

# **Disability Needs Assessment: Data Evidence Base**

**March 2024**

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**List of Abbreviations:**

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
AA	Attendance Allowance
DFLE	Disability-free life expectancy
DLA	Disability Living Allowance
DPRC	Disabled Persons Railcards
DSA	Disabled Students' Allowance
EHC Plan	Education, health and care plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMCA	Greater Manchester Combined Authority
HE	Higher Education
ITA	Integrated Transport Authority
KS1	Key Stage 1
KS2	Key Stage 2
KS4	Key Stage 4
LSOA	Lower Super Output Areas
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NHS	National Health Service
NS-SEC	National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PIP	Personal Independence Payment
SEN	Special Educational Needs
TfWM	Transport for West Midlands
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UK	United Kingdom
WMCA	West Midlands Combined Authority

## Executive Summary

As part of its Health function, the West Midlands Combined Authority is producing a comprehensive disability needs assessment, based on its core function – housing, transport, employment and skills as well as health and wellbeing and democratic data. This needs assessment will be used by the WMCA's Disability Working Group to determine the “opportunities for action” which is proposed to be taken forward by the new West Midlands Mayor and the WMCA from June 2024.

The Economic Intelligence Unit was contracted by the West Midlands Combined Authority to review existing, principally local and regional data available on disabled people and in doing so, identify the trends, key messages and data gaps. This data evidence base complements the other disability insight and intelligence that has been contracted by the WMCA as part of its comprehensive Disability Needs Assessment.

The WMCA supports the Social Model of Disability which states you are not disabled by your impairments but rather by society and the environment you are in. Under the Equality Act 2010, you are disabled if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities. The social model uses 'disabled person' rather than 'person with a disability' as it places the person being disabled by society,

A disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions). Impairments can be physical, mental or psychosocial, intellectual, and sensory.<sup>1</sup>

An estimated 1 billion people around the world have a disability. We know that all too often, disabled people face appalling stigma, discrimination and abuse. We know that disabled people are often excluded from opportunities, so do not achieve their potential. We know that our societies miss out.

But in too many cases, we do not know the scale of the challenge, where the gaps are, and where more needs to be done. We do not know where disabled children are missing out on the chance to go to school, or where people are unable to access work. For too long, data sources have been too scattered and disaggregation by disability has been overlooked. Where the data does exist, it often remains hidden and unused. While this is happening, disabled people will continue to be excluded, and we will be left with a critical development gap.

Collecting disability disaggregated data is a complex process, hindered by several limitations. These include fundamental problems such as disability data not being routinely collected. When it is collected, it can be poor quality and may only provide details on prevalence, rather than identifying the social or environmental barriers that result in social exclusion.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [McKinsey Health Institute](#)

<sup>2</sup> [UCL International Disability Research Programme, Disability Data Review](#)

Alongside this data evidencing report we have produced a supporting report which covers data gaps. This outlines where gaps persist in our knowledge at a local level for the disabled community across the WMCA area.

### **Programmes to encourage better data collection for disabled people**

**Global:** [University College London International Disability Research Programme](#), [World Health Organisation](#)

**National:** [The Office for National Statistics – Improving Disability data in the UK, Review of Transport Accessibility Statistics](#)

## Key Messages

All data sources are referenced throughout the document.

### Demographics

- There were nearly 1.6 million disabled people in the West Midlands region, which represented 26.7% of the total population (third highest region, just behind the North East and North West). There were approximately 751,600 of the West Midlands population that had difficulty with mobility, this was followed by 588,500 with stamina/breathing/fatigue impairment and 570,500 with a mental health impairment.
- There are a total of 518,269 disabled residents in the WMCA area. The WMCA has a higher proportion of disabled residents than the England wide proportion, (17.8% vs 17.3%).
- This can be split further by 8.1% (237,682) of usual WMCA residents that were disabled under the Equality Act where day-to-day to activities were limited a lot (England 7.3%) and 9.6% (280,587) where activities were limited a little (England 10.0%). 5.6% (162,053) of usual WMCA residents that were not disabled under the Equality Act who had a long term physical or mental health condition, but day-to-day activities were not limited (England 6.8%).
- There were more disabled females in the WMCA area at 285,557 (55.1%) than males at 232,712 (44.9%). Whereas the population that is non disabled is split relatively 50/50 for females and males.
- 2.8% of the population in the WMCA area were living with sight loss, equal to 84,100 people. This is compared to 3.3% across both the West Midlands region and the UK.
- Disability is spread unevenly across the WMCA geography, with high numbers in south Birmingham, north Walsall, Dudley and north Solihull.
- 2,603 disabled children in need in the WMCA area, 10.9% of all children in need. This compares to 11.5% across West Midlands region and 12.8% across England. This is the lowest levels of disabled children in need in the WMCA area since 2013. Dudley (15.2%) and Solihull (14.8%) had the highest levels, down to Walsall (2.7%).
- For the WMCA area, there was a greater proportion of disabled people that are of a White ethnicity than the proportion of White people in the general population. All

ethnic minority groups show a lower proportion of disabled people than the general population.

- Across both the WMCA and England, disability prevalence increases with age.
- There are high levels of deprivation (45.1% of Lower Super Output Areas – LSOAs in top 20% most deprived).

## Transport

- Of the 587,148 households in the WMCA with no cars or vans, 28.2% (165,504) were disabled households, above the England average of 27.7%.
- 32% of WMCA respondents reported the main reason for not attempting to travel by ring and ride was disability/age or illness.
- Approximately 24.8 million journeys were made by disabled WMCA residents in 2022 - over 19.2 million disabled journeys were on the bus, nearly 5.1 million were on the rail and just over 440,000 were on the tram.
- There are 30,000 registered disabled pass Swift card holders in the WMCA area. Furthermore, of the nearly 80 million Swift journeys in 2022, approximately 9% were disabled.
- Journeys taken by disabled-people in the West Midlands ITA area have not recovered since the pre-pandemic period (an average of 126 journeys per pass in the years 2015-2019) to an average of 74 journeys per pass in 2023.
- Within the TfWM area 87% of stations are already step-free leaving just 8 that need to be improved to provide a fully accessible network. Over 40% of railways stations in Great Britain do not have step-free access.
- 127,874 Blue Badges were held in the WMCA.
- 43% of disabled residents walk or wheel at least five days a week (46% of non-disabled residents). 9% of disabled West Midlands residents cycle at least once a week (lower than the 14% for non-disabled). 33% of disabled residents reported they do not cycle but would like to.
- 57% of disabled West Midlands residents think walking or wheeling safety in their local area is good (lower than the 67% for non-disabled). While 30% of disabled residents think cycling safety in their local area is good (35% for non-disabled). 51% of disabled West Midlands residents feel welcome and comfortable walking, wheeling or spending time on the street of their neighbour (52% non-disabled).
- 33% of residents reported that access to an adapted cycle would help them cycle more.
- The Birmingham Walking and Cycling Index for 2023 reveals that 47% of disabled people feel welcome and comfortable walking, wheeling or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood, compared to 62% of non-disabled people. 39% of disabled people walk or wheel at least five days a week, compared to 44% of non-disabled people. 42% of disabled people think walking or wheeling safety in their local area is good, compared to 58% of non-disabled people.
- 7% of disabled people cycle at least once a week, compared to 14% of non-disabled people. 27% of disabled people think cycling safety in their local area is good, compared to 37% of non-disabled people.

- Midland Mencap research found that blue route through Birmingham's A38 may seem like an accessible route for all citizens, but the width of the barriers makes it very difficult for our citizen's using adapted trikes and cycles due to width.
- The three major barriers highlighted in relation to using cycling as a mobility aid are: road/path accessibility, citizen ability, and road safety.

## Housing and Regeneration

- In the West Midlands region, disabled people are more likely to rent social housing, with 24.5% of disabled people aged 16 to 64 years occupying a socially rented property, compared with 8.6% of non-disabled people aged 16-64.
- Disabled people in the West Midlands were less likely to be owner-occupiers, with 39.9% of disabled people aged 16 to 64 years being owner-occupiers, compared to 53.4% of non-disabled people aged 16 to 64.
- The West Midlands region has a higher proportion of disabled people living with parents, than the national average (18.7% vs 16.3%).
- The West Midlands region has a lower proportion of disabled people living in private rented accommodation than the national average (15.1% vs 17.4%).
- 17.4% of new social housing lettings in the WMCA had a tenant that had a disability-related adaption requirement.
- There were a total of 3,061 beds in 305 care homes in the WMCA area providing support for people with a learning disability and autistic people.
- In 2022/23, 75.6% (4,737) of adults (aged 18-64) with a learning disability lived in stable and appropriate accommodation in the WMCA area. This was lower than the national average of 80.5%. Across all English regions, the West Midlands had the lowest proportion at 71.4%.
- In 2019/2020, 20.0% of supported working age adults with a learning disability in the WMCA were living in unsettled accommodation, above the national figures (16.9%).

## Employment and Skills

- The WMCA has a higher proportion of pupils (13.9%) with SEN support than the regional (13.7%) and national average (13.0%), but a lower percentage of pupils with EHC Plans (3.9% WMCA compared to 4.3% in England).
- For most SEN groups, there were more boys than girls, with autism having the largest difference. Reasons for this difference are complex.
- 18% of children in the WMCA area with SEN have a good level of development at the end of KS1, compared to 71.9% of children without SEN. This equates to a gap of 53.8pp. SEN pupils in the WMCA perform worse than their regional and national comparators.
- 18% of pupils in the WMCA area with SEN met the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined) at Key Stage 2, compared with 20% of pupils with SEN in England. All groups of SEN pupils in the WMCA perform worse than their English counterparts
- For Key Stage 4, in terms of the percentage of pupils achieving grades 5 and above in English and maths there was a gap of 31.9pp in the WMCA, as 15.4% of SEN pupils achieved this compared to 47.3% for non-SEN pupils. The gap was



larger in England at 34.3pp, with both SEN pupils (17.0%) and non-SEN pupils (51.3%) performing better than their WMCA counterparts.

- For Key Stage 4 in the WMCA, there was a gap of 20.5, with an average Attainment 8 score of 27.9 for SEN pupils, compared to 48.4 for non-SEN pupils. SEN pupils in the WMCA perform worse than their national comparators.
- Outcomes for SEN pupils at the end of KS4 reveal they were least likely to sustain an education, apprenticeship or employment destination (87.2%) than pupils with no identified SEN (93.2%). This compares to 88.9% and 94.6% respectively across England.
- In the WMCA in 2023, 5.7% of people ages 16-17 with SEN were NEET (not in education, employment or training), this is compared to 1.8% without SEN, a gap of 3.9pp. This is a larger gap than for NEETs with and without SEN across England (3.7pp).
- Across both the autumn and spring terms 2022/23, the overall absence rate was 10.1% for pupils with SEN across the WMCA area, compared to 6.8% for pupils with no-SEN. Across England, figures were 10.1% and 6.5 respectively.
- Disabled people are more likely to have a Level 1 and entry level qualifications and Level 2 qualifications as their highest level of qualification. Disabled people in the WMCA area are less likely to have a Level 4+ qualification than their national counterparts.
- Disabled people in the WMCA area are less likely to be in employment and more likely to be economically inactive, when comparing to disabled people across England - 49.1% employment rate compared to 57.3% and 45.8% economically inactive compared to 38.8%.
- There is a pronounced gender gap in employment rates for disabled people in the WMCA.
- Disability pay gap of 14.7% for the West Midlands region between disabled and non-disabled people. This was a bigger pay gap than the England average of 13.8%.
- Disabled people in the West Midlands get paid the least out of all the English regions, and have the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest disability pay gap.
- There are 62,802 Disability Living Allowance (DLA) cases in payment claimants, 66,815 Attendance Allowance (AA) cases in payment and 188,175 Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claimants in the WMCA area (all claimant data is broken down by impairment).
- In the 7 Universities within the WMCA area, in the academic year of 2020/21 there are 5,515 students in receipt of the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).

## Health and Wellbeing

- 38.5% of LSOAs were in the top 20% most deprived for the health deprivation and disability domain.
- In 2022-23 in the WMCA area there were a total of 2,200 adults receiving short-term support (adults social care), which included 75 people receiving support for learning disabilities. There were a total of 4,614 adults receiving long-term support.

- The total cost of short-term and long-term support in the WMCA was £908.3m. This includes £338.8m for support to people with learning disabilities.
- 28,575 people were in contact with Learning Disabilities and Autism services in 2023 across West Midlands NHS Trusts in 2023.
- In November 2023 out of the 185 inpatients with learning difficulties or autism across West Midlands NHS Trusts, 5.4% had a length of stay less than 3 days, 10.8% stayed 1-4 weeks, with 18.9% staying 1-3 months. 18.9% of inpatients have been in hospital for 2-5 years, and 14.5% have been in hospital for 5-10 years. Across England, longer stays in hospital were more prevalent than in the 4 West Midlands NHS Trusts.
- In the WMCA in September 2023, there were 21,015 patients with an open referral for suspected autism. Of these, 17,650 (84%) had a referral that had been open at least 13 weeks. Across England, 85% of referrals had been open for at least 13 weeks.
- The Wheelchair Data Collection report the current annual expenditure on wheelchair services by ICBs in the WMCA area is £12,732,158.
- Disability-free life expectancy (DFLE) at birth reduced by 0.3 years for males and 1.5 years for females in the WMCA between 2015 to 2017 and 2018 to 2020. Across the UK it reduced by 0.7 years for males and 1.2 years for females.
- In the West Midlands in the year ending March 2021, disabled people were more likely to have been involved in civic participation (43.4%) than non-disabled people (42.9%).
- At the end of March 2021, 16.8% of disabled people in the West Midlands had feelings of loneliness often/always, compared to 3.6% for their non-disabled counterparts.
- On all wellbeing indicators, disabled people score worse than their non-disabled counterparts, across both the West Midlands and the UK.

## Demographics

**This section firstly provides the overall national and regional population profile for context before diving into the local population estimates. Key local findings include:**

- 518,269 WMCA residents are disabled (local population data by impairment is not available but sight loss (2.8% of pop) and children in need with a recorded disability (10.9%) has been included to provide).
- 74.7% of local disabled residents were of white ethnicity.
- There were more disabled females in the WMCA area at 285,557 (55.1%) than males at 232,712 (44.9%). Whereas the population that is non disabled is split relatively 50/50 for females and males.
- Across both the WMCA and England, disability prevalence increases with age.
- There are high levels of deprivation (45.1% of Lower Super Output Areas – LSOAs in top 20% most deprived) – overall and for the health deprivation and disability domain (38.5% of LSOAs in top 20% most deprived).

## National Population

Please note, the Family Resource Survey and Census show significant differences with the amount of disabled people. The 2021 census found that a [smaller proportion of people were disabled in England than in 2011](#) – 17.7% in 2021, compared to 19.3% in 2011. But this contrasts with other sources that show disability rates increasing:

- The [Family Resources Survey](#) found 24% of people were disabled in the UK in 2021/22, up from 19% in 2011/12.
- Requests for adult social care [increased to 1.98 million in 2021/22](#).
- The number of Personal Independence Payment claimants more than [doubled from 1.3 million in March 2017 to 2.9 million in March 2022](#).

What explains these differences? One reason might be the timing of the census – it was completed in March 2021, in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic. This could have had an impact on people's perceptions of their health (the proportion of people reporting very good health increased) and disability status. This was also too early for the [impact of long covid](#) on disability rates to be fully included.

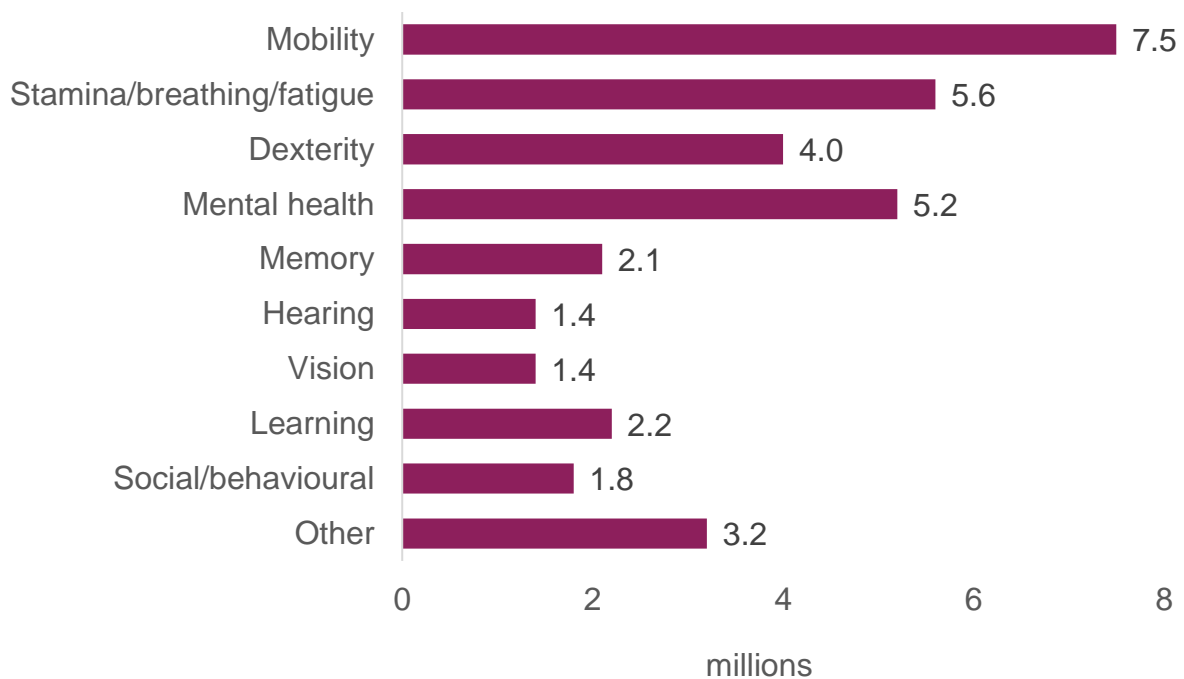
A second reason could be the change in the wording of the census question:

- In 2011 the question asked: 'Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? Include problems related to old age.'
- In 2021 the question asked: 'Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?' If yes, 'Do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?'

Problems relating to old age were mentioned in the 2011 census but not in 2021. And in the 2021 census there was a [sharp fall in the rate of older people](#) reporting disabilities – 82% of 85-89-year-olds reported a disability in 2011, but this fell to 54% in 2021. This contrasts with a rise in disability rates among younger people.

An estimated 16.0 million people in the UK had a disability in 2021/22. This represented 24% of the total population. Across the UK, the most prevalent impairment with 7.5 million people was mobility issues. This was followed by stamina/breathing/fatigue impairment with 5.6 million.

### Number of disabled people by impairment type in the UK, 2021/22:



### Complex Disabilities

There are 1.6 million people with complex disabilities in the UK. Complex disabilities are defined as having two or more of the following conditions (from birth/ following illness or injury/develop with age) and they report that their life is impacted by their disabilities: sight loss, hearing loss, autism and learning disability.<sup>3</sup>

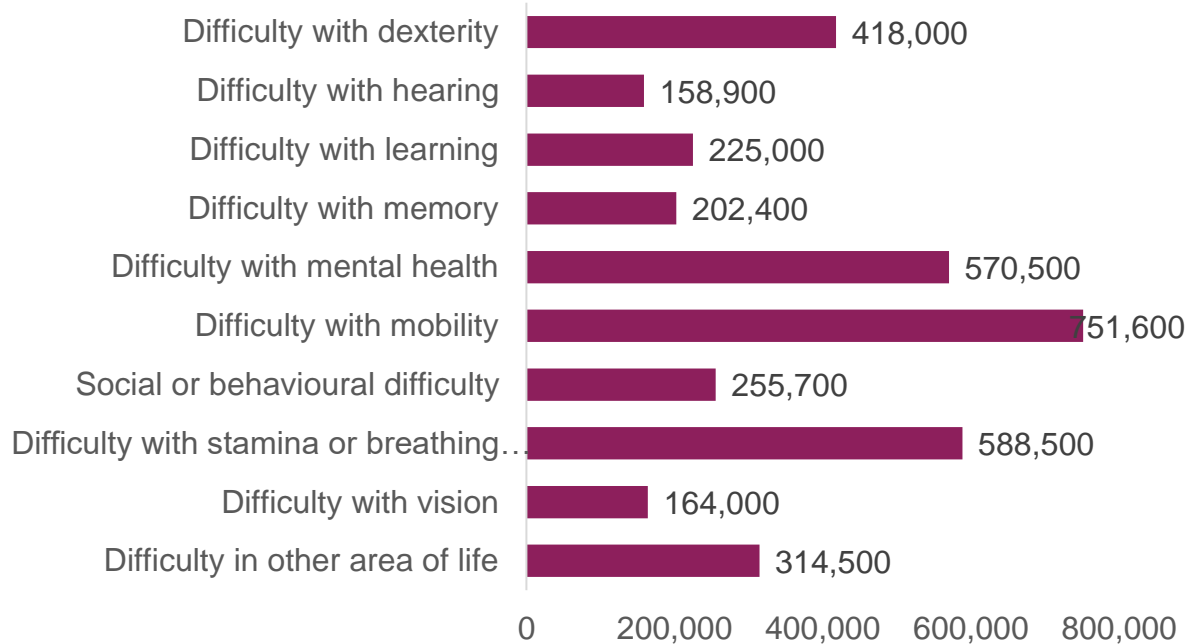
### Regional Population

The Family Resource Survey shows in 2021/22 there were nearly 1.6 million disabled people in the West Midlands region, which represented 26.7% of the total population (third highest region, just behind the North East and North West). There were approximately 751,600 of the West Midlands population that had difficulty with mobility, this was followed by 588,500 with stamina/breathing/fatigue impairment and 570,500 with a mental health impairment.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> [Sense/National Centre for Social Research](#)

<sup>4</sup> DWP/ Stat-Xplore, Family Resources Survey, 2023. Please note, figures have been rounded.

## Number of disabled people by impairment type for the West Midlands region, 2021/22:



## West Midlands Combined Authority Area Population

Please note, data is not available by all impairments at a local level, meaning Census 2021 has been used to provide an overview of the disabled resident population and any available insights have been included.

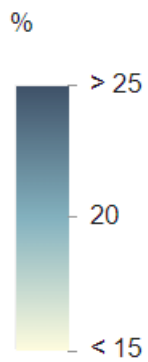
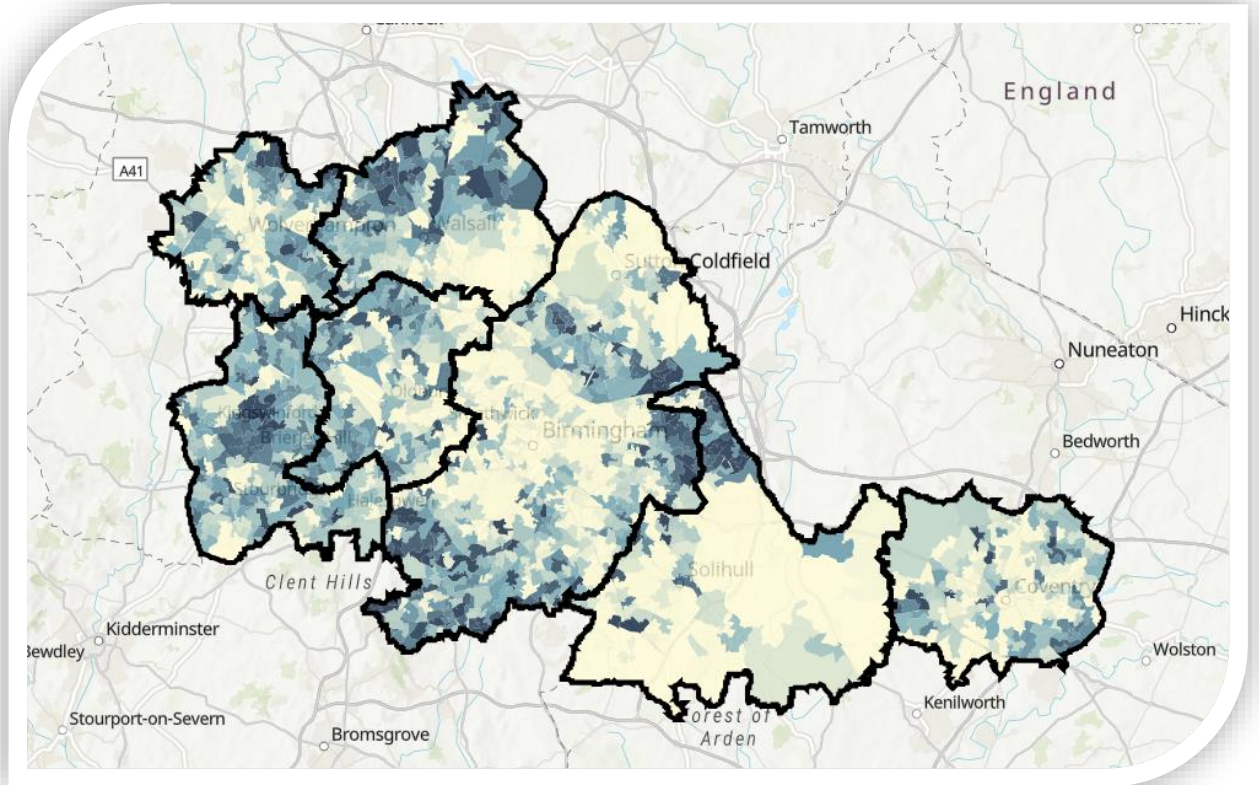
Census 2021 shows there were just over 2.9 million residents in the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) area. Of these residents, 17.8% (518,269) were disabled under the Equality Act, which was above the England proportion of 17.3%<sup>5</sup>. This can be split further by 8.1% (237,682) of usual WMCA residents that were disabled under the Equality Act where day-to-day to activities were limited a lot (England 7.3%) and 9.6% (280,587) where activities were limited a little (England 10.0%).

As well, there were a further 5.6% (162,053) of usual WMCA residents that were not disabled under the Equality Act who had a long term physical or mental health condition, but day-to-day activities were not limited (England 6.8%).

<sup>5</sup> Please note, these figures rise to 19.1% (average) for the WMCA and 17.7% for England when age-standardised proportions are applied.

Disability is spread unevenly across the WMCA geography, with high numbers in south Birmingham, north Walsall, Dudley and north Solihull.

**Proportion of disabled residents:**





## Local Population Insight: Sight Loss

In 2022, 2.8% of the population in the WMCA area were living with sight loss, equal to 84,100 people. This is compared to 3.3% across both the West Midlands region and the UK.<sup>6</sup>

### Estimated numbers and percentage of people living with sight loss:

	Estimated number of people living with mild sight loss (partial sight)	Estimated number of people living with moderate sight loss (partial sight)	Estimated number of people living with severe sight loss (blindness)	Estimated total number of people living with sight loss	Percentage of people living with sight loss in population
Birmingham	18,500	6,360	3,710	28,600	2.5%
Coventry	6,080	2,100	1,220	9,410	2.4%
Dudley	7,380	2,550	1,550	11,500	3.5%
Sandwell	5,910	2,040	1,200	9,150	2.7%
Solihull	5,350	1,830	1,130	8,310	3.8%
Walsall	5,790	2,000	1,200	8,980	3.1%
Wolverhampton	5,270	1,810	1,090	8,160	3.0%
<b>WMCA</b>	<b>54,300</b>	<b>18,700</b>	<b>11,100</b>	<b>84,100</b>	<b>2.8%</b>
West Midlands Region	128,000	44,100	26,600	198,000	3.3%
England	1,210,000	418,000	251,000	1,880,000	3.3%
United Kingdom	1,440,000	497,000	298,000	2,230,000	3.3%

## Local Population Insight: Children in Need

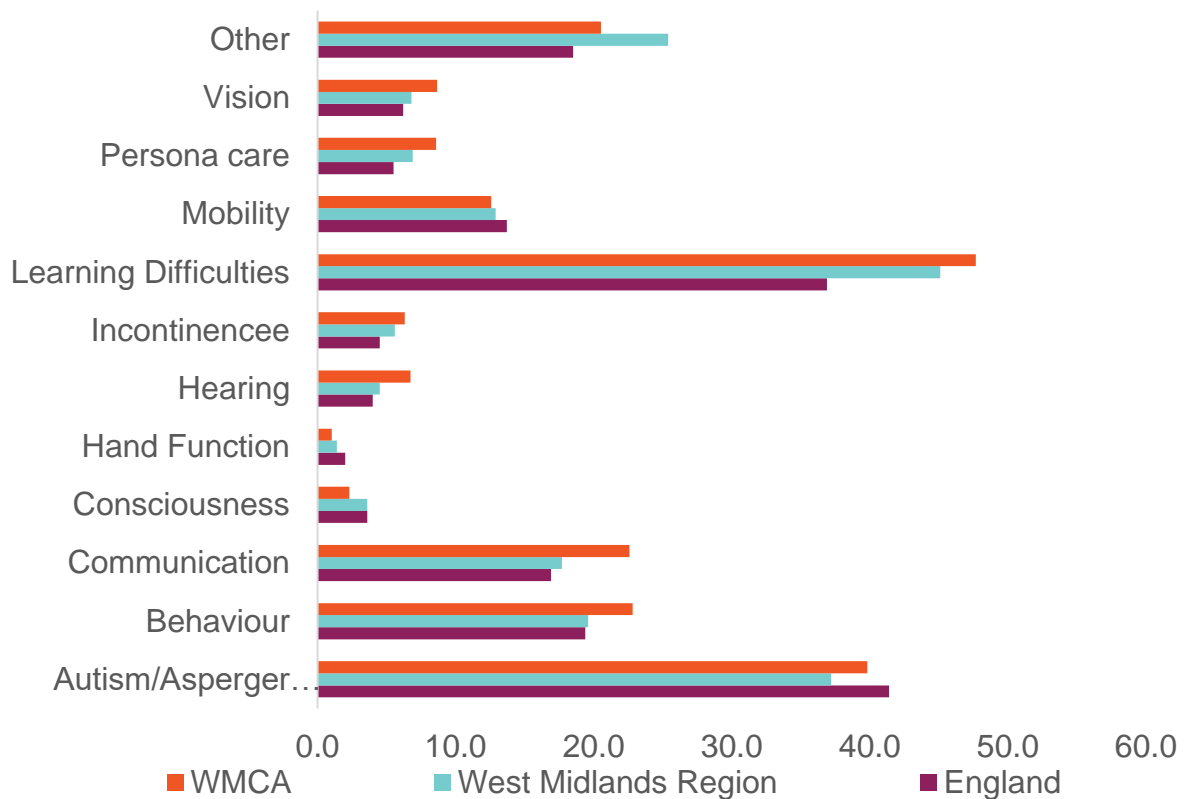
As of March 2023, there were 2,603 disabled children in need in the WMCA area, 10.9% of all children in need. This compares to 11.5% across West Midlands region and 12.8% across England. This is the lowest levels of disabled children in need in the WMCA area since 2013. Dudley (15.2%) and Solihull (14.8%) had the highest levels, down to Walsall (2.7%).<sup>7</sup>

The WMCA has higher than national levels of children with the following disabilities recorded: behaviour (22.8%), communication (22.6%), hearing (6.7%) incontinence (6.3%), learning difficulties (47.7%) personal care (8.6%), vision (8.7%) and other (20.5%).

<sup>6</sup> Royal National Institute for the Blind, [Sight Loss Data Tool V5](#).

<sup>7</sup> Department for Education, [Children in Need 2023](#). Children in Need are a legally defined group of children (under the Children Act 1989), assessed as needing help and protection as a result of risks to their development or health.

### Percent of disabled children in need, March 2023:



### Gender and Age

There were more disabled females in the WMCA area at 285,557 (55.1%) than males at 232,712 (44.9%). Whereas the population that is non disabled is split relatively 50/50 for females and males. This disability gender split is also seen across England, with 55.3% female and 44.7% male.

Of the 518,269 WMCA disabled residents, 7.5% (38,910) were aged under 15 years old. 57.7% (299,180) were aged 16-64 years old and 34.8% (180,178) were aged 65 years and over. This varies from the non-disabled residents where figures are much larger, as 24.1% were aged under 15 years old and 64.4% for those aged 16-64 years old and lower proportion of the population is aged 65 years and over at 11.4%.

### Age breakdown for disabled residents:

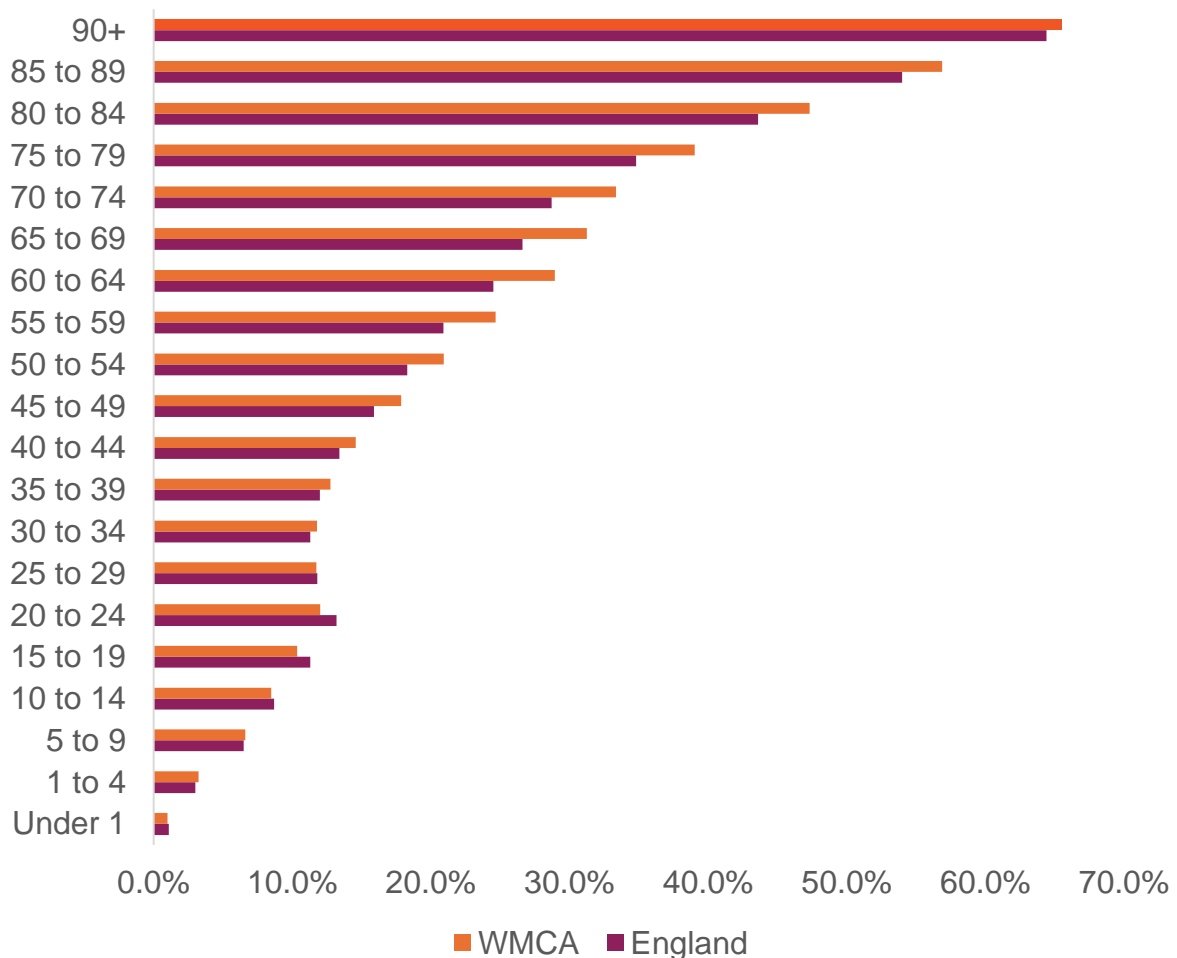
Age	WMCA
Aged 4 years and under	5,132
Aged 5 to 9 years	13,126
Aged 10 to 15 years	20,651
Aged 16 to 19 years	16,630
Aged 20 to 24 years	24,634
Aged 25 to 34 years	47,656
Aged 35 to 49 years	84,465
Aged 50 to 64 years	125,795
Aged 65 to 74 years	76,576
Aged 75 to 84 years	65,558
Aged 85 years and over	38,042



The chart below shows the percentage of people for each age category that are disabled. In the 90+ category, in the WMCA 65.5% of people are disabled. Across England 64.4% of all people aged 90+ are disabled.

Across both the WMCA and England, disability prevalence increases with age. The WMCA has a lower proportion of disabled young people (under 30) than the England average, and a larger proportion of older residents are disabled.

**Prevalence of people that are disabled by age group, WMCA and England 2021:**



**Ethnicity**

Of the 518,269 WMCA disabled residents, the majority at 74.7% (386,895) were classed as White. This was followed by 14.6% (75,885) were Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh. 5.3% (27,492) were Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African. 3.3% (16,934) were Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups and 2.1% (11,064) were classed as an Other Ethnic Group.

This means for the WMCA area, there was a greater proportion of disabled people that are of a White ethnicity than the proportion of White people in the general population. All ethnic minority groups show a lower proportion of disabled people than the general population.

## Marital Status

Of the 518,269 WMCA disabled residents, 34.2% (177,484) were married or in a registered civil partnership (Eng. 36.2%) This is followed closely by 31.8% (164,895) have never married and never registered a civil partnership (Eng. 30.1%). For non-disabled WMCA residents these figures are similar at 33.3% and 32.5% respectively.

There were also 12.6% (65,535) widowed or surviving civil partnership partner disabled people in the WMCA area (Eng. 12.3%), a higher proportion than non-disabled WMCA residents (3.1%).

10.7% (55,681) of disabled people were divorced or civil partnership dissolved (Eng. 11.9%), whereas it was nearly half the proportion for non-disabled (5.2%). 7.5% (38,910) reported does not apply (Eng. 6.7%), in contrast this category accounted for 24.1% for non-disabled people. 3.0% (15,766) were separated, but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership (Eng. 2.8%), similar figures for non-disabled residents (1.7%).

## Households

There were just over 1.13 million households in the WMCA area. Of these, 26.7% (302,722) had 1 person disabled under the Equality Act in the household. There were 7.8% (88,529) with 2 or more people disabled. These figures were above the West Midlands (26.4% and 7.4% respectively) and national average (25.4% and 6.6% respectively).

## Deprivation

Analysis at a national level show for both females and males, a higher percentage of people were disabled in the most deprived areas compared with the least deprived areas. In the most deprived areas, 27.2% of females were disabled, compared with 13.6% in the least deprived areas. Similarly, 24.7% of males in the most deprived areas indicated that they were disabled, compared with 11.7% in the least deprived areas.<sup>8</sup>

As well, in the most deprived areas of England, there were higher levels of disability in younger age groups compared with the least deprived areas; for example, 21.6% of 40- to 44-year-olds were disabled in the most deprived areas compared with 8.1% in the least deprived areas.

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<sup>8</sup> ONS, Disability by age, sex and deprivation, Census 2021.

## Age-specific percentages of disabled people in each age group in each decile of deprivation, England, 2021:

### England

	Most deprived					Least deprived				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
90+	68.0	67.6	65.4	65.0	64.2	64.9	64.0	63.6	63.2	61.7
85 to 89	61.3	59.2	56.9	55.9	54.8	53.4	52.7	52.4	51.3	49.5
80 to 84	54.3	50.9	48.4	46.0	44.3	42.9	41.4	40.8	39.6	37.5
75 to 79	48.3	44.1	41.0	38.0	35.3	33.7	32.2	31.3	29.8	27.7
70 to 74	43.6	38.3	34.7	31.6	29.1	27.4	25.9	24.6	23.5	21.3
65 to 69	42.5	36.8	32.9	29.3	26.5	24.5	22.8	21.8	20.2	17.8
60 to 64	40.6	34.5	30.6	27.1	24.3	22.0	20.2	19.1	17.5	15.2
55 to 59	35.3	29.4	25.9	23.1	20.8	18.8	17.2	15.9	14.6	12.6
50 to 54	30.8	25.5	22.3	20.2	18.2	16.4	15.0	13.9	12.6	10.9
45 to 49	26.5	21.8	19.1	17.3	15.9	14.4	13.3	12.1	11.0	9.3
40 to 44	21.6	17.7	15.4	14.3	13.1	12.1	11.3	10.3	9.5	8.1
35 to 39	18.7	15.1	13.2	12.4	11.5	10.7	10.1	9.5	8.7	7.8
30 to 34	16.9	13.6	12.0	11.2	10.7	10.0	9.7	9.2	8.9	8.2
25 to 29	16.7	13.5	12.2	11.6	11.1	10.5	10.5	10.0	9.9	9.6
20 to 24	16.4	14.2	13.4	13.1	12.9	12.5	12.4	12.0	11.7	11.5
15 to 19	13.3	12.2	11.8	11.6	11.6	11.1	10.8	10.3	9.8	9.5
10 to 14	11.0	10.0	9.6	9.3	8.9	8.3	7.9	7.4	7.0	6.2
5 to 9	8.6	7.8	7.3	6.9	6.5	6.1	5.6	5.2	4.9	4.3
1 to 4	4.3	3.8	3.4	3.1	2.8	2.7	2.5	2.4	2.1	1.9
Under 1	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.8

Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021

Age-specific percentage (%)

Overall deprivation is high in the West Midlands region, and this is prevalent in the WMCA area, as 45.1% of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) were in the top 20% most deprived areas in England, with 26.4% of those in the top 10%.

## Transport

**This section provides an overall summary of national insights followed by local insights which includes:**

- Of the 587,148 households in the WMCA with no cars or vans, 28.2% (165,504) were disabled households, above the England average of 27.7%.
- 127,874 Blue Badges were held in the WMCA.
- 32% of WMCA respondents reported the main reason for not attempting to travel by ring and ride was disability/age or illness.
- Within the TfWM area 87% of stations are already step-free leaving just 8 that need to be improved to provide a fully accessible network. Over 40% of railways stations in Great Britain do not have step-free access.<sup>9</sup>
- Approximately 24.8 million journeys were made by disabled WMCA residents in 2022 - over 19.2 million disabled journeys were on the bus, nearly 5.1 million were on the rail and just over 440,000 were on the tram.
- There are 30,000 registered disabled pass Swift card holders in the WMCA area. Furthermore, of the nearly 80 million Swift journeys in 2022, approximately 9% were disabled.
- 33% of residents reported that access to an adapted cycle would help them cycle more.

## National Insights

**There are various national datasets and publications for transport which includes coverage on public transport (buses, taxis, rail and air), key findings are highlighted below:**

- [Department for Transport](#) data shows for 2021/22 that 46% of buses on local services had audible and visible information is provided.
- [National Travel Survey](#) shows disabled adults in England made 25% fewer trips than non-disabled adults in 2022. [Motability](#) reports this to be as high as 38% in the years 2007-2019.
- [Department for Transport](#) data shows in England in 2023, 55% of taxis were wheelchair accessible, and 5.1% of Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) were wheelchair accessible.
- [Office of Rail and Road](#) statistics indicate that across England there were 271,831 Disabled Persons Railcards (DPRC) in circulation as of October 2023, an increase of 18% compared with October 2022.
  - [Leonard Cheshire research](#) from 2017 on the experience of disabled passengers reveal their experiences when traveling on rail services across the UK. Two thirds of disabled passengers reported experiencing at least one problem during their rail journey. The journey stage with the highest level of reported problems was on-board trains (23% of passengers). [Further research](#) from Department for Transport looks at the experiences of disabled rail passengers.

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<sup>9</sup> [Leonard Cheshire, Disabled people cannot use over 40% of Great Britain's train stations, 2018](#)

- [UK Civil Aviation Authority Consumer Survey Wave 12](#) found across the UK, 34% of disabled people had flown in the last 12 months, compared to 60% of non-disabled people. Satisfaction was lower for disabled passengers at 74% compared to 80% for non-disabled passengers.

## Local Insights

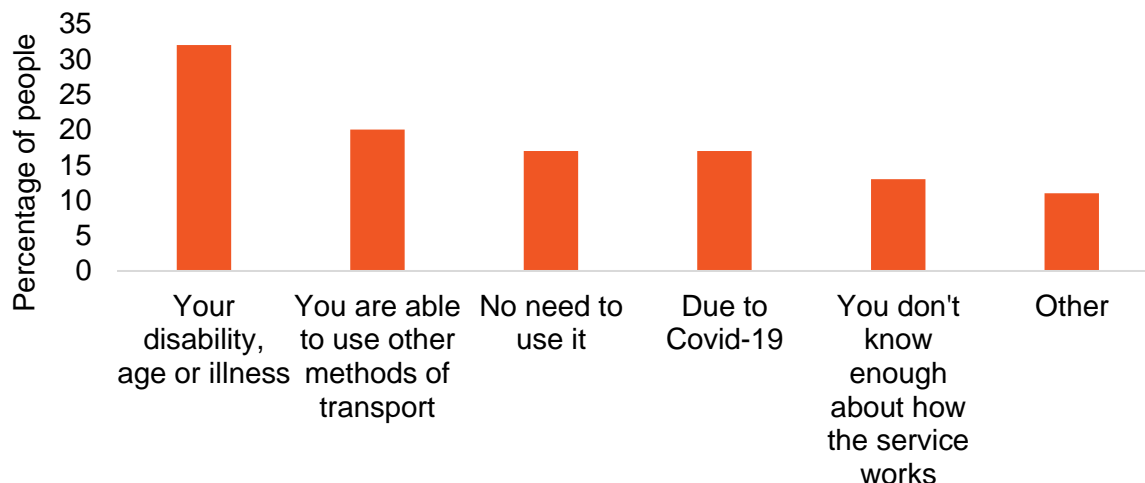
### Car or Van Availability

Census 2021 data shows that of the 587,148 households in the WMCA with no cars or vans, 28.2% (165,504) were disabled households, above the England average of 27.7%. Of the nearly 2.3 million households in the WMCA with 1 or more cars or vans, 14.6% (334,096) were disabled households and this was slightly above the national average of 14.5%.<sup>10</sup>

### Ring and Ride

Data from Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) shows that 163 (14%) respondents had registered for Ring and Ride, but never attempted to use the service. The main reason for not attempting to travel by the service was disability/age or illness (32%).<sup>11</sup>

#### Reasons for never attempting to use Ring and Ride:



### Public Transport Usage

Transport for West Midlands data shows in the WMCA area, of the 267 million public transport journeys made, approximately 24.8 million were disabled journeys in 2022. Of these, 52% in were in Birmingham, 10% for both Sandwell and Wolverhampton, 9% Coventry, and 6% for Dudley, Solihull and Walsall.<sup>12</sup> Data also shows that over 19.2 million disabled journeys were on the bus, nearly 5.1 million were by rail and just over 440,000 were on the tram.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Census 2021

<sup>11</sup> Transport for West Midlands (TfWM)

<sup>12</sup> TfWM, Operator Patronage by Mode Annualised Reports from Dec-2022, Fareshare Journey Analysis Summary Reporting for 2022 and estimations, 2024

<sup>13</sup> TfWM

There are 30,000 registered disabled pass Swift card holders in the WMCA area. Furthermore, of the nearly 80 million journeys in 2022, approximately 9% were disabled.<sup>14</sup>

National findings suggest that current bus users were least likely to have a disability, whereas lapsed bus users had the highest levels of disability. Disabled people are amongst the most likely to use the bus less because of Covid-19, disabled people aged 80 years and over were most likely to use the bus less as a result of Covid-19. In 2023 there were over 33 million trips in the West Midlands ITA using 417,954 older and disabled concessionary bus passes, an average of 74 journeys per pass. This is an increase since 2022 from an average of 42 journeys per pass. However, journeys have not recovered since the pre-pandemic period (an average of 126 journeys per pass in the years 2015-2019). 38,068 of these passes were disabled concessionary travel passes.<sup>15</sup>

### Inclusive Access

Within the TfWM area 87% of stations are already step-free leaving just 8 that need to be improved to provide a fully accessible network. It is recognised, however, that many technically fully step-free stations are still not easy for people to use, and more work needs to be done to fully meet the needs of all our users. Inclusive access is not just about being able to get from the street to the train without steps. There are many other aspects, including provision for people with sight or hearing impairments, stations and station approaches that feel secure and are well lit, and adequate seating.<sup>16</sup>

### Blue Badges

As of the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, in England 2.57 million Blue Badges were held, an increase of 5.7% since March 2022, with 4.6% of the population held a Blue Badge. Across the West Midlands region 298,000 Blue Badges were held and for the WMCA 127,874 Blue Badges were held.<sup>17</sup>

### Walking, Wheeling and Cycling

In England, disabled people take 30% fewer walking or wheeling trips than non-disabled people.<sup>18</sup> This is known as the 'transport accessibility gap'. One reason for this gap is that our streets are often inaccessible and unsafe for disabled people to navigate. These barriers can prevent disabled people accessing what they need, from essentials like healthcare and food, opportunities in work and education, and social benefits like community and green space. This means reduced independence and a higher risk of isolation for disabled people.

Research shows that disabled people experience many barriers to active travel and are under-represented in cycling. The West Midlands Walking and Cycling Index for 2021<sup>19</sup> shows that 43% of disabled residents walk or wheel at least five days a week

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<sup>14</sup> TfWM

<sup>15</sup> [Department for Transport, Concessionary travel statistics](#)

<sup>16</sup> [West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy 2022-2050](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Blue Badge Digital Service \(BBDS\) database](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Sustrans Disabled Citizens Enquiry](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Sustrans / Transport for West Midlands, Walking and Cycling Index 2021, released 2022.](#)

(46% of non-disabled residents). 9% of disabled West Midlands residents cycle at least once a week (lower than the 14% for non-disabled). 33% of disabled residents reported they do not cycle but would like to.

57% of disabled West Midlands residents think walking or wheeling safety in their local area is good (lower than the 67% for non-disabled). While 30% of disabled residents think cycling safety in their local area is good (35% for non-disabled). 51% of disabled West Midlands residents feel welcome and comfortable walking, wheeling or spending time on the street of their neighbour (52% non-disabled).

33% of residents reported that access to an adapted cycle would help them cycle more. 20 people benefitted from training and a long-term loan of an adapted cycle.

The Birmingham Walking and Cycling Index for 2023 reveals that 47% of disabled people feel welcome and comfortable walking, wheeling or spending time on the streets of their neighbourhood, compared to 62% of non-disabled people. 39% of disabled people walk or wheel at least five days a week, compared to 44% of non-disabled people. 42% of disabled people think walking or wheeling safety in their local area is good, compared to 58% of non-disabled people.

7% of disabled people cycle at least once a week, compared to 14% of non-disabled people. 27% of disabled people think cycling safety in their local area is good, compared to 37% of non-disabled people.

Midland Mencap research found that blue route through Birmingham's A38 may seem like an accessible route for all citizens, but the width of the barriers makes it very difficult for our citizen's using adapted trikes and cycles due to width. Out of the 76 respondents consulted with, just under half (49%) actively cycle. The three major barriers highlighted in relation to using cycling as a mobility aid are not surprisingly: road/path accessibility, citizen ability, and road safety.

In Birmingham, Sustrans are delivering a project using the City of London Street Accessibility Tool (COLSAT) and in person auditing with community codesign, to consider the impacts of the streetscape on disabled people.



# Housing and Regeneration

## This section's highlights include:

- The West Midlands region has a higher proportion of disabled people living with parents, than the national average (18.7% vs 16.3%).
- Disabled people in the West Midlands were less likely to be owner-occupiers, with 39.9% of disabled people aged 16 to 64 years being owner-occupiers, compared to 53.4% of non-disabled people aged 16 to 64.
- In 2022/23, 75.6% (4,737) of adults (aged 18-64) with a learning disability lived in stable and appropriate accommodation in the WMCA area. This was lower than the national average of 80.5%. Across all English regions, the West Midlands had the lowest proportion at 71.4%.

## Local Insights

### Housing Ownership

In the West Midlands region, disabled people are more likely to rent social housing, with 24.5% of disabled people aged 16 to 64 years occupying a socially rented property, compared with 8.6% of non-disabled people aged 16-64. This reflects national the national trend where figures were 24.9% for disabled and 7.9% for non-disabled.<sup>20</sup>

Disabled people in the West Midlands were less likely to be owner-occupiers, with 39.9% of disabled people aged 16 to 64 years being owner-occupiers, compared to 53.4% of non-disabled people aged 16 to 64. Reflecting national figures of 39.7% for disabled people and 53.3% for non-disabled people.

The West Midlands region has a higher proportion of disabled people living with parents, than the national average (18.7% vs 16.3%). National insights show that young disabled people (aged 16 to 24 years) were less likely to live with their parents (74.6%) than young non-disabled people (79.3%), but this pattern reverses for ages 25 to 54 years. Above age 24 years, there was a significant drop in the proportion of both disabled and non-disabled people living with parents. The reduction was notably larger for non-disabled people with only 25.8% living at home (79.3% of 16–24-year-olds) ages 25 to 29 years, in comparison to disabled people with 32.4% living with parents (74.6% of 16–24-year-olds).

The West Midlands region has a lower proportion of disabled people living in private rented accommodation than the national average (15.1% vs 17.4%).

Across England, disabled people aged 16-64 with mental illness or other nervous disorders are most likely to rent social housing (34.5%). Disabled people aged 16 to 64 years with autism were the least likely to own their own home (of all main impairment types), with just 3.8% owning their own home, this compares to 53.3% of non-disabled people.

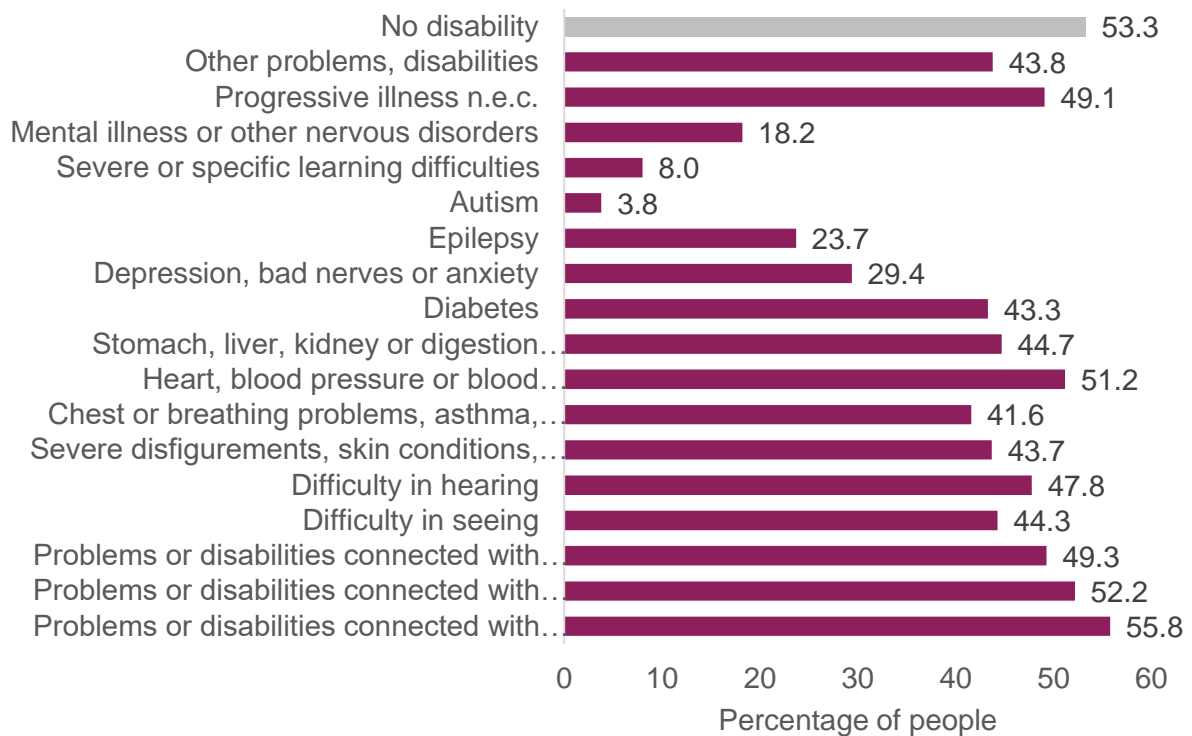
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<sup>20</sup> [Disability and housing](#)

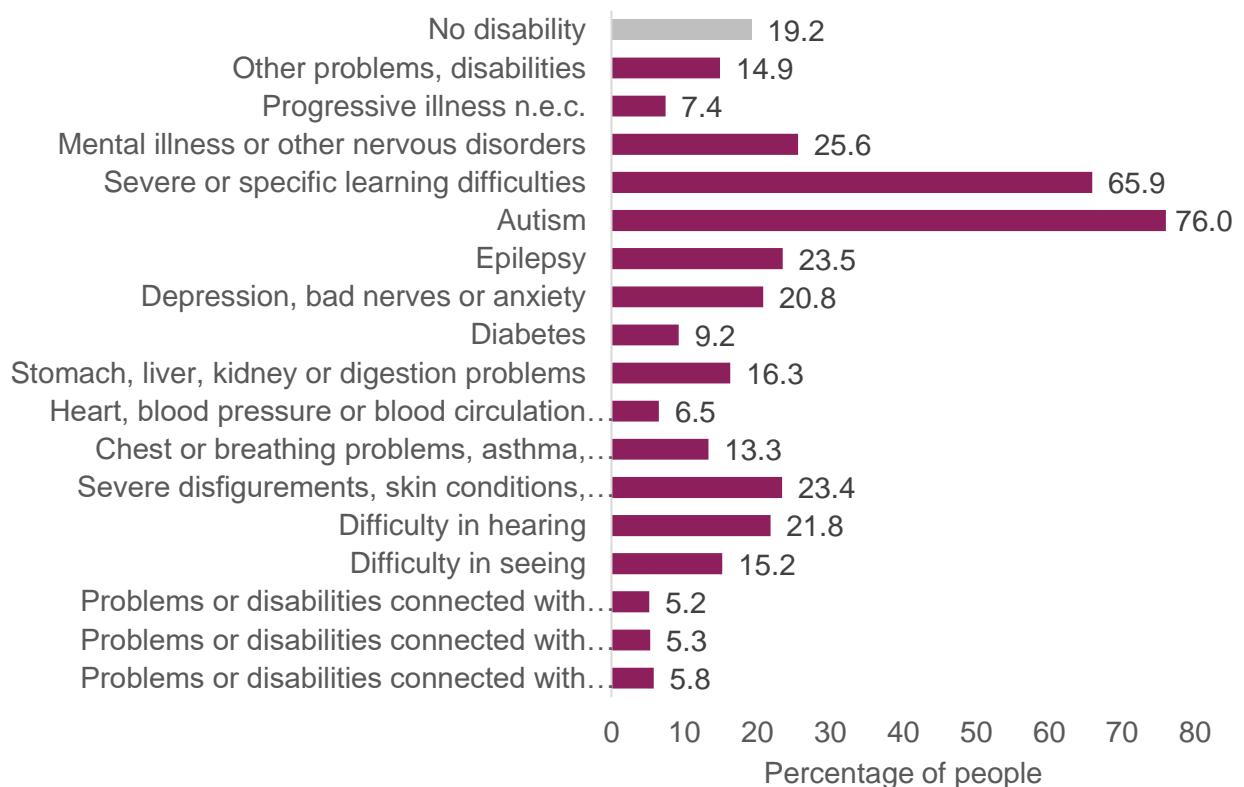


### Percentage of Disabled People Classed as Owner Occupier (National), 2021:

As seen in the chart below, disabled people with autism are most likely to live with parents (76.0%), closely followed by severe or specific learning difficulties (65.9%).



### Percentage of Disabled People Living with Parents (National) 2021:



## Lettings in Social Housing

In 2021/22 there were a total of 13,980 social housing new lettings in the WMCA area, of these 17.4% (2,433) had a tenant that had a disability-related adaption requirement.<sup>21</sup>

Overall, for the WMCA, the median weekly household income for disabled tenants was £253.85 (1,127 incomes used for median), for those that indicated no disability, the median weekly income was £242.89 (5,722 income used for median).

Overall, for the WMCA, the weekly median rent & charges for disabled tenants was £85.20 (2,420 rents used for median), for those that indicated no disability, the weekly median rent & charges were £84.68 (11,542 rents used for median).

### Disability related social lettings:

	Disability related Adaption Requirements	Median Income	Rents and Charges
Birmingham	823	£241.00	£83.68
Coventry	311	£276.92	£99.90
Dudley	359	£252.85	£82.04
Sandwell	306	£232.73	£78.45
Solihull	66	£303.00	£119.76
Walsall	341	£227.99	£84.60
Wolverhampton	227	£298.50	£87.97
<b>WMCA</b>	<b>2,433</b>	<b>£253.85</b>	<b>£85.20</b>

## Number of Care Homes Providing Support for People with a Learning Disability and Autistic People

As of March 2024, in the West Midlands region there were 653 care homes providing support for people with a learning disability and autistic people – accounting for 39.2% of all care homes. This equates to 6,940 beds in care homes. Of these 653 care homes in the West Midlands region, 305 were in the WMCA area and a total of 3,061 beds.<sup>22</sup>

## Adults with a Learning Disability who Live in Stable and Appropriate Accommodation

In 2022/23, 75.6% (4,737) of adults (aged 18-64) with a learning disability lived in stable and appropriate accommodation in the WMCA area. This was lower than the national average of 80.5%. Across all English regions, the West Midlands had the lowest proportion at 71.4%.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> [Department for Levelling Up](#), Housing & communities – COntinuous REcording (CORE) of Lettings in Social Housing in England.

<sup>22</sup> LG Inform

<sup>23</sup> [Public Health England Fingertips](#) (NHS Digital. Measures from the Adult and Social Care Outcomes Framework)

### Proportion of adults with a learning disability living in stable and appropriate accommodation:

	Percentage
Birmingham	66.8%
Coventry	80.2%
Dudley	76.4%
Sandwell	86.0%
Solihull	78.0%
Walsall	84.3%
Wolverhampton	75.8%
<b>WMCA</b>	<b>75.6%</b>
West Midlands Region	71.4%
England	80.5%

### Supported Working Age Adults with Learning Disability Living in Unsettled Accommodation

In 2019/2020, 20.0% of supported working age adults with a learning disability in the WMCA were living in unsettled accommodation, above the national figures (16.9%). Figures vary within the WMCA from 13.0% in Walsall to 25.7% in Birmingham.<sup>24</sup>

### Proportion of supported working adults with learning disability living in unsettled accommodation:

	Percentage
Birmingham	25.7%
Coventry	21.7%
Dudley	15.8%
Sandwell	14.4%
Solihull	17.8%
Walsall	13.0%
Wolverhampton	19.4%
<b>WMCA</b>	<b>20.0%</b>
West Midlands Region	20.4%
England	16.9%

### Accessible Environment

Dojo for business analysed Tripadvisor's data on the top 25 most populated UK and global cities. This analysis looked at the percentage of activities, restaurants, cafes, parking and pubs which have accessible access. As well as looking into the percentage of hotels that had facilities for disabled guests overall and the percentage of hotels in each city which had facilities for disabled guests. Locally, analysis is only available for Wolverhampton and Birmingham where they ranked top and 21<sup>st</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Public Health England (NHS Digital, Adult Social Care Activity and Finance Report, Short and Long- Term Care Statistics). Please note, WMCA has been aggregated from all known lower geography values.

respectively. Wolverhampton scored highly on the percentage of pubs and café that are wheelchair friendly as well as parking spaces.<sup>25</sup>

#### Dojo accessible cities score:

	Wolverhampton	Birmingham
Rank	1	21
Number of restaurants	453	2,090
% of wheelchair friendly restaurants	30.9%	26.3%
Number of hotels	48	359
% of hotels which have facilities for disabled guests	16.7%	12.3%
Number of cafes	79	317
% of cafes that are wheelchair friendly	55.7%	43.9%
Number of pubs	102	240
% of pubs which are wheelchair friendly	71.6%	66.3%
Number of things to do with wheelchair access	14	64
% parking spaces that are accessible	84%	46%
Index score out of 150	111	54

However, research from Surewise looks at six key metrics and scored the 65 cities on a per 1,000 scale. On this basis, Wolverhampton came in 52<sup>nd</sup> and Birmingham 64<sup>th</sup>.

#### Surewise accessibility score:

	Wolverhampton	Birmingham
<b>Rank</b>	52	64
Overall Score	44.07	27.36
Hotels	0.03	0.05
Attractions	0.49	0.1
Restaurants	1.16	0.23
Parking	0.02	0.01
Toilets	0.06	0.01
Licensed Wheelchair Accessible Taxis	0.58	0.57

<sup>25</sup> [Dojo for business](#)

## Employment and Skills

**This section provides an overall summary of national insights followed by local insights which includes:**

- In the 2022/23 academic year in the WMCA, 74,950 pupils have special educational needs (SEN), 13.9% of all pupils.
- 18% of children with SEN have a good level of development at the end of KS1, compared to 71.9% of children without SEN. This equates to a gap of 53.8pp. SEN pupils in the WMCA perform worse than their regional and national comparators.
- In the WMCA, the gap was 20.5, with an average Attainment 8 score of 27.9 for SEN pupils, compared to 48.4 for non-SEN pupils. SEN pupils in the WMCA perform worse than their national comparators.
- Disabled people are more likely to have a Level 1 and entry level qualifications and Level 2 qualifications as their highest level of qualification. Disabled people in the WMCA area are less likely to have a Level 4+ qualification than their national counterparts.
- Disabled people in the WMCA area are less likely to be in employment and more likely to be economically inactive, when comparing to disabled people across England - 49.1% employment rate compared to 57.3% and 45.8% economically inactive compared to 38.8%.
- The West Midlands region disability pay gap was 14.7% in 2021. This was a bigger pay gap than the England average of 13.8%.
- Disabled people in the West Midlands get paid the least out of all the English regions, and have the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest disability pay gap.
- There are 62,802 Disability Living Allowance (DLA) cases in payment claimants, 66,815 Attendance Allowance (AA) cases in payment and 188,175 Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claimants in the WMCA area (all claimant data is broken down by impairment).

## National Insights

**There are various national datasets and publications for employment and skills which includes coverage on 16-18 destinations, graduate outcomes, digital skills, businesses and employment challenges, key findings are highlighted below:**

- [Department for Education data](#) for the 2021/22 academic year shows for 16-18 destinations that students with SEN were less likely to sustain a destination for each of the main destinations compared to pupils without SEN, in education (59.7% vs 63.2%), apprenticeships (4.7% vs 5.3%) and employment (19.5% vs 20.6%).
- [UCAS undergraduate data](#) estimations found that in 2023, 128,525 students with a declared disability applied through UCAS to university.
- [Office for Students reports](#) that in 2021-22, 17.4% of full-time students were disabled students, and 19.7% of part-time students were disabled students.

- Continuation rates were lowest for students with social or communication impairments at 86.9%.
- 85.5% of disabled students completed their studies, compared to 87.6% of non-disabled students. Completion rates were lowest for students with mental health conditions (82.2%).
- The proportion of students that progressed to professional or managerial employment, further study, or other positive outcomes, 15 months after gaining their qualification, rates were 70.9% for disabled students vs 72.6% for non-disabled students. Rates were lowest for those with social or communication impairment (68.4%).
- [ONS data](#) shows the number of disabled adults who were recent internet users in 2020 reached almost 11 million, 81.4% of disabled adults.
- [Lloyds Consumer Digital Index reports](#) that 75% of disabled people have foundation level digital skills, compared to 90% of non-disabled people. People with physical impairments are the least likely to have foundation level digital skills, at 67%.
- [Small Business Britian reports](#) that nationally 25% of entrepreneurs are disabled or neurodiverse and 25% of small business owners are disabled or have a health condition. As well as 37% of disabled entrepreneurs have been discriminated against because of their disability.
- [Federation of Small Businesses](#) found that 52% of entrepreneurs have experienced a barrier due to their having a disability or health condition, such as not being able to commit to consistent hours or meet short deadlines (34%), when applying for financial support (15%), and lacking access to equipment (11%).
- [Leonard Cheshire reports](#) that 19% of employers say they would be less likely to hire a disabled person. The cost of making workplace adjustments was cited as a barrier for almost 70% of employers.
- [Work Foundation UK Insecure Work Index](#) displays a record 1.45 million disabled workers are now in severely insecure work.
- [Graduate Labour Market Statistics](#) shows that Disabled graduates were less likely to be employed (highly skilled or otherwise) and more likely to be inactive than their non-disabled peers. The inactivity rate for disabled graduates (19.2%) was more than double the rate for non-disabled graduates (8.8%).
  - Median earnings for disabled graduates aged 16-64 across England was £34,000 in 2022, a gap of £5,500 compared to non-disabled graduates. This is in addition to additional average living costs which are higher for disabled people.
- During Covid-19, disabled workers were more likely than non-disabled workers to lose work, see their hours reduced, or be furloughed. A survey of more than 6,000 people by [Citizen's Advice](#) found that more than one in four (27%) disabled workers faced redundancy in 2020 compared with 17% of non-disabled workers.
  - In the second year of the recovery, there were signs that disabled people were still disproportionately impacted. A [survey by Leonard Cheshire](#) in 2021 found that 69% of disabled respondents had their work impacted by the pandemic, which included seeing working hours and earnings reduced and exiting the labour market.

- [The Great Big Workplace Adjustments Survey 2023](#) provides key insights such as 1 in 8 disabled people are waiting over a year to get the adjustments they need.

## Local Insights

### Special Educational Needs

In the 2022/23 academic year in the WMCA, 74,950 pupils have special educational needs (SEN), 13.9% of all pupils. 21,047 children had an education, health and care (EHC plan), 3.9% of all pupils. Across England, 13.0% of pupils had SEN support, and 4.3% had EHC plans.<sup>26</sup>

Coventry has a higher proportion of SEN pupils than the England average, at 15.8%. The WMCA has fewer pupils with an EHC plan than regionally or nationally, except for Dudley (4.9%).

#### SEN and EHC plans in the WMCA area:

Area	Total Pupils	Total SEN Support Pupils	EHC Plan	SEN Support %	EHC Plan %
Birmingham	215,537	30,432	8,212	14.1%	3.8%
Coventry	62,377	9,855	2,117	15.8%	3.4%
Dudley	48,515	6,655	2,372	13.7%	4.9%
Sandwell	62,844	8,050	2,378	12.8%	3.8%
Solihull	42,635	5,835	1,606	13.7%	3.8%
Walsall	55,251	7,094	2,260	12.8%	4.1%
Wolverhampton	51,131	7,029	2,102	13.7%	4.1%
<b>WMCA</b>	<b>538,290</b>	<b>74,950</b>	<b>21,047</b>	<b>13.9%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>
West Midlands region	999,312	136,477	40,459	13.7%	4.0%
GMCA	498,127	65,906	23,851	13.2%	4.8%
England	9,073,832	1,183,384	389,171	13.0%	4.3%

For most SEN groups, there were more boys than girls, with autism having the largest difference. Reasons for this difference are complex. In some cases, this may be because certain disabilities are more common in boys. But it is likely to be also down to gender bias in assessment and from those referring children for assessment, as well as girls being better at hiding the challenges they face from some conditions.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> [Special Educational Needs in England, 2022/23 academic year](#)

<sup>27</sup> [The Conversation, 2023](#)



## SEN by primary need in the WMCA area:

Primary Need	Number of pupils in WMCA	% of all pupils WMCA	% boys WMCA	% girls WMCA	% boys England	% girls England
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	6,046	8.3%	71.9%	28.1%	70.3%	29.7%
Hearing Impairment	1,230	1.7%	48.3%	51.7%	50.3%	49.7%
Moderate Learning Difficulty	19,749	27.0%	57.7%	42.3%	57.7%	42.3%
Multi- Sensory Impairment	128	0.2%	68.0%	32.0%	65.7%	34.3%
Other Difficulty/Disability	1,751	2.4%	62.0%	38.0%	60.3%	39.7%
Physical Disability	1,477	2.0%	55.4%	44.6%	55.9%	44.1%
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty	48	0.1%	68.8%	31.3%	60.9%	39.1%
SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need	2,893	4.0%	60.1%	39.9%	59.9%	40.1%
Severe Learning Difficulty	178	0.2%	68.5%	31.5%	62.4%	37.6%
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	13,515	18.5%	66.9%	33.1%	65.9%	34.1%
Specific Learning Difficulty	6,036	8.3%	54.7%	45.3%	54.9%	45.1%
Speech, Language and Communications needs	19,307	26.4%	68.3%	31.7%	68.2%	31.8%
Visual Impairment	790	1.1%	56.3%	43.7%	55.1%	44.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>73,148</b>		<b>63.2%</b>	<b>36.8%</b>	<b>62.8%</b>	<b>37.2%</b>

## Early Years

There is a large discrepancy between children with SEN and children without SEN in terms of early years outcomes. In the WMCA, 18% of children with SEN have a good level of development at the end of KS1, compared to 71.9% of children without SEN. This equates to a gap of 53.8pp. This gap is also seen nationally, however both SEN and non-SEN children outperform their WMCA counterparts at the regional and national level.<sup>28</sup>

## Good level of development at the end of KS1:

Area	Characteristic	Early Years no of children	Number with Good Level of Development	Good Level of Development %	Gap
<b>WMCA</b>	No identified SEN	31,918	23,026	71.9	
<b>WMCA</b>	All SEN	4,838	875	18.0	53.8
<b>West Midlands</b>	No identified SEN	59,798	43,879	73.4	
<b>West Midlands</b>	All SEN	8,716	1,748	20.1	53.3
<b>England</b>	No identified SEN	539,561	399,493	74.0	
<b>England</b>	All SEN	70,599	13,976	19.8	54.2

<sup>28</sup> [DfE Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Results, academic year 2022/23](#)

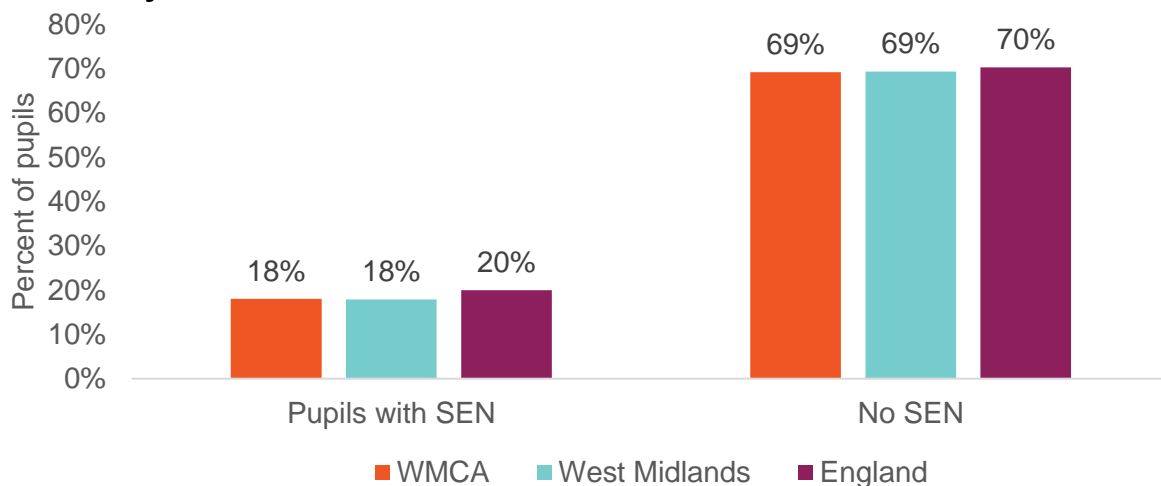


## Key Stage 2

In 2023, 21% of pupils at the end of key stage 2 in the WMCA area had SEN, compared to 20% across England. Pupils with SEN either have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or receive SEN support. In 2023, 4% of all pupils had an EHCP and 17% were on SEN support. Figures were 5% and 17% for England respectively.

In 2023, 18% of pupils in the WMCA area with SEN met the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined), compared with 20% of pupils with SEN in England. Of those pupils on SEN support, 22% met the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined), whilst 5% of those pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan met the standard. Figures were 24% and 8% respectively for England, meaning all groups of SEN pupils in the WMCA perform worse than their English counterparts.<sup>29</sup>

### Percent of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, academic year 2022/23:



## Key Stage 4

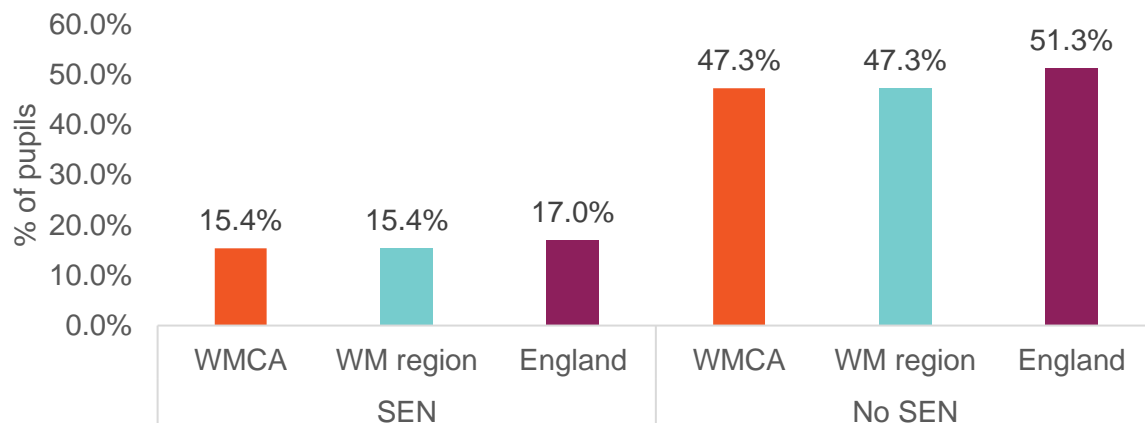
In the WMCA in the 2022/23 academic year pupils with SEN had significantly lower attainment than pupils without SEN across the headline measures.<sup>30</sup>

The gap for the percentage of pupils achieving grades 5 and above in English and maths is 31.9pp in the WMCA, as 15.4% of SEN pupils achieved grades 5 and above in English and maths compared to 47.3% for non-SEN pupils. The gap was larger in England at 34.3pp, with both SEN pupils (17.0%) and non-SEN pupils (51.3%) performing better than their WMCA counterparts.

<sup>29</sup> [DfE Key State 2 Attainment, academic year 2022/23](#)

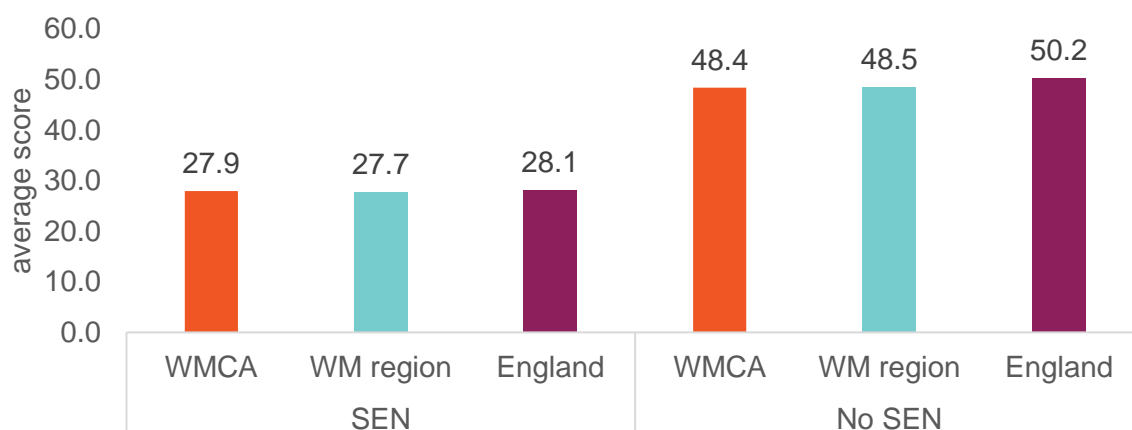
<sup>30</sup> [DfE Key Stage 4 Attainment, Academic year 2022/23](#)

## Percentage of pupils achieving grades 5 or above in English and mathematics GCSEs:



The same pattern was seen in the average Attainment 8 gap. In the WMCA, the gap was 20.5, with an average Attainment 8 score of 27.9% for SEN pupils, compared to 48.4% for non-SEN pupils. Across England, the gap was larger at 22.1, with an average Attainment 8 score of 28.1% for SEN and 50.2% for non-SEN pupils.

## Average Attainment 8 score of all pupils:



## KS4 Destinations

Across the WMCA, there were 4,964 pupils with an identified SEN in KS4 in the 2021/22 academic year. Outcomes for SEN pupils reveal they were least likely to sustain an education, apprenticeship or employment destination (87.2%) than pupils with no identified SEN (93.2%). This compares to 88.9% and 94.6% respectively across England. Larger gaps in sustained education destinations were observed in the WMCA (7.4pp), higher than across England. SEN pupils were more likely than their non-SEN counterparts to enter apprenticeships and work destinations.<sup>31</sup>

Since 2020/11, there has been an increase in SEN pupils in sustained education, employment or apprenticeship destinations across the WMCA, from 81.2% in 2010/11 to a high of 88.5% in 2017/18. This has since fallen slightly to 87.2%.

<sup>31</sup> [DFE, Key Stage 4 Destination Measures, academic year 2021/22](#)

### Key Stage 4 destinations (% of pupils) by SEN provision, 2021/22:

	Breakdown	Overall	Education	Apprenticeships	Work
<b>WMCA</b>	Identified SEN	87.2	79.8	3.0	4.5
<b>WMCA</b>	No identified SEN	93.2	87.3	2.8	3.1
<b>WMCA</b>	Gap	-6.0	-7.4	0.1	1.4
<b>England</b>	Identified SEN	88.9	80.4	3.3	5.2
<b>England</b>	No identified SEN	94.6	87.5	3.4	3.7
<b>England</b>	Gap	-5.7	-7.1	-0.1	1.5

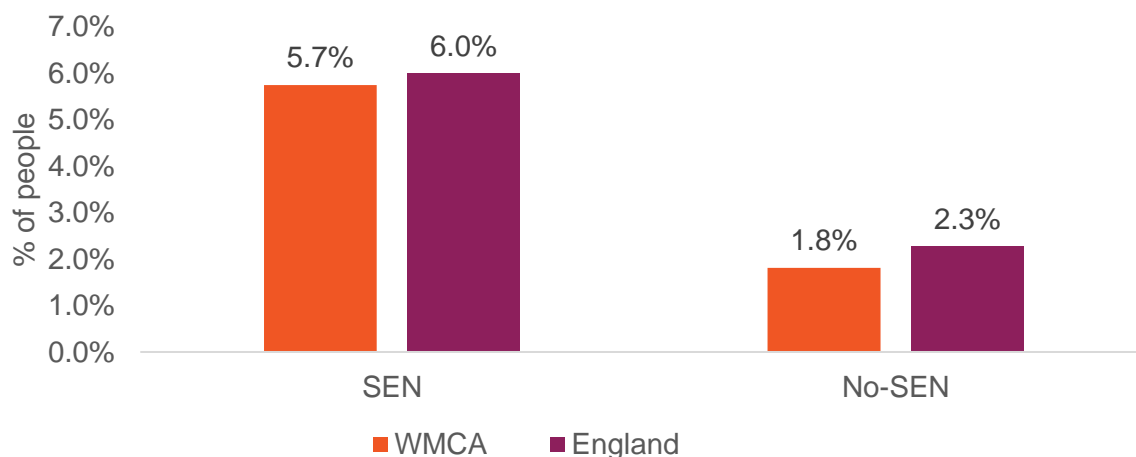
## 16-18 Results

A maximum of 60 points are available for A level. In the academic year 2022/23 in the WMCA SEN pupils received an average point score of 29.7 (note, data for Wolverhampton is unavailable), this is compared to their non-SEN counterparts who received an average point score of 31.9. Across England, both SEN (32.1) and non-SEN pupils (34.2) performed better than their WMCA counterparts.<sup>32</sup>

## Not in Education Employment or Training

In the WMCA in 2023, 5.7% of people ages 16-17 with SEN were NEET (not in education, employment or training), this is compared to 1.8% without SEN, a gap of 3.9pp. This is a larger gap than for NEETs with and without SEN across England (3.7pp). The WMCA has lower rates of NEETs for both SEN and non-SEN 16-17 pupils.<sup>33</sup>

### 16–17-year-old NEET:



<sup>32</sup> [DfE A Level and other 16-18 results](#)

<sup>33</sup> [DfE Participation in Education and Training and NEET age 16 to 17 2023](#)

## Pupil Absence in Schools

Across both the autumn and spring terms 2022/23, the overall absence rate was 10.1% for pupils with SEN across the WMCA area, compared to 6.8% for pupils with no-SEN. Across England, figures were 10.1% and 6.5 respectively.

In the WMCA area, 32.1% of pupils with SEN were persistently absent across the autumn and spring terms 2022/23 (i.e. missed 10% or more sessions), compared to 20.5% of their non-SEN counterparts. Across England, figures were 30.8% and 18.5% respectively.<sup>34</sup>

## Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions

In the Autumn term 2022/23 across the WMCA there were a total of 196 permanent exclusions, of which 55.6% (109 pupils) had SEN provision. For SEN pupils with statement or EHC the permanent exclusion rate was 0.07%, and for SEN pupils without statement this was 0.14%, whilst non-SEN pupils had a permanent exclusion rate of 0.02%. Figures were similar across the West Midlands and England.

During this same period there were 11,985 suspensions across the WMCA area, of which 43.3% (5,188 pupils) had SEN provision. For SEN pupils with statement or EHC the suspension rate was 6.2%, and for SEN pupils without statement this was 5.8%, whilst non-SEN pupils had a suspension rate of 1.6%. suspension rates for all pupil groups were higher across England.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> [DfE Pupil Absence in Schools academic year 2022/23](#)

<sup>35</sup> [Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England, autumn term 2022/23](#)

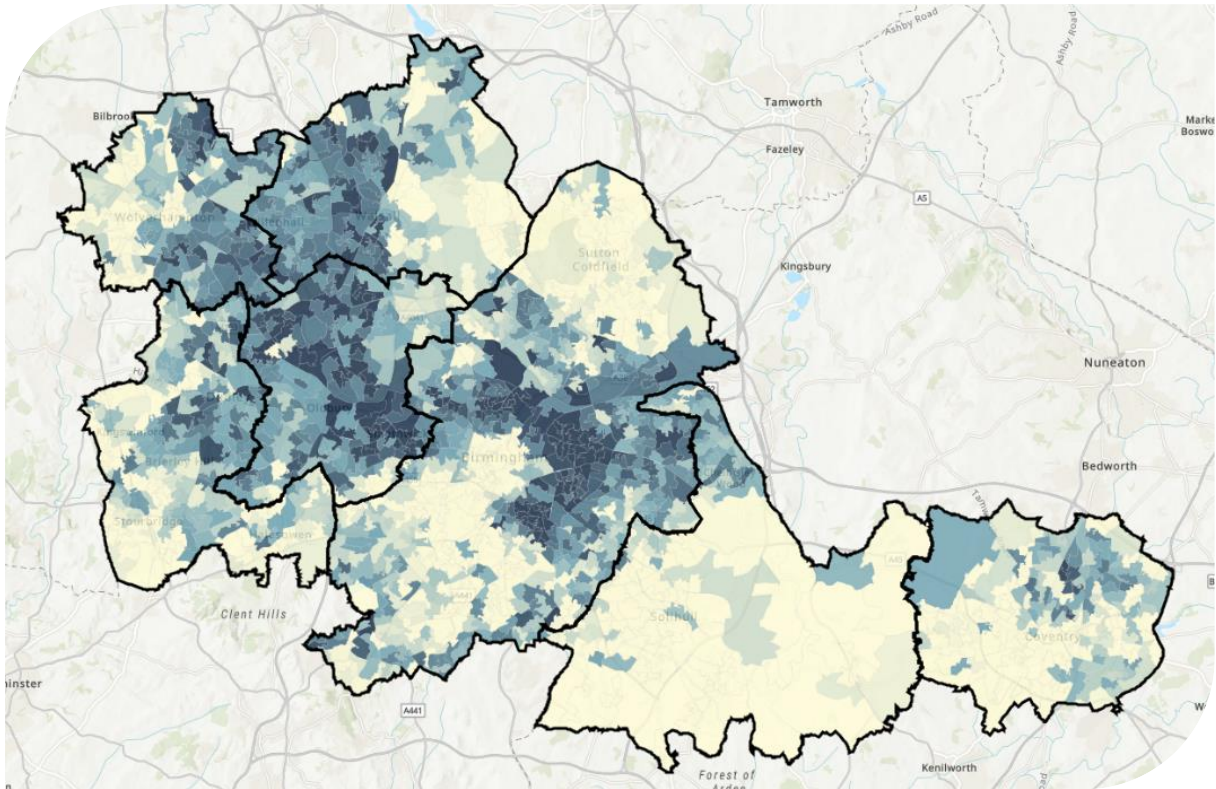
**Permanent Exclusions and Suspensions, Autumn term 2022/23:**

Area	Characteristic	Permanent exclusions	Permanent exclusion rate	Suspension	Suspension rate
England	SEN provision - No SEN	1,571	0.02%	135,795	1.9%
West Midlands	SEN provision - No SEN	206	0.03%	13,958	1.8%
<b>WMCA</b>	<b>SEN provision - No SEN</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>0.02%</b>	<b>6,797</b>	<b>1.6%</b>
England	SEN provision - SEN with statement or EHC	233	0.07%	26,557	7.8%
West Midlands	SEN provision - SEN with statement or EHC	29	0.08%	2,446	6.9%
<b>WMCA</b>	<b>SEN provision - SEN with statement or EHC</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0.07%</b>	<b>1,184</b>	<b>6.2%</b>
England	SEN provision - SEN without statement	1,300	0.12%	85,014	8.2%
West Midlands	SEN provision - SEN without statement	197	0.16%	8,586	6.9
<b>WMCA</b>	<b>SEN provision - SEN without statement</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>0.14%</b>	<b>4,004</b>	<b>5.8%</b>

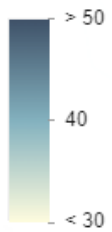
### Highest Level of Qualification

Disabled people are more likely to have a Level 1 and entry level qualifications and Level 2 qualifications as their highest level of qualification. This differs to that of non-disabled people who are more likely to hold a level 3, level 4, or higher qualification. This highlights inequalities in access for disabled people to obtain higher level qualifications. Of disabled people of the working age population in the WMCA area, there is a lower proportion of those with a level 4+ qualification than nationally, with a difference of 5.3 percentage points with a WMCA figure of 33.6% and an England national figure of 38.9%.

### Highest level of qualification-for disabled residents - no qualifications:

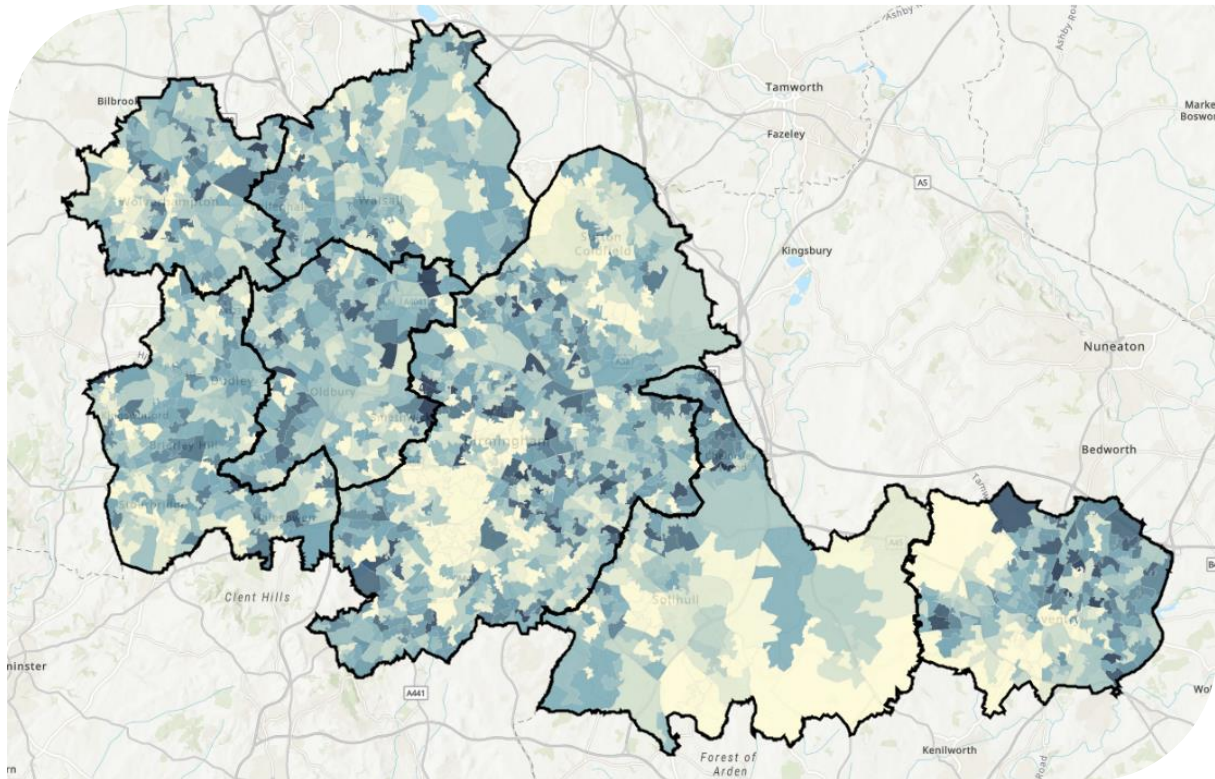


% No qualifications





## Highest level of qualification-for disabled residents – level 1 and entry level qualifications:



% Level 1 and entry level qualifications

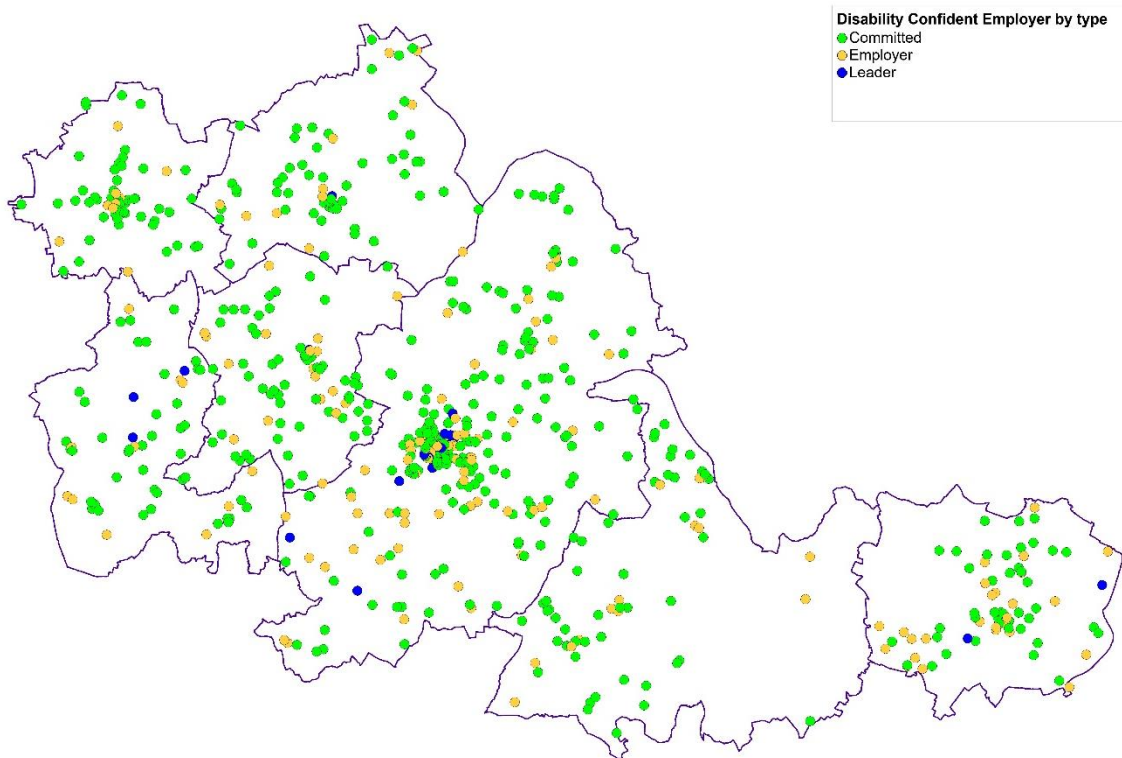


## Disabled Confident Employers

The Disability Confident scheme aims to help employers make the most of the opportunities provided by employing disabled people. It is voluntary and has been developed by employers and disabled people's representatives. The Disability Confident scheme has 3 levels that have been designed to support the Disability Confident journey. Employers must complete each level before moving on to the next. In the WMCA area, there are 817 Disability Confident Employers. By category, 602 were Committed, 187 were Employer, and 28 were Leader.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> [Gov.UK, Disability Confident Employers](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/disability-confident-employers)

## Locations of Disability Confident Employers in the WMCA:



## National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC)

23.4% (112,137) of disabled WMCA residents aged 16 years and over were socio-economic classification L14.1 & L14.2: never worked and long-term unemployed, this rate was above the West Midlands region and national proportions at 18.7% and 17.2% respectively. For the WMCA, this was 12.9pp above those that were non-disabled (11.0pp and 10.8pp higher for the West Midlands region and nationally). Whereas the highest classification proportion for non-disabled WMCA residents was L4, L5 & L6: lower managerial, administrative & professional occupations at 17.1% with a gap of 4.7pp for disabled people.



## NS-SEC breakdown, 2021:

	WMCA	West Midlands Region	England
L1, L2 and L3: Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations	25,347	66,109	710,006
L4, L5 and L6: Lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations	59,479	145,079	1,448,451
L7: Intermediate occupations	47,958	104,997	1,010,282
L8 and L9: Small employers and own account workers	32,038	84,321	848,640
L10 and L11: Lower supervisory and technical occupations	25,626	56,735	486,098
L12: Semi-routine occupations	70,373	147,536	1,270,257
L13: Routine occupations	80,762	167,057	1,340,233
L14.1 and L14.2: Never worked and long-term unemployed	112,137	188,477	1,565,321
L15: Full-time students	25,649	45,028	435,944
<b>Total</b>	<b>479,369</b>	<b>1,005,339</b>	<b>9,115,232</b>

## Employment Gap

Over the past 20 years, disabled workers have consistently experienced an employment gap compared with non-disabled people. Prior to the pandemic, across the UK 54.7% of disabled people were in employment, compared with 81.6% of non-disabled people, a gap of 26.9pp. The employment gap was wider in the West Midlands at 27.8pp (79.9% vs 52.1% respectively).<sup>37</sup> Nationally, this gap was wider for men, which is driven by higher rates of employment for non-disabled men than non-disabled women.

Across the WMCA, disabled people see lower rates of employment (49.1% compared to 57.3%) and economic activity (54.2% compared to 61.2%) compared to their national counterparts.

Annual Population Survey data shows that disabled people in the WMCA area are less likely to be in employment and more likely to be economically inactive, when comparing to non disabled people. Disabled people in the WMCA area have higher rate of economic inactivity than nationally. In the WMCA area, 49.1% of disabled people are in employment, this consists of 52.8% male and 46.1% female. In the WMCA area, 45.8% of disabled people are inactive, this is higher than that of people who are non disabled which sits at 19.9%. The proportion of economically inactive disabled people in the WMCA (45.8%) is 7.0 percentage points higher than in England (38.8%).

<sup>37</sup> [ONS, Disability and Employment, 2021](#)

## Economic activity of people aged 16 to 64 by disability status, WMCA and England in 2022

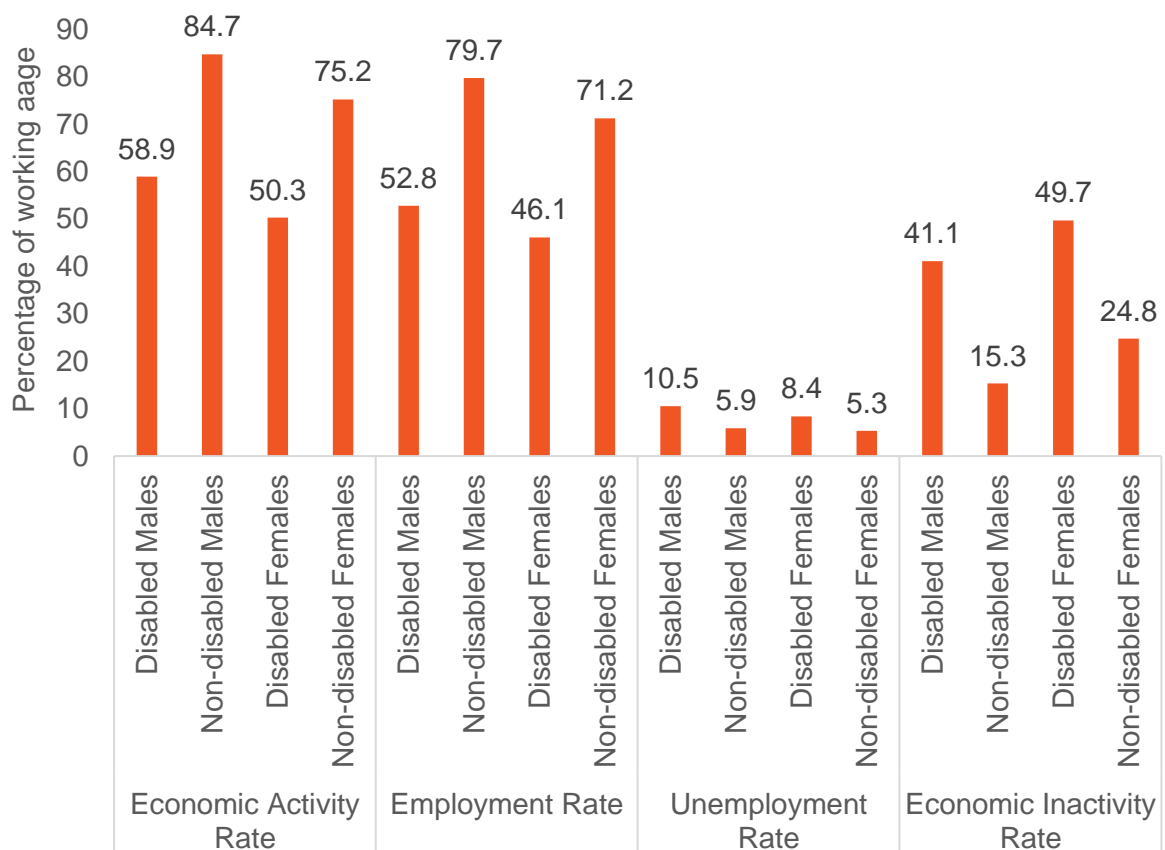
	Disabled people	Disabled people	Non-disabled people	Non-disabled people	Gap	Gap
	WMCA	England	WMCA	England	WMCA	England
<b>Economically active</b>	<b>54.2%</b>	61.2%	<b>80.1%</b>	84.4%	<b>-25.9</b>	-23.2
Employed	<b>49.1%</b>	57.3%	<b>75.6%</b>	81.8%	<b>-26.5</b>	-24.5
Unemployed	<b>9.4%</b>	6.3%	<b>5.7%</b>	3.1%	<b>3.7</b>	3.2
Economically inactive	<b>45.8%</b>	38.8%	<b>19.9%</b>	15.6%	<b>25.9</b>	23.2

### Gender Employment Gap

In the WMCA, disabled females perform worse than disabled males when looking at economic activity rates (50.3% vs 58.9%), employment rates (46.1% vs 52.8%) and economic inactivity rates (49.7% vs 41.1%). Disabled females have lower unemployment rates than disabled males (8.4% vs 10.5%).

However, when comparing rates between disabled and non-disabled males and females, there is a larger gap between disabled males and non-disabled males, than the gap between disabled females and non-disabled females.

### Economic activity of males and females aged 16 to 64 by disability status, WMCA 2022:



### Gap in the Employment Rate Between those with a Physical or Mental Long Term Health Condition (aged 16 to 64) and the Overall Employment Rate

For 2022/23, on average in the WMCA area, there was a 11.9pp gap. Notably within, the WMCA area, figures vary significantly from 7.5pp in Dudley and 7.8pp in Walsall to 20.1pp in Sandwell and 14.1pp in Wolverhampton. The West Midlands region had a gap of 9.4pp and nationally it stood at 10.4pp.

### Gap in the Employment Rate Between those who are in Contact with Secondary Mental Health Services and the Overall Employment Rate

For 2021/22, the WMCA area had a 68.3pp gap and within area figures vary from 64.2pp in Birmingham and 67.2 pp in Coventry to 76.0pp in Solihull and 77.7pp in Dudley. The West Midlands region had a gap of 69.7pp and nationally it stood at 69.4pp.

### Hours Worked

Census 2021 data shows for usual disabled residents aged 16 years and over in the WMCA area, 52.4% (59,248) that were in employment worked 31 to 48 hours. This was above the West Midlands (50.9%) and national (50.0%) proportions. For the WMCA area, this was 9.4pp lower than the non-disabled residents for 31 to 48 hours worked (-10.2pp for West Midlands and 10.0pp nationally).

#### Hours worked for disabled residents in employment:

	WMCA	WMCA	West Midlands Region	West Midlands Region	England	England
<b>Part-time: 15 hours or less worked</b>	17,285	15.30%	40,131	15.60%	411,890	16.40%
Part-time: 16 to 30 hours worked	28,682	25.40%	65,256	25.40%	629,118	25.10%
Full-time: 31 to 48 hours worked	59,248	52.40%	130,854	50.90%	1,253,090	50.00%
Full-time: 49 or more hours worked	7,827	6.90%	20,784	8.10%	210,626	8.40%
In Employment	113,042		257,025		2,504,724	

### Earnings Pay Gap

The West Midlands region disability pay gap<sup>38</sup> was 14.7% in 2021, the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest pay gap out of all the English regions and a larger pay gap than the England average of 13.8%.<sup>39</sup> The median pay of disabled employees in England in 2021 was £12.10, this was £0.94 more than in the West Midlands, the lowest pay out of all the English regions. Since 2014, the pay gap has increased by 3.7pp in the West Midlands, with the UK increasing by 2.1pp.

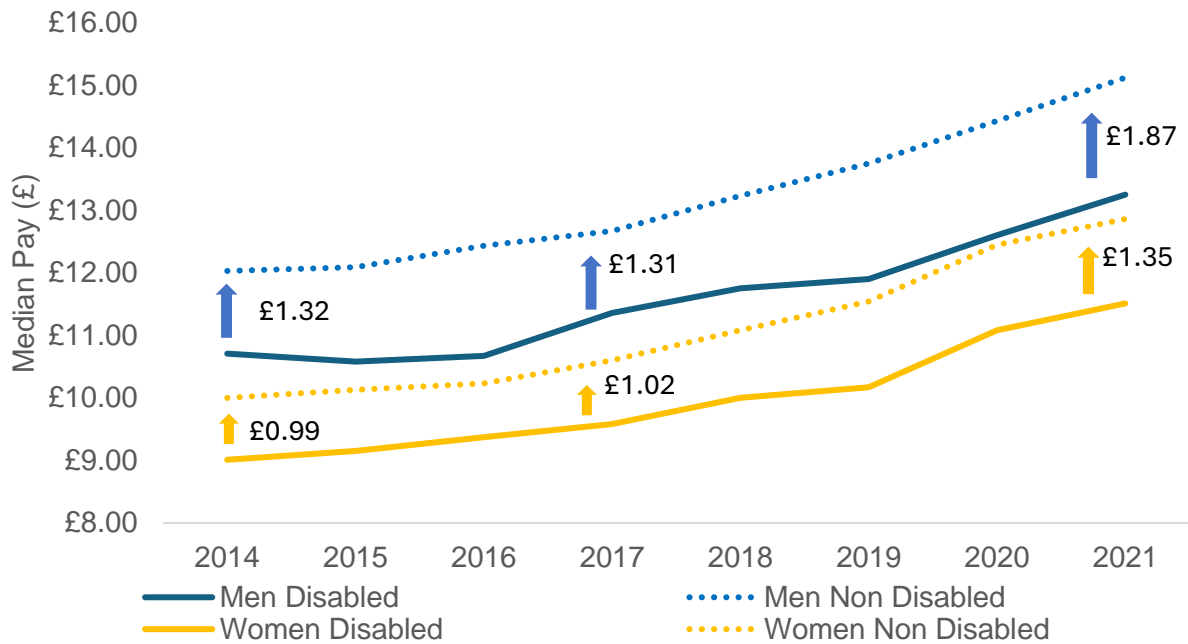
Nationally, the pay gap was larger for disabled men (12.4%) than for disabled women (10.5%), with disabled men out earning disabled women. Nationally, disabled

<sup>38</sup> The difference between average earnings between disabled people and non-disabled people

<sup>39</sup> [ONS, Disability Pay Gaps: Raw Pay Gaps, UK, 2021](#)

employees aged 45-49 (19.7%) have the largest pay gap. The pay gap was higher for full-time workers, at 10.2%, compared to part-time workers at 4.7%.

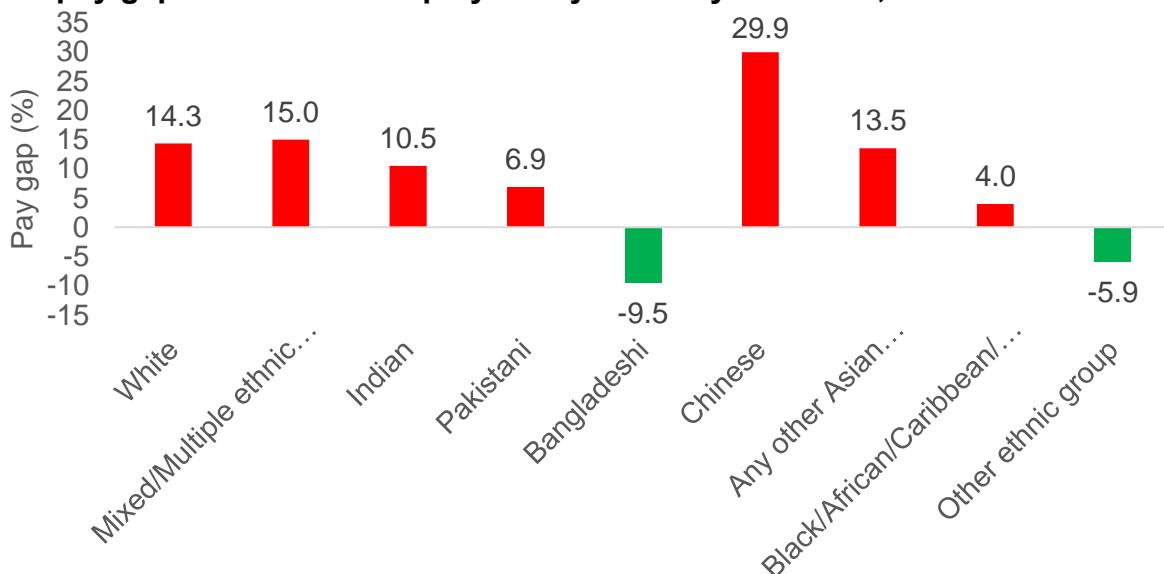
**The pay gap for disabled employees by gender in the UK, 2014-2021:**



Disabled employees aged 16-19 had the smallest pay gap, at 0.3%. Disabled employees with dependent children had a larger pay gap (16.8%) compared to disabled employees with no dependent children (10.7%). The disability pay gap was highest for the managers, directors and senior officials at 10.4%, followed by associate professional and technical occupations at 10.0%. The smallest pay gap was in the caring, leisure and other service occupations at 1.3%.

All ethnic groups except Bangladeshi (-9.5%) and Other (-5.9%) had a pay gap between disabled and non-disabled people. The largest pay gap by ethnicity was for Chinese disabled people, at 29.9%.

**The pay gap for disabled employees by ethnicity in the UK, 2021:**



## Claimants

### Disability Living Allowance<sup>40</sup>

In August 2023, there were 63,206 Disability Living Allowance (DLA) entitlements in the WMCA area. The following analysis focuses on cases in payment only.

#### Cases in Payment

In August 2023, there were 62,802 DLA cases in payment claimants in the WMCA area. 99.4% of eligible people claimed. When compared to three months prior (May 2023), DLA claimants in the WMCA were 2.9% higher (+1,776), this rate was above that of the West Midlands region (+2.8%) and nationally (+2.3%). When compared to August 2022, DLA claimants in the WMCA area increased by 3.3% (+1,996), again above the West Midlands region (+3.0%) and national (+2.5%) growth rate. When compared to February 2020 (Pre-Covid-19), the WMCA area has 1.3% (+805) more DLA claimants in contrast to the West Midlands (-0.9%) and nationally (-3.2%) which are lower.

The WMCA accounted for 4.8% of England's DLA claimants, the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest of all Combined Authority areas (not including London). GMCA accounted for the highest at 5.4%.

#### DLA claimant trends:

	Feb-20	Aug-22	May-23	Aug-23	Quarter-on-Quarter Change	One Year Change	Compared to pre-Covid-19	Mean of Weekly Award Amount – Aug-23
Birmingham	23,993	23,993	24,201	24,937	3.0%	3.9%	3.9%	£105.48
Coventry	7,152	6,763	6,892	7,144	3.7%	5.6%	-0.1%	£104.43
Dudley	6,855	6,585	6,549	6,693	2.2%	1.6%	-2.4%	£106.02
Sandwell	7,214	6,897	6,844	7,028	2.7%	1.9%	-2.6%	£107.48
Solihull	4,688	4,646	4,660	4,791	2.8%	3.1%	2.2%	£106.19
Walsall	6,558	6,490	6,476	6,676	3.1%	2.9%	1.8%	£104.92
Wolverhampton	5,537	5,432	5,404	5,533	2.4%	1.9%	-0.1%	£104.94
<b>WMCA</b>	<b>61,997</b>	<b>60,806</b>	<b>61,026</b>	<b>62,802</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>£105.64*</b>
West Midlands Region	117,840	113,353	113,619	116,787	2.8%	3.0%	-0.9%	£105.30
England	1,187,723	1,122,420	1,124,542	1,150,138	2.3%	2.5%	-3.2%	£104.89

\*Average

In August 2023, 62.5% (32,229) of WMCA DLA claimants were for children, this proportion was above that of the West Midlands region (59.0%) and national

<sup>40</sup> Department for Work and Pensions, 2024. Disability Living Allowance is a benefit for people who became disabled before the age of 65 and who need assistance with personal care or mobility. You can claim DLA if: you were born before 8 April 1948 and are already claiming DLA, or you're claiming on behalf of a disabled person under the age of 16. To continue to claim DLA, you'll need to show that you meet the criteria for at least one of the two components – the 'care component' and the 'mobility component'. DLA is gradually being replaced by Personal Independence Payment (PIP), so you can't make a new claim for DLA. People will instead need to apply for PIP or Attendance Allowance, depending on your age. If you're over 16 but under State Pension age, claim PIP. If you're over State Pension age, claim Attendance Allowance.

(59.4%). The working age population accounted for 4.6% (2,909) of WMCA DLA claimants, significantly below the national rate (13.7%) but similar to the West Midlands region (5.0%). With 32.9% (20,648) of WMCA DLA claimants over state pension age, below the West Midlands region proportion (36.1%) but above the national proportion (31.9%).

There were more male DLA claimants in the WMCA in August 2023 at 57.8% (36,319), this was also the case within all WMCA local authorities. This reflected the West Midlands region proportion (57.4%) and nationally (57.6%).

### Main Disability Condition

In August 2023, 29.8% (18,735) of DLA claimants in the WMCA was due to learning difficulties. This was followed by 15.0% (9,398) were for behaviour disorder and 14.4% (9,036) for arthritis.

**DLA claimants by main disability condition<sup>41</sup> (highest to lowest):**

	<b>WMCA DLA Claimants: Aug-23</b>
<b>Learning Difficulties</b>	18,735
Behavioural Disorder	9,398
Arthritis	9,036
Hyperkinetic Syndrome	3,845
Unknown/Transfer from AA	3,013
Disease Of the Muscles, Bones or Joints	1,773
Neurological Diseases	1,761
Heart Disease	1,439
Diabetes Mellitus	1,307
Spondylosis	1,194
Back Pain - Other / Precise Diagnosis not Specified	1,154
Psychoneurosis	937
Cerebrovascular Disease	924
Visual Disorders and Diseases	914
Hearing Disorders	914
Respiratory Disorders and Diseases	726
Skin Disease	662
Psychosis	598
Epilepsy	595
Malignant Disease	537
Trauma to Limbs	400
Asthma	322
Dementia	291
Renal Disorders	231
Bowel and Stomach Disease	220
Multiple Sclerosis	217
Severely Mentally impaired	199
Metabolic Disease	176
Terminally Ill	163
Cystic Fibrosis	162
Parkinsons Disease	142
Peripheral vascular Disease	126
Chronic Pain Syndromes	118
Blood Disorders	115
Multi System Disorders	79
<b>Total</b>	<b>62,802</b>

<sup>41</sup> 57 categories available, for the WMCA area 22 were excluded due to either nil or negligible number of claimants.



## Attendance Allowance<sup>42</sup>

In August 2023, there were 71,691 AA entitlements in the WMCA area. The following analysis focuses on cases in payment only.

### Cases in Payment

In August 2023, there were 66,815 AA cases in payment claimants in the WMCA area. 93.2% of eligible people claimed. When compared to May 2023, AA claimants in the WMCA were 2.0% higher (+1,300), this rate was below that of the West Midlands region (+2.3%) and nationally (+2.4%). When compared to August 2022, AA claimants in the WMCA area increased by 5.5% (+3,490), again below the West Midlands region (+7.0%) and national (+7.5%) growth rate. When compared to February 2020 (Pre-Covid-19), the WMCA area has 0.5% (+317) more AA claimants, which is a lower increase than the West Midlands (+4.7%) and nationally (+5.9%).

The WMCA accounted for 4.3% of England's DLA claimants, the highest of all Combined Authority areas (not including London). GMCA accounted for the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest at 4.0%.

### AA claimant trends:

	Feb-20	Aug-22	May-23	Aug-23	Quarter-on-Quarter Change	One Year Change	Compared to pre-Covid-19	Mean of Weekly Award Amount – Aug-23
Birmingham	22,719	21,515	22,222	22,606	1.7%	5.1%	-0.5%	£89.81
Coventry	6,684	6,303	6,554	6,730	2.7%	6.8%	0.7%	£89.95
Dudley	8,713	8,608	9,036	9,256	2.4%	7.5%	6.2%	£88.31
Sandwell	8,482	7,981	8,161	8,318	1.9%	4.2%	-1.9%	£90.86
Solihull	5,623	5,447	5,710	5,856	2.6%	7.5%	4.1%	£89.85
Walsall	7,683	7,214	7,418	7,510	1.2%	4.1%	-2.3%	£89.10
Wolverhampton	6,594	6,257	6,414	6,539	1.9%	4.5%	-0.8%	£89.06
<b>WMCA</b>	<b>66,498</b>	<b>63,325</b>	<b>65,515</b>	<b>66,815</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>£89.56*</b>
West Midlands Region	140,181	137,096	143,433	146,704	2.3%	7.0%	4.7%	£88.98
England	1,211,833	1,194,045	1,253,607	1,283,729	2.4%	7.5%	5.9%	£89.06

\*Average

In August 2023, 22.2% (14,867) of WMCA AA claimants were aged 85-89 years old (West Midlands region: 22.7% and England: 22.5%).

<sup>42</sup> [Department for Work and Pensions, 2024](#). Attendance Allowance is a benefit for people over state pension age who are so severely disabled, physically or mentally, that they need a great deal of help with personal care or supervision.

**AA claimants by age, August 2023:**

	<b>Aged 65-69 Years</b>	<b>Aged 70-74 Years</b>	<b>Aged 75-79 Years</b>	<b>Aged 80-84 Years</b>	<b>Aged 85-89 Years</b>	<b>90 and over</b>	<b>Total</b>
Birmingham	1,094	3,385	4,251	4,766	4,854	4,250	22,600
Coventry	300	898	1,267	1,466	1,517	1,276	6,724
Dudley	328	1,196	1,719	2,138	2,173	1,705	9,259
Sandwell	397	1,342	1,702	1,855	1,812	1,221	8,329
Solihull	175	661	1,039	1,264	1,360	1,357	5,856
Walsall	297	988	1,410	1,691	1,736	1,394	7,516
Wolverhampton	242	969	1,233	1,435	1,415	1,249	6,543
<b>WMCA</b>	<b>2,833</b>	<b>9,439</b>	<b>12,621</b>	<b>14,615</b>	<b>14,867</b>	<b>12,452</b>	<b>66,827</b>
West Midlands	5,413	19,239	28,200	32,368	33,240	28,243	146,703
England	46,949	162,799	252,192	280,149	288,422	253,217	1,283,728

There were more female AA claimants in the WMCA in August 2023 at 63.0% (42,097), this was also the case within all WMCA local authorities. This reflected the West Midlands region proportion (62.7%) and nationally (62.4%).

In August 2023, 33.3% (22,251) of AA claimants in the WMCA was due to arthritis. This was followed by 8.6% (5,777) for dementia and 7.4% (4,972) for unknown.

**AA claimants by main disability condition<sup>43</sup> (highest to lowest):**

	<b>WMCA AA Claimants: Aug-23</b>
Arthritis	22,251
Dementia	5,777
Unknown	4,972
Heart Disease	4,938
Respiratory Disorders and Diseases	3,641
Disease Of the Muscles, Bones or Joints	3,201
Cerebrovascular Disease	2,948
Back Pain - Other / Precise Diagnosis not Specified	2,591
Malignant Disease	2,268
Visual Disorders and Diseases	1,878
Terminally Ill	1,578
Parkinsons Disease	1,366
Neurological Diseases	1,101
Diabetes Mellitus	1,012
Spondylosis	835
Renal Disorders	833
Trauma to Limbs	777
Cognitive disorder - other / precise diagnosis not specified	719
Psychosis	693
Psychoneurosis	472
Frailty	387
Hearing Disorders	382

<sup>43</sup> 57 categories available, for the WMCA area 14 were excluded due to either nil or negligible number of claimants.

	<b>WMCA AA Claimants: Aug-23</b>
Asthma	301
Multi System Disorders	279
Peripheral vascular Disease	253
Bowel and Stomach Disease	238
Chronic Pain Syndromes	174
Skin Disease	150
Epilepsy	127
Metabolic Disease	94
Multiple Sclerosis	92
Major Trauma Other than Traumatic Paraplegia/Tetraplegia	73
Inflammatory Bowel Disease	71
Alcohol and Drug Abuse	70
Blood Disorders	68
Infectious diseases: Viral disease - Coronavirus covid-19	58
Learning Difficulties	54
Haemodialysis	19
Traumatic Paraplegia/Tetraplegia	18
Motor Neurone Disease	8
Infectious diseases: Bacterial disease - Tuberculosis	7
Personality Disorder	5
Behavioural Disorder	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,815</b>

## Personal Independent Payment<sup>44</sup>

### Personal Independent Payment (PIP) Cases with Entitlement

In October 2023, there were 188,175 PIP claimants in the WMCA area. When compared to July 2023, PIP claimants in the WMCA were 2.9% higher (+5,302), this rate was below that of the West Midlands region (+3.0%) and nationally (+3.4%). When compared to October 2022, PIP claimants in the WMCA area increased by 11.8% (+19,855), with the West Midlands and national rate increasing by 11.8% and 12.4% respectively. When compared to March 2020 (Pre-Covid-19), the WMCA area has 44.4% (+57,829) more PIP claimants, with the West Midlands 43.6% higher and national claimants were 45.8% higher.

In October 2023, 13.5% (25,417) of WMCA PIP claimants were aged 60-64 years old (West Midlands region: 13.7% and England: 13.9%).

<sup>44</sup> [Department for Work and Pensions, 2024](#). Personal Independence Payment helps people aged over 16 with some of the extra costs caused by long-term disability, ill-health or terminal ill-health. The DWP have started to replace Disability Living Allowance for working age people with Personal Independence Payment.

**PIP claimants by age, October 2023:**

	<b>WMCA</b>	<b>West Midlands</b>	<b>England</b>
Aged 16-19	8,831	16,123	145,175
Aged 20-24	10,517	18,963	161,516
Aged 25-29	10,849	19,402	161,162
Aged 30-34	12,309	21,975	183,810
Aged 35-39	13,345	23,505	199,303
Aged 40-44	14,695	25,794	217,408
Aged 45-49	14,984	26,674	229,969
Aged 50-54	20,462	37,363	314,310
Aged 55-59	23,859	44,099	379,295
Aged 60-64	25,417	47,518	407,089
Aged 65-69	20,758	39,985	335,537
Aged 70-74	11,204	22,464	181,949
Aged 75-79	932	1,902	16,211
<b>Total</b>	<b>188,175</b>	<b>345,768</b>	<b>2,932,738</b>

There were more female PIP claimants in the WMCA in October 2023 at 54.3% (102,253), this was also the case within all WMCA local authorities. This reflected the West Midlands region proportion (54.6%) and nationally (54.7%).

In October 2023, 37.6% (70,739) of PIP claimants in the WMCA was due to psychiatric disorders. This was followed by 20.9% (39,274) for musculoskeletal disease (general) and 13.1% (24,716) for musculoskeletal disease (regional). Further breakdowns can be seen on the left-hand side table.

In October 2023, 37.0% (69,574) of PIP claimants in the WMCA based off International Classification of Diseases (ICD) was due to mental and behavioural disorders. This was followed by 31.7% (59,633) for diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue and 10.6% (20,028) for diseases of the nervous system. Further breakdowns can be seen on the right-hand side table.

**PIP claimants by disability: (highest to lowest)**

	<b>WMCA PIP Claimants - Oct 2023</b>
Psychiatric disorders	70,739
Musculoskeletal disease (general)	39,274
Musculoskeletal disease (regional)	24,716
Neurological disease	22,277
Respiratory disease	6,923
Malignant disease	4,775
Cardiovascular disease	4,429
Visual disease	3,694
Hearing disorders	2,186
Endocrine disease	1,765
Genitourinary disease	1,564
Gastrointestinal disease	1,328
Skin disease	1,200
Autoimmune disease (connective tissue disorders)	937
Infectious disease	606
Haematological Disease	603
Diseases of the liver, gallbladder, biliary tract	599
Metabolic disease	328
Unknown or missing	95
Multisystem and extremes of age	65
Diseases of the immune system	64
Disability not recorded - Assessment not completed	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>188,175</b>

### PIP claimants by ICD: (highest to lowest)

	<b>WMCA PIP Claimants - Oct 2023</b>
Mental and Behavioural Disorders	69,574
Diseases of the Musculoskeletal system and Connective Tissue	59,633
Diseases of the Nervous System	20,028
Diseases of the Respiratory System	6,490
Neoplasms	5,123
Injury Poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	4,888
Diseases of the Circulatory System	4,275
Congenital Malformations Deformations and Chromosomal Abnormalities	3,546
Diseases of the Eye and Adnexa	3,342
Endocrine Nutritional and Metabolic Diseases	2,555
Diseases of the Digestive System	1,818
Diseases of the Ear and Mastoid Process	1,582
Diseases of the Genitourinary System	1,533
Symptoms Signs and Abnormal Clinical and Laboratory findings not elsewhere classified	1,308
Diseases of the Blood and Blood forming organs and certain diseases involving the immune mechanism	769
Diseases of the Skin and Subcutaneous System	586
Certain Infectious and Parasitic Diseases	535
Codes for special purposes	362
Factors influencing Health Status and Contact with Health Services	119
Claimants without any diagnosis code on the system	109
Certain Conditions Originating in the Perinatal Period	0
Disability not recorded - Assessment not completed	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>188,175</b>

## Cost of Living and the Extra Cost of Disability

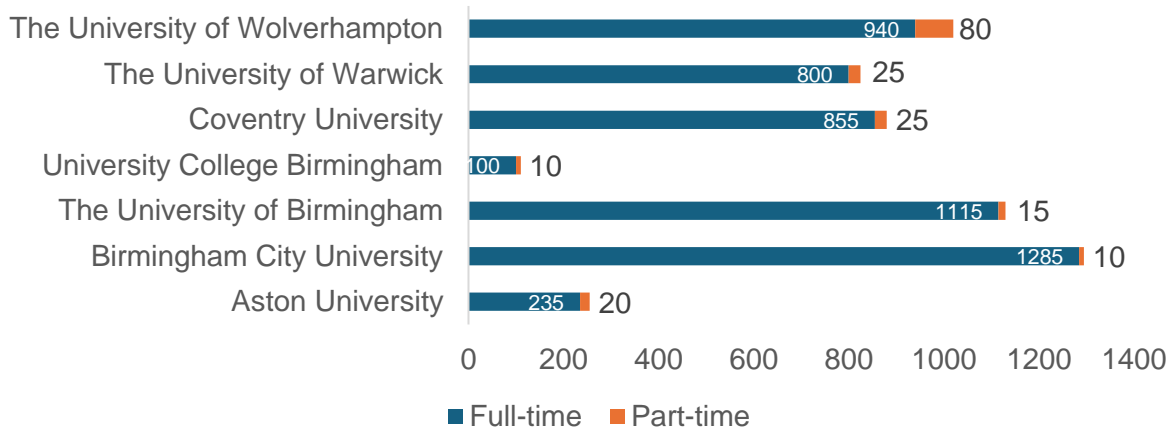
On average, disabled households (with at least one disabled adult or child) need an additional £975 a month, or £11,700 annually to have the same standard of living as non-disabled households.<sup>45</sup> If this figure is updated to account for inflation over the current period (2022/2023), these extra costs rise to £1,122 per month, or £13,464 annually.

<sup>45</sup> [Scope, 2023](#)

## Students in Receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance

In the 7 Universities within the WMCA area, in the academic year of 2020/21 there are 5,515 students in receipt of the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).<sup>46</sup>

### Number of students in receipt of DSA:



The University of Wolverhampton had the highest percentage of students in receipt of DSA, with 8.1% for full-time students and 5.3% for part-time students. Students receiving DSA were more likely to be studying full-time than part-time. Across all the Universities in the WMCA area there was a lower proportion of students in receipt of DSA compared to the average number of disabled people aged 20-24 (12.0%).

### Proportion of students in receipt of DSA out of all students

HE provider	Mode of study	Number in receipt of DSA	Percentage in receipt of DSA (%)	Total students
Aston University	Full-time	235	2.2%	10,650
Aston University	Part-time	20	2.9%	625
Birmingham City University	Full-time	1,285	6.5%	19,880
Birmingham City University	Part-time	10	3.2%	375
The University of Birmingham	Full-time	1,115	5.8%	19,155
The University of Birmingham	Part-time	15	2.6%	585
University College Birmingham	Full-time	100	3.1%	3,195
University College Birmingham	Part-time	10	3.5%	315
Coventry University	Full-time	855	4.4%	19,295
Coventry University	Part-time	25	1.8%	1,260
The University of Warwick	Full-time	800	6.6%	12,060
The University of Warwick	Part-time	25	3.5%	780
The University of Wolverhampton	Full-time	940	8.1%	11,630
The University of Wolverhampton	Part-time	80	5.3%	1,555
UK	Full-time	98,330	6.9%	1,432,675
UK	Part-time	5,635	3.1%	179,720

<sup>46</sup> [HESA, Widening Participation Summary](#)



## Health and Wellbeing

**This section provides an overall summary of national insights followed by local insights which includes:**

- In 2022-23 in the WMCA area there were a total of 2,200 adults receiving short-term support (adults social care), which included 75 people receiving support for learning disabilities. There were a total of 4,614 adults receiving long-term support.
- In the WMCA in September 2023, there were 21,015 patients with an open referral for suspected autism. Of these, 17,650 (84%) had a referral that had been open at least 13 weeks. Across England, 85% of referrals had been open for at least 13 weeks.
- In the West Midlands in the year ending March 2021, disabled people were more likely to have been involved in civic participation (43.4%) than non-disabled people (42.9%).
- At the end of March 2021, 16.8% of disabled people in the West Midlands had feelings of loneliness often/always, compared to 3.6% for their non-disabled counterparts.
- On all wellbeing indicators, disabled people score worse than their non-disabled counterparts, across both the West Midlands and the UK.

## National Insights

**There are various national datasets and publications for health and wellbeing which includes coverage Covid-19, barriers, health, mortality and physical activity. Key findings are highlighted below:**

- [Kingsfund](#) insights shows that 60% of those who died from Covid-19 in the first year of the pandemic were disabled. People with learning disabilities were eight times more likely to die of Covid-19 than the general population.
- [Mencap](#) highlights that a number of barriers are stopping people with a learning disability from getting good quality healthcare include: a lack of accessible transport links, patients not being identified as having a learning disability, staff having little understanding about learning disability, failure to recognise that a person with a learning disability is unwell, failure to make a correct diagnosis, anxiety or a lack of confidence for people with a learning disability, lack of joint working from different care providers, not enough involvement allowed from carers and inadequate aftercare or follow-up care.
- NHS Digital's [health and care of people with learning disabilities experimental statistics](#) provides numerous insights. 79.8% of patients with a learning disability had a Learning Disability Health Check in 2022-23, a statistically significant increase from 71.8% in 2021-22.
- The 2022 [Learning Disabilities Mortality Review \(LeDeR\) revealed](#) that 62.9 years old was the median age at death for people with a learning disability in 2022. This is an increase from 2018, where the median age at death was 61.8 years.

- [NHS Digital Health Survey](#) found that in 2021, 51% of adults in England with at least one longstanding illness were obese. This is compared to 49% of adults with no longstanding illness.
- [A sample survey from LeDeR](#) found that 8.5% of people with a learning disability in their sample had diabetes and that someone with a learning disability was nearly 2.5 times more likely to have diabetes in comparison to someone from the general population. A separate study found that diabetes was almost 3.7 times more common in people with Down syndrome than people from the general population.
- [Research](#) shows that respiratory-associated deaths are almost 11 times higher in people with a learning disability compared to the general population.
- [Research](#) from a sample of 372 coroner's inquest reports from two areas of England, there is evidence of autism in 41.4% of the adults who died by suicide, which is significantly higher than the 1.1% of people in the UK general alive population believed to be autistic.
- [Research from National Institutes of Health](#) reports people with a learning disability were found to be almost 5 times more likely to attend hospital for conditions which should not lead to hospital admissions.
- Sport England found [disabled adults](#) are almost twice as likely as non-disabled people to be physically inactive (41.0% vs 20.9%). However, [disabled children](#) were more likely than their non-disabled peers to be physically active (51.1% vs 47.9%).
  - [Activity Alliance](#) data shows that 77% of disabled people would like to be more active, compared to 54% non-disabled people. This "activity gap" has remained consistent in previous years, showing an ongoing unmet need.
- A report from the [University of Central Lancashire](#) on ethnic minorities with a learning disability and access to health care highlights several key findings:
  - LeDeR findings show that a higher proportion of adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities were from 'Asian/Asian British' (21%) and 'Black/African/Caribbean/Black British' (14%) ethnic groups, compared those from the 'White British' group (7%). There is also evidence to suggest higher levels of psychological distress in carers of people with a learning disability from ethnic minorities.
  - In terms of transitional care, 'South Asian' carers reported unmet needs in relation to culturally appropriate services and for health, social care and education services than 'Caucasian' carers. However, greater satisfaction was expressed by 'South Asian' carers in comparison to 'Caucasian' carers about the transition process (43% compared to 19% respectively).
  - 'South Asian' participants were found to have more family members in their support network while 'white' participants had more service users and staff.
- [Health Watch](#) report that disabled people have had a worse experience of waiting for treatment than non-disabled people – of the respondents who identified themselves as disabled, 66% waited more than four months for treatment compared to 44% of those who identified as non-disabled. Long waits also affected disabled people more than non-disabled people in terms of ability to

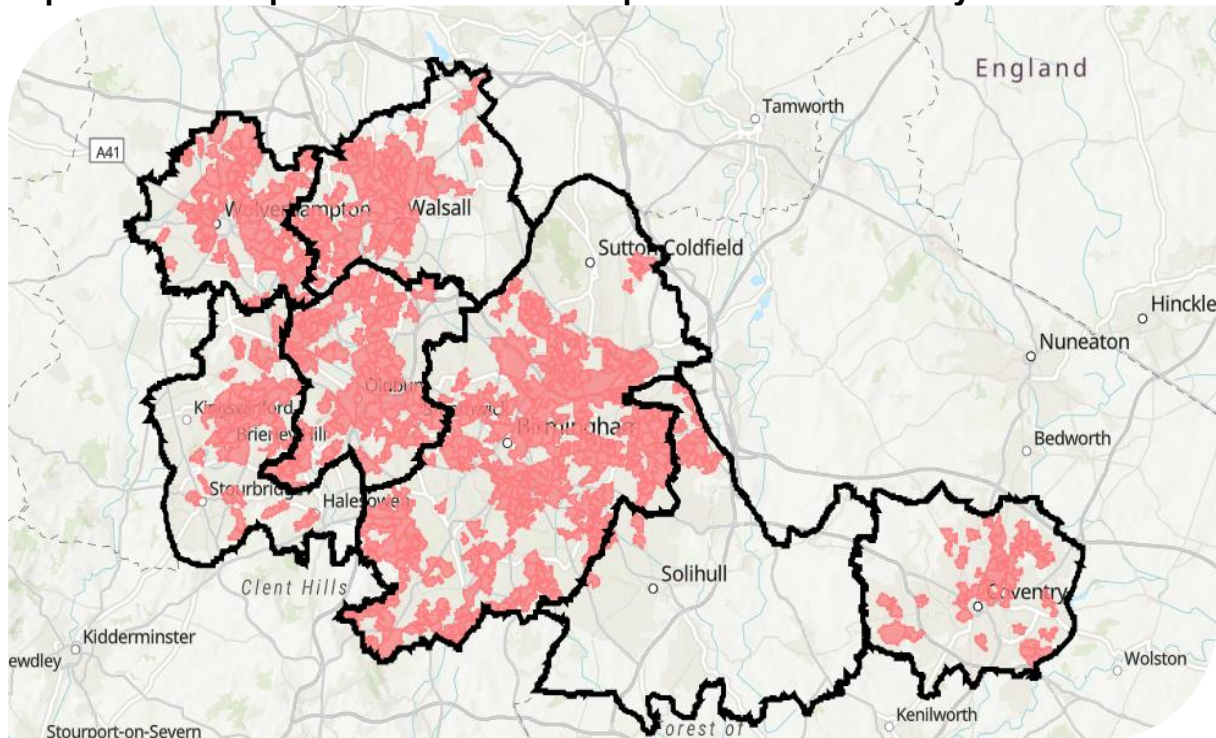
work (55% vs 29%), ability to carry out household tasks (51% vs 33%), ability to socialise (49% vs 31%) and physical fitness (60% vs 40%).

## Local Insights

### Health Deprivation and Disability Domain<sup>47</sup>

38.5% of LSOAs in the WMCA were in the top 20% most deprived areas for the health deprivation and disability domain in England, this can be seen in the following map. 14.7% of those LSOAs are in the top 10% most deprived.

#### Top 20% most deprived for the health deprivation and disability domain:



### Adult Social Care

In 2022-23 in the WMCA area there were a total of 2,200 people receiving short-term support, which included 75 people receiving support for learning disabilities.

There were a total of 4,614 people receiving long-term support. This can be broken down by 1,809 people aged 18-64 and 2,805 people aged 65+. This includes 965 people receiving support for learning disabilities.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> The Health Deprivation and Disability Domain measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. The domain measures morbidity, disability and premature mortality but not aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.

<sup>48</sup> [NHS. Adult Social Care Activity and Finance Report, England, 2022-23](#)

## Number of People Accessing Long-Term Support:

Support		Short-term care			Long-term care		
		18-64	65+	Total	18-64	65+	Total
<b>Physical Support</b>	Access and Mobility Only	20	60	80	92	243	335
	Personal Care Support	360	905	1,265	486	1,818	2,304
<b>Sensory Support</b>	Support for Visual Impairment	0	0	0	17	21	38
	Support for Hearing Impairment	0	0	0	12	7	19
	Support for Dual Impairment	0	0	0	12	13	25
<b>Support with Memory and Cognition</b>		10	55	65	42	346	388
<b>Learning Disability Support</b>		75	0	75	845	120	965
<b>Mental Health Support</b>		570	15	585	261	215	476
<b>Social Support</b>	Substance Misuse Support	0	5	0	5	10	15
	Asylum Seeker Support	0	0	0			
	Support for Social Isolation/Other	20	15	35	73	63	136
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,095</b>	<b>1,105</b>	<b>2,200</b>	<b>1,809</b>	<b>2,805</b>	<b>4,614</b>

The total cost of short-term and long-term support in the WMCA was £908.3m. This includes £338.8m for support to people with learning disabilities.

### Mental Health Services

Across the following West Midlands NHS Trusts during 2023, 28,575 people were in contact with Learning Disabilities and Autism services in 2023 (Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust, Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust).

70 people were subject to detention (learning disability and Autism services) (Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust, Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust).

And 80 people were subject to the Mental Health Act (learning disability and Autism services), (Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust, Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust).<sup>49</sup>

In November 2023 out of the 185 inpatients with learning difficulties or autism at 4 NHS Trusts mentioned above, 5.4% had a length of stay less than 3 days, 10.8% stayed 1-4 weeks, with 18.9% staying 1-3 months. 18.9% of inpatients have been in hospital for 2-5 years, and 14.5% have been in hospital for 5-10 years. Across

<sup>49</sup> [NHS Digital, 2024](#)

England, longer stays in hospital were more prevalent than in the 4 West Midlands NHS Trusts.<sup>50</sup>

### Learning disabilities and/or autistic spectrum disorder inpatients by length of hospital stay as of the end of November 2023:

Length of stay in hospital	WMCA Total	WMCA %	England	England %
0-3 days	10	5.4%	115	3.4%
4-7 days	0	0.0%	70	2.1%
1-2 weeks	10	5.4%	120	3.6%
2-4 weeks	10	5.4%	170	5.1%
1-3 months	35	18.9%	500	14.9%
3-6 months	20	10.8%	420	12.6%
6-12 months	15	8.1%	420	12.6%
1-2 years	25	13.5%	495	14.8%
2-5 years	35	18.9%	625	18.7%
5-10 years	25	13.5%	265	7.9%
10+ years	0	0.0%	145	4.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>185</b>		<b>3,345</b>	

## Autism Referral Waiting Times

In the WMCA in September 2023, there were 21,015 patients with an open referral for suspected autism. Of these, 17,650 (84%) had a referral that had been open at least 13 weeks. Across England, 85% of referrals had been open for at least 13 weeks.

### First Appointments

In September 2023, 3.9% (830) of the patients with an open referral that had been open more than 13 weeks had had a first appointment within the recommended 13 weeks. Across England, this was 6.2%.

### Open/Closed Referrals

There were 1,340 new referrals and 1,055 closed referrals in September 2023.

### Diagnoses

Across England, September 2023 also saw 766 patients with a referral for suspected autism receive an autism diagnosis in the month, compared with 1,058 in September 2022. No data is available for the WMCA due to low values/disclosive reasons.

## Wheelchair Services

The Wheelchair Data Collection<sup>51</sup> report for Q3 2023 shows that the current annual expenditure on wheelchair services by ICBs in the WMCA area is £12,732,158 – all ICBs in the WMCA area have reported transitioning from a voucher system to personal wheelchair budgets. The report shows there are a total of 38,222 adults

<sup>50</sup> [NHS Digital, 2024](#)

<sup>51</sup> [Wheelchair Data Collection, 2023](#)



and 4,549 children registered with the wheelchair service in the WMCA area. In Q3 of 2023, the data shows 1,462 new patients referred to the service and 1,828 patients re-referred to the service.

## Disability Free Life Expectancy

Disability-free life expectancy (DFLE) at birth reduced by 0.7 years for males and 1.2 years for females in the UK between 2015 to 2017 and 2018 to 2020. In the WMCA DFLE reduced by 0.3 years for males and 1.5 years for females.<sup>52</sup>

## Disability and Social Participation

In the West Midlands in the year ending March 2021, disabled people were more likely to have been involved in civic participation (43.4%) than non-disabled people (42.9%). These rates were similar across the UK at 45.7% and 43.0% respectively.

Disabled people were slightly less likely to have been involved in a group (59.7%) as non-disabled people (61.1%) in the year ending March 2021 in the West Midlands.

For both types of volunteering (formal and informal), the proportions of disabled and non-disabled people who had participated were similar.<sup>53</sup>

## Loneliness

At the end of March 2021, 16.8% of disabled people in the West Midlands had feelings of loneliness often/always, compared to 3.6% for their non-disabled counterparts. Rates of loneliness for disabled people were higher than the England average of 15.1% but matches non-disabled counterparts at 3.6%. Nationally, feelings of loneliness were higher for disabled women (16.5%) compared to men (13.2%).<sup>54</sup>

## Wellbeing

On all wellbeing indicators, disabled people score worse than their non-disabled counterparts, across both the West Midlands and the UK.<sup>55</sup> The gap between disabled people and non-disabled people was larger across the UK for happiness, life satisfaction and anxiety, however the average scores for disabled people in the West Midlands were lower for all indicators except life satisfaction, where disabled people in the West Midlands scored slightly higher than their UK counterparts (6.52 vs 6.46).

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<sup>52</sup> [Health state life expectancies, UK: 2018 to 2020](#) - Years lived disability-free is an estimate of the average number of years lived without activity restriction resulting from a long-lasting physical or mental health condition; it is based upon a self-rated assessment of how health conditions and illnesses reduce an individual's ability to carry out day-to-day activities. Conversely, years with disability are the years lived with activity restriction.

<sup>53</sup> [ONS, Disability and social participation, 2022](#)

<sup>54</sup> [Disability and loneliness, 2022](#)

<sup>55</sup> [Disability and well-being, 2021](#)

## Average well-being ratings for people aged 16 to 64 by disability status, UK and West Midlands, June 2021:



## Crime

In the year ending September 2023, the Crime Survey for England and Wales found that 12.0% of disabled adults aged 16 years and over experienced personal crime (including fraud), compared with 9.4% of all adults.<sup>56</sup>

Disabled women were more than twice as likely (17.3%) to experience domestic abuse than non-disabled women (7.0%), and almost twice as likely than disabled men (9.0%).<sup>57</sup> Rates of domestic abuse for disabled and non-disabled adults have not changed significantly from five years ago.

Across England and Wales in 2022/23, there were 13,777 hate crimes recorded by the police on disability grounds, a decrease since the previous year by 1%. Since 2011/12, this has increased by 691%.

Locally, the West Midlands Police Force area has a conviction rate of 83.3% for disability hate crimes (5 convicted out of 6 prosecuted) in 2022/23.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> [Crime Survey for England and Wales, year ending September 2023 – personal crime incidence](#)

<sup>57</sup> [Disability and Crime, 2019](#)

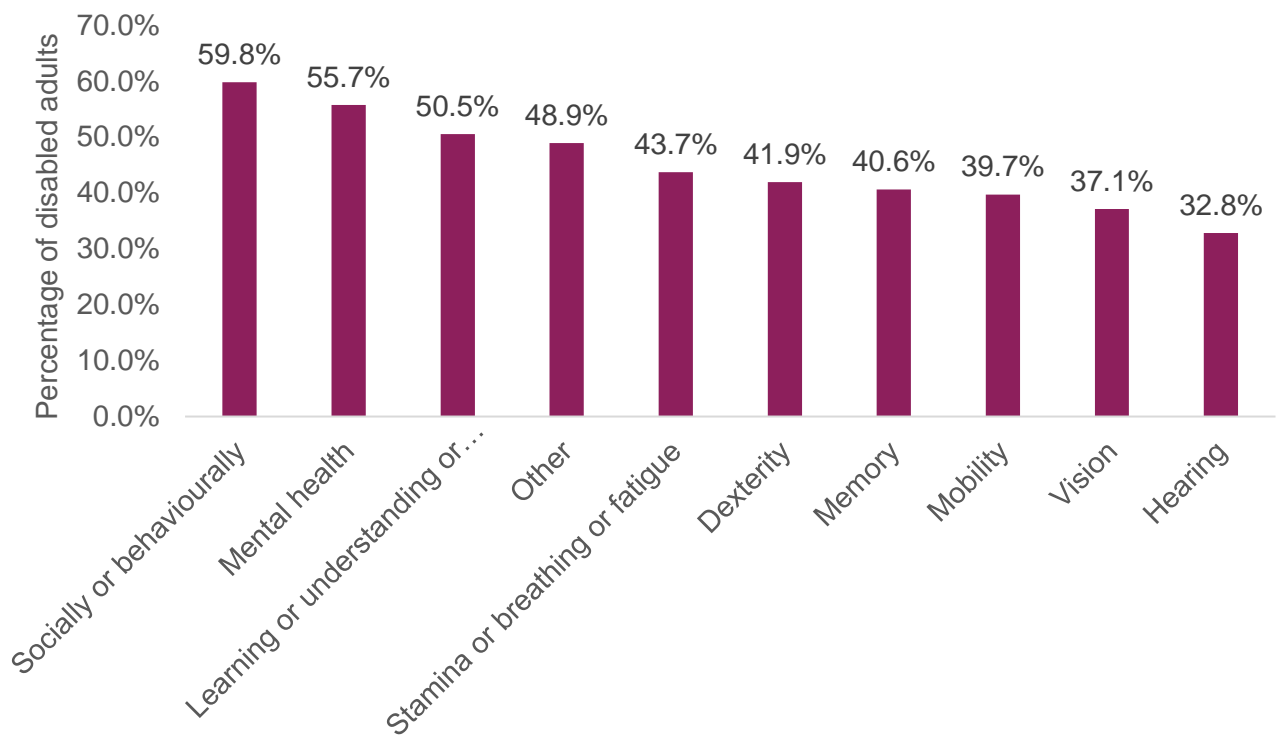
<sup>58</sup> [House of Commons, 2024](#)



## Perceptions of Crime

- **Ratings of the local police:** 45.0% of disabled adults said their local police were doing a good or excellent job, compared with 52.5% of non-disabled adults.
- **Perceptions of changing crime levels:** 52.5% of disabled adults said local crime had gone up “a little” or “a lot” in the past few years, compared with 48.4% of non-disabled adults.
- **Feeling safe:** 65.8% of disabled adults said they felt “very or fairly” safe when walking alone after dark, compared with 82.2% of non-disabled adults.<sup>59</sup>

### Proportion of disabled adults experiencing any anti-social behaviour in the last year by impairment type



<sup>59</sup> [ONS, Crime in England and Wales, Annual Supplementary tables - year ending March 2023](#)

## Policy Implications and Recommendations

**The key messages identified in this report reveals several significant disparities and challenges faced by disabled people across the WMCA area. These include:**

### Data Limitations

The reliance on outdated datasets poses a challenge to accurately reflect the current situation of disability-related issues. Additionally, the lack of up-to-date data may hinder the formulation of effective policies to address present needs and challenges. In addition, discrepancies in data sources, methodologies, and quality impact the ability to compare and analyse disability-related data effectively, limiting the reliability of findings for policymaking purposes.

### Policy Implication

There is a need for standardised methodologies and protocols for data collection to ensure consistency and comparability across different data sources and time periods.

### Recommendation

Advocate for a comprehensive approach to enhance the quality and reliability of disability-related data by developing standardised data collection methods and protocols, improving transparency, and fostering cross-sector collaboration among government agencies, research institutions, and survey organisations.

## Demographics

### Policy Implication

The higher proportion of disabled residents in the WMCA compared to the national average indicates a need for targeted policies and services to address their specific needs.

### Recommendation

Implement targeted programs for disabled people in the WMCA, focusing on areas such as accessibility, social inclusion, and support services.

## Housing

### Policy Implication

The concentration of disabled people in social housing suggests a need for increased accessibility and support within these housing units.

### Recommendation

Invest in accessible housing infrastructure and provide financial support for adaptations to ensure disabled people can live independently and comfortably.

## Transport

### Policy Implication

Issues with transport usage indicate a lack of accessibility and inclusivity in public transportation systems.

### Recommendation

Improve accessibility in public transport, including ramps, elevators, and designated seating areas, to accommodate disabled people needs effectively.

## Employment and Skills

### Policy Implication

Discrepancies in early years outcomes and lower rates of employment among disabled people highlight systemic barriers to education and employment.

### Recommendation

Implement early intervention programs to support children with SEN and provide vocational training and job placement assistance for disabled people to increase their employment opportunities.

### Policy Implication

There is a need for policies that promote inclusive employment practices, emphasising flexibility in work arrangements and task allocation to accommodate the diverse abilities and needs of all employees, including disabled people.

### Recommendation

Encourage employers to foster inclusive work environments by adopting flexible work arrangements, task allocation strategies that leverage employees' strengths, and providing reasonable accommodations, prioritising flexible arrangements for disabled employees.

## Health and Wellbeing

### Policy Implication

Health and well-being disparities between disabled and non-disabled individuals emphasise the importance of addressing systemic inequalities in healthcare access and support services.

### Recommendation

Increase funding for disability-specific health services and support programs, including mental health services and social support networks, to improve overall well-being and reduce feelings of loneliness among disabled people.

However, health inequalities are largely preventable. Not only is there a strong social justice case for addressing health inequalities, there, is also a pressing economic case. It is estimated that the annual cost of health inequalities is around £150bn per

annum, equivalent to 7% of GDP through lost taxes, welfare payments and costs to the NHS. Therefore, action on health inequalities requires action across all the social determinants of health, including education, occupation, income, home, and community.

### Policy Implication

Our report highlights the interplay between various social determinants such as health, housing, income, education, and employment, emphasising the need for comprehensive policies addressing these factors to reduce health inequalities.

### Recommendation

Policymakers should adopt a holistic approach to address health inequalities by investing in early childhood development, empowering individuals, and communities, promoting fair employment and good work, ensuring a healthy standard of living, fostering sustainable communities, and strengthening ill-health prevention efforts. This strategy should target multiple social determinants simultaneously, including housing, education, employment, healthcare, and environmental sustainability, to create equitable and healthy communities for all.

Addressing these policy implications will reduce disparities and improve the quality of life for disabled people in the WMCA area. Collaboration between government agencies, community organisations, and disability advocacy groups is essential to ensure effective implementation and sustainable progress.