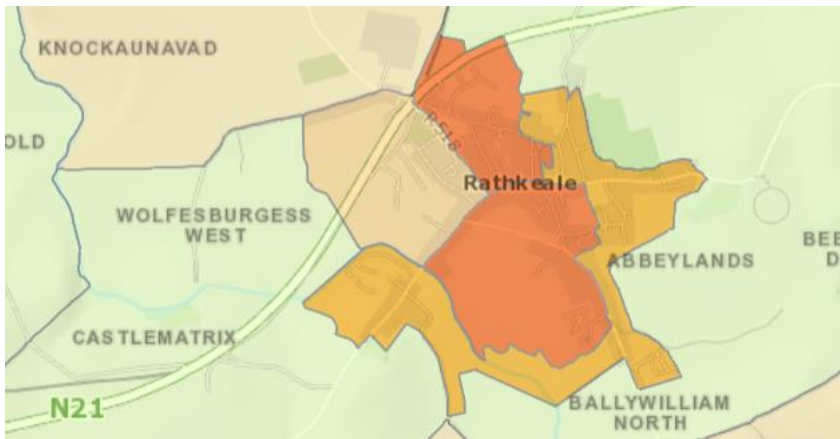
Travellers own a significant portion of Rathkeale’s houses and park their caravans on their own property when present in the town. There are only 11 families on Rathkeale’s sole halting site that do not have other properties in the town.

The number of [Irish Travellers](#) living in the State and counted in Census 2022 was 32,949, an increase of 6% from 30,987 in the 2016 census. Using Census data, Rathkeale hosts 1% of all Travellers. However, it could be 2% over the Christmas Period.

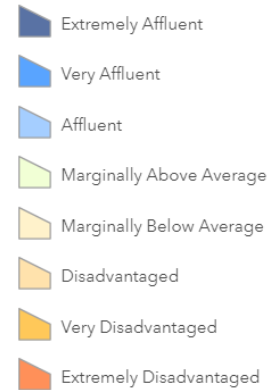
<sup>9</sup> The [usually resident and present measure](#) of the population refers to all persons who usually live in Ireland and who were present in the State on Census Night. It excludes persons who were not usually resident in the State on Census Night but who were present and persons who were usually resident in the State but were outside the State on Census Night. The collection of completed questionnaires took place between Monday, 04 April and Friday, 06 May 2022 with Census Night being Sunday, 03 April 2022.

## Pobal HP Deprivation Index

Pobal [data](#) can be used to improve community support, improve program design and resource allocation.



Pobal HP Description 2022



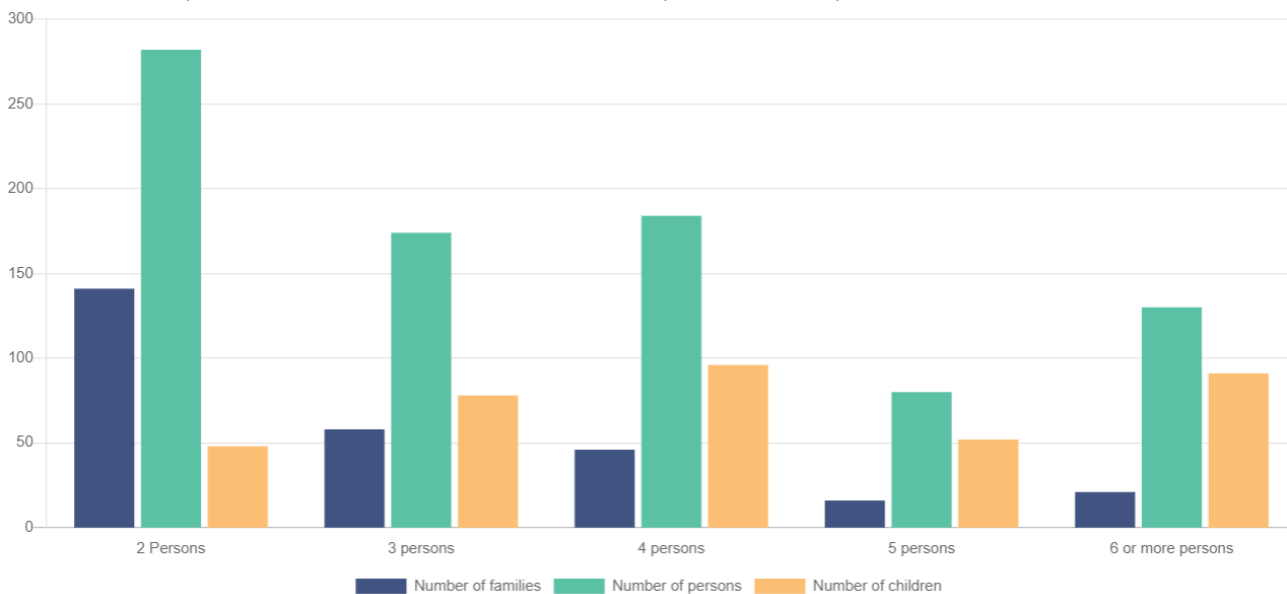
<b>Total Population</b> <b>1,231</b>	<b>Proportion Primary Education Only</b> <b>40.66%</b>	<b>Proportion Third Level Education</b> <b>11.12%</b>
<b>HP Deprivation Indices</b> Deprivation: an absence of essential/ desirable attributes, possessions and opportunities.	<b>Unemployment Rate- Female</b> <b>26.43%</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate- Male</b> <b>16.53%</b>
	<b>Lone Parent Ratio</b> <b>35.81</b>	<b>Age Dependency Ratio</b> <b>36.12</b>

The deprivation index measures Demographic Vitality and Labour Market Situations.

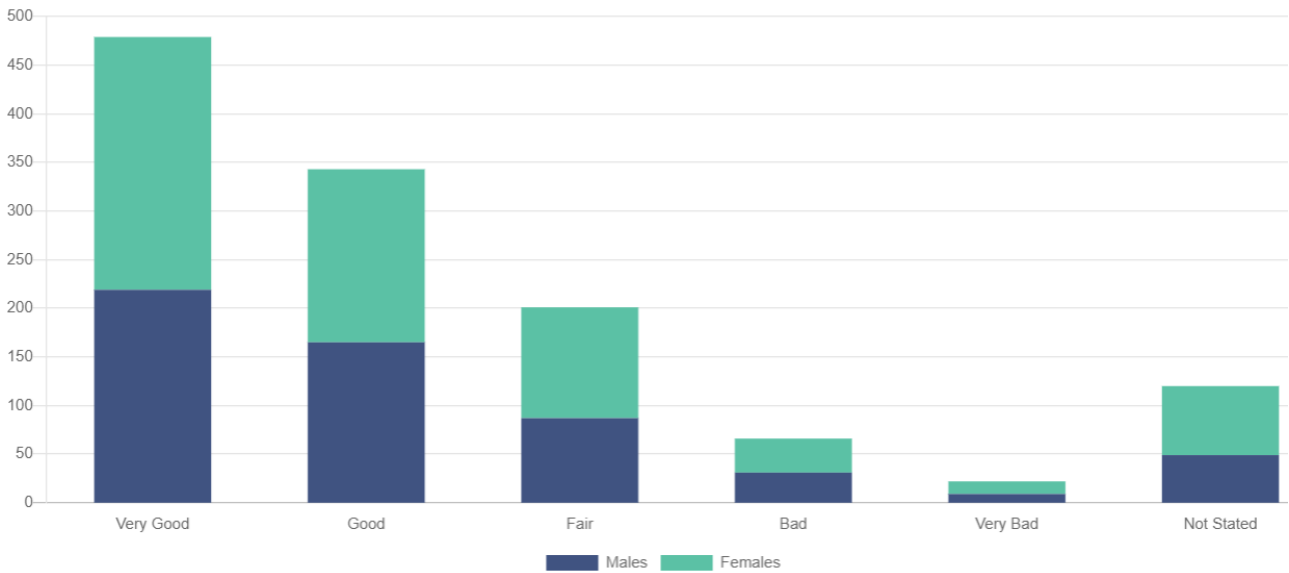
The entire Rathkeale urban area (87% of the 1,408 population) is disadvantaged.

The extremely disadvantaged area, mostly downtown and “the Hill”, has 34% (474 people) of the 1,408 population.

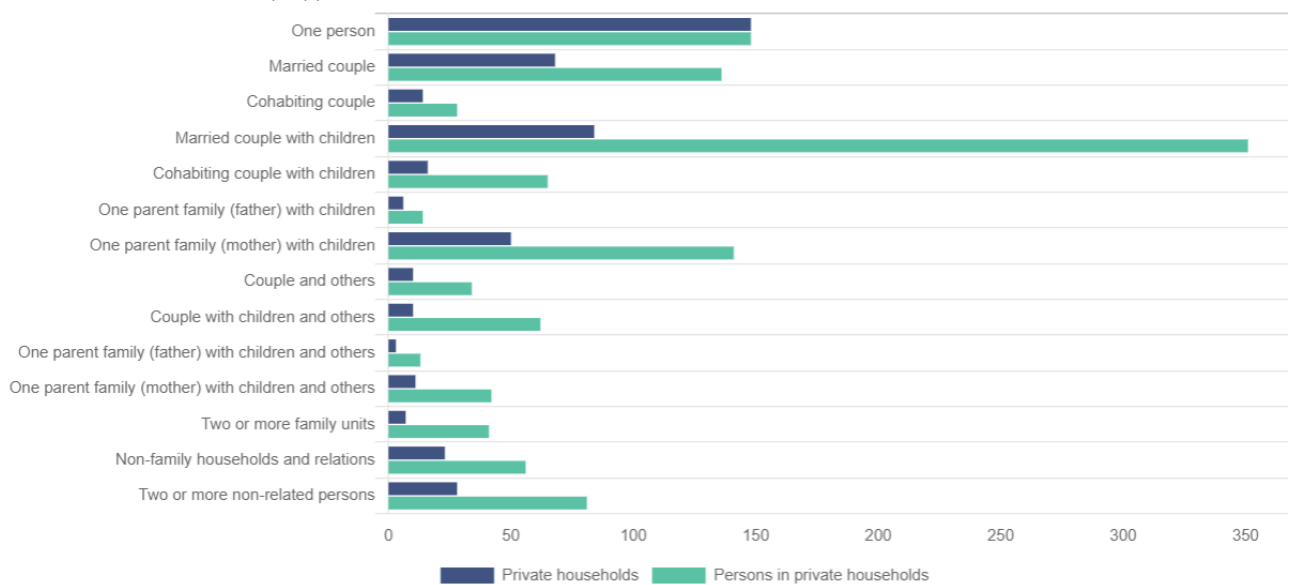
## Families, family members and children in families, by size of family



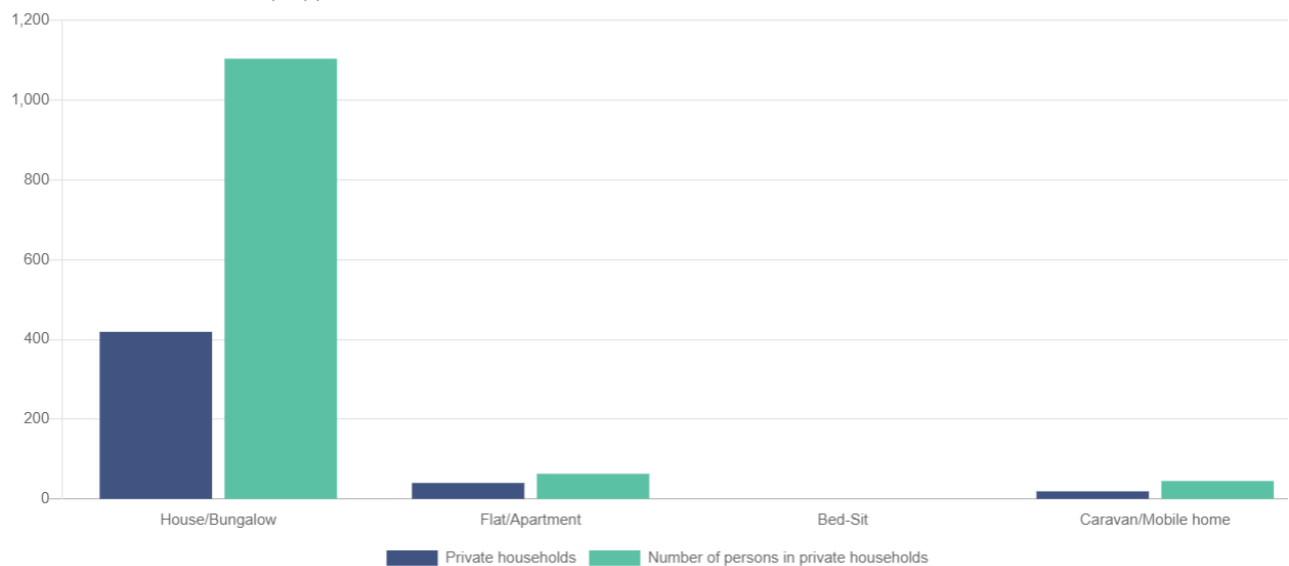
### Population by general health and sex



### Private households by type

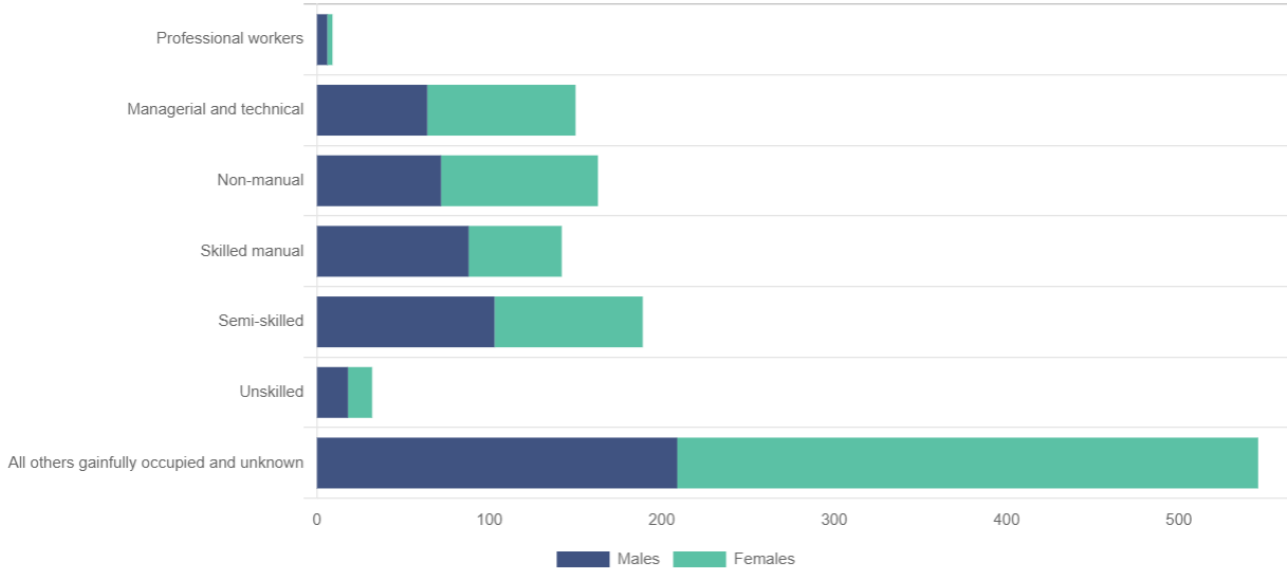


### Private households by type of accommodation

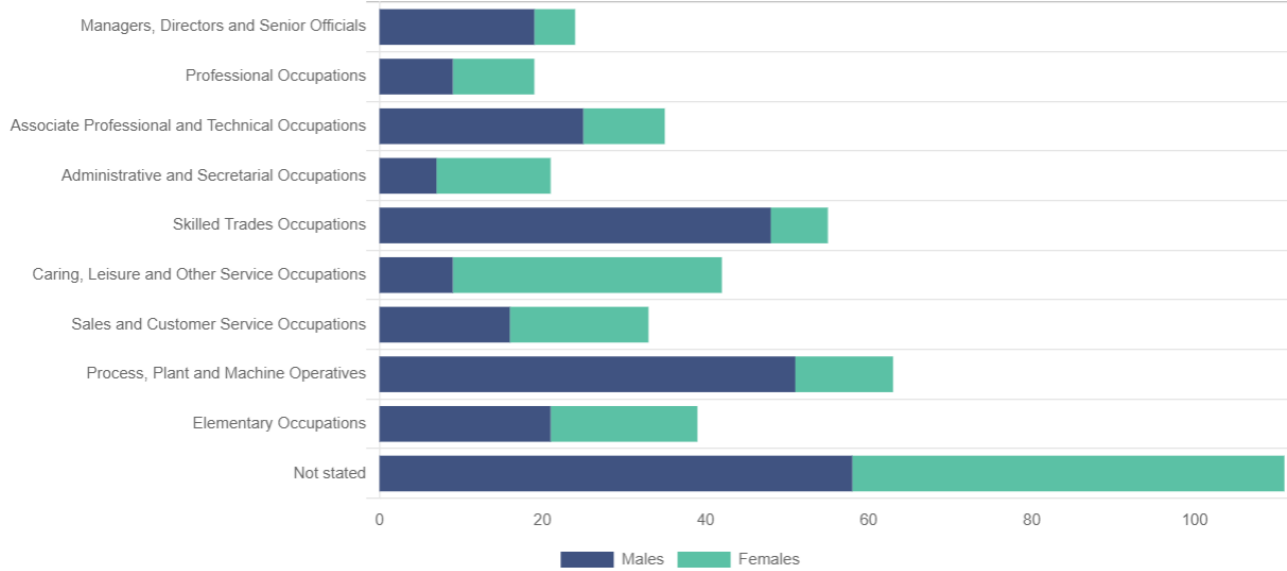


Comment: The statistic of 19 households living in caravans is unlikely to be useful when quantifying the town's Traveller population. When the migrant population is in town from November through March there could be 19 caravans on a single street, most in front of the houses owned by the same people.

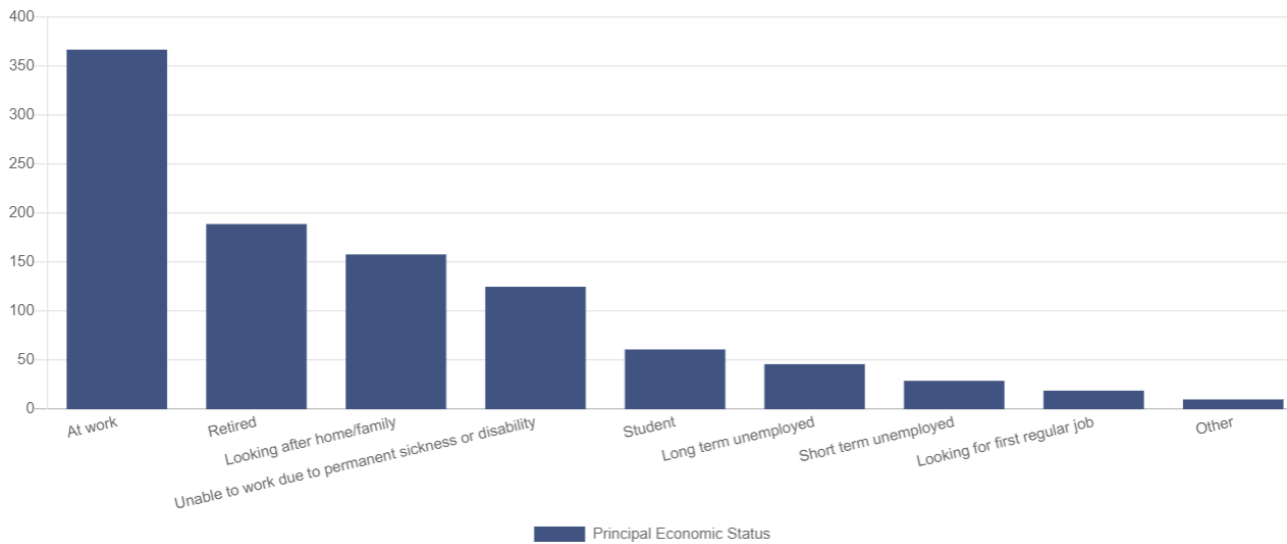
### Population by sex and social class



### Persons at work or unemployed by occupation and sex



### Population aged 15 years and over by principal economic status



### Number of households with internet access



Comment: The statistics indicate that 203 (43%) households do not have internet access. However, it is plausible that many of these people have access via personal smartphones.

### Number of volunteers

Comment: The number of volunteers was listed 93 people, that is 11% of the population aged between 15 and 69 years old in this geographical area. However, the type of work is unspecified and there are likely far fewer people could be considered activists or organisers.