

Census 2021 Briefing #3: Armed Forces Veterans

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Summary

- 5,071 Havering residents reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces (2.4% of usual residents aged 16 years and over), which is lower than England (3.8%) and higher than London (1.4%);
- 5% of London's veteran population lives within Havering, which is the third highest proportion after Bromley (6.6%) and Croydon (5.1%);
- Within Havering, the highest proportion of veterans by neighbourhood (MSOA) are residing in Cranham East, Upminster North & Cranham West, Rainham East & Wennington, Elm Park East, Dagnam Park & Noak Hill and Rise Park;
- Within London, Havering had the second highest (after Bexley) proportion of households with at least one veteran (4.7%), but had a lower proportion of households with *two or more* veterans (2.2%) than London overall (2.7%) and England (4%);
- Havering had a lower percentage of veterans residing in communal establishments (1.8%, 89 veterans), than London (2.3%) and England (2.0%).

1. Introduction

On 10 November 2022, the third release of 2021 Census data was published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This publication is the second of a series of nine 'Topic Summaries' that will be released periodically from Autumn 2022 to Spring 2023. The topic covered by this release is UK armed forces veterans. For the first time, in support of the [Armed Forces Covenant](#), the ONS collected Census information on the veterans population who have either previously served in the regular forces, reserve forces, or both. Following this, ONS will be releasing further detailed information on the veteran population broken down by other Census variables, such as age, health and labour market characteristics.

2. UK armed forces veteran population

2.1 Previously served (person) in the UK armed forces¹

The Census shows that 5,071 people in Havering reported they had previously served in the UK armed forces (2.4% of usual residents aged 16 years and over), with more than three-quarters saying they had previously served in the regular forces, or both the regular and reserve forces² (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Proportion (%) of people previously served in the UK armed forces for Havering local authority, London region and England, in 2021

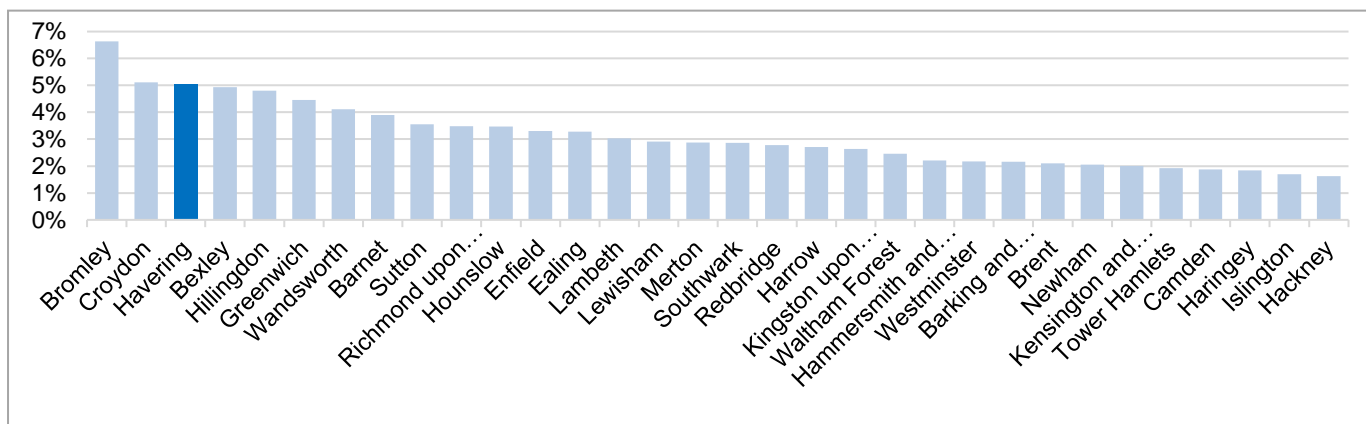
	Havering (n)	Havering (%)	London (%)	England (%)
Previously served in UK armed forces	3645	71.9%	64.6%	76.3%
Previously served in UK reserve armed forces	1243	24.5%	31.7%	19.5%
Previously served in both regular and reserve UK armed forces	183	3.6%	3.7%	4.3%
Total people previously served in UK armed forces	5071	2.4%	1.4%	3.8%

¹ Usual resident population by whether or not they have previously served in the UK armed forces. This includes those who have served for at least one day in the UK armed forces, either regular, reserves, or Merchant Mariners who have seen duty on legally defined military operations. This does not include people who are currently serving in the UK armed forces. The estimates are as at Census Day, 21 March 2021.

² Include UK armed forces, UK reserve armed forces and both regular and reserve UK armed forces

5.0%, 5,071 of London's veteran population lives within Havering, which is the third highest proportion after Bromley (6.6%, 6,673 veterans) and Croydon (5.1%, 5,139 veterans) (see figure 2).

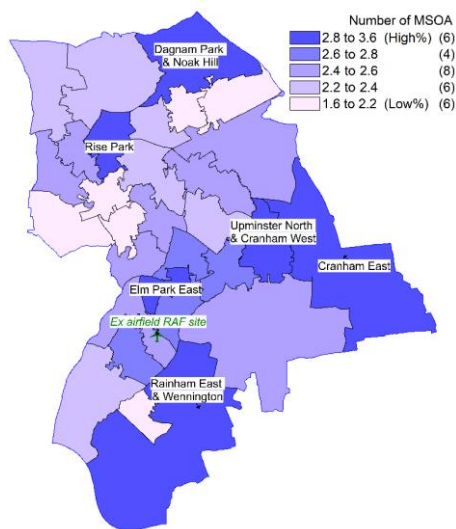
Figure 2: Proportion (%) of people previously served in the UK armed forces by London Local Authorities, in 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), Census 2021

Within the borough, the highest proportion of veterans by neighbourhood (MSOA)³ are residing in Cranham East, Upminster North & Cranham West, Rainham East & Wennington, Elm Park East, Dagnam Park & Noak Hill and Rise Park (see figure 3). Hornchurch Country Park is the former site of Hornchurch RAF and is in close proximity to the mentioned areas. This corresponds with the ONS national summary⁴ which noted that the areas with the highest proportion of veterans previously served in the UK armed forces tended to be near existing armed forces bases.

Figure 3: Proportion (%) of veterans previously served in the UK armed forces by Havering MSOA



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), Census 2021

2.2 Previously served (household) in the UK armed forces⁵

According to Census 2021, Havering had 101,277 households in total and 4.8% of these (4,869 households) reported that someone in the household had previously served in the UK armed forces. This is higher than London (2.8%) and lower than England (7.0%).

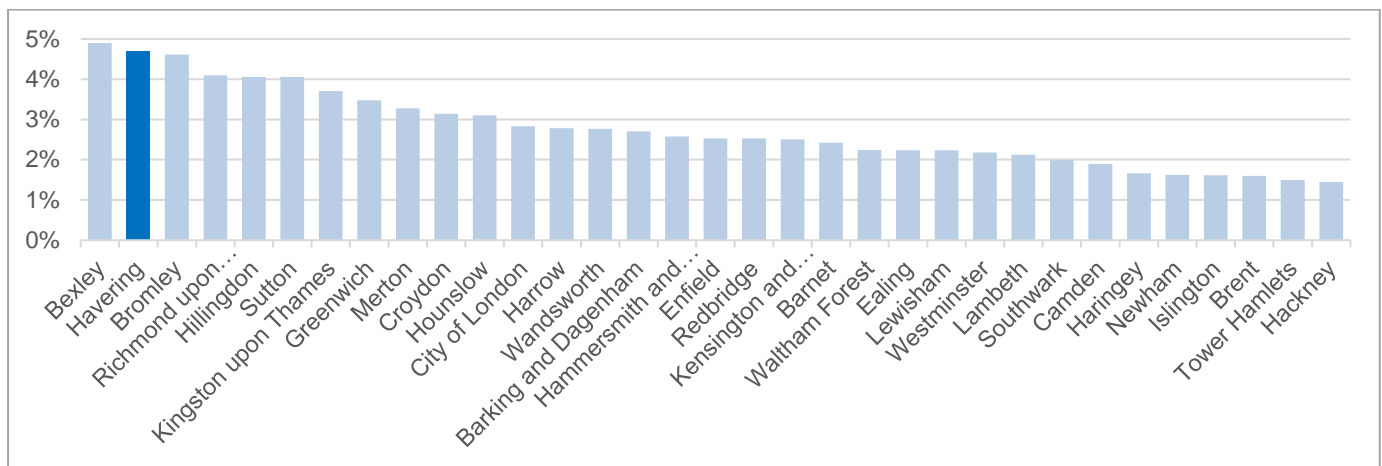
Within London, Havering had the second highest proportion of households with one veteran, at 4.7% (4,764 households), after Bexley (4.9%, 4,665 households) (see Figure 4).

³ MSOA (Middle Layer Super Output Areas) are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics. The minimum population of an MSOA is 5,000 and on average is 7,200

⁴ [UK armed forces veterans, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

⁵Households by the number of people in the household who have previously served in the UK armed forces. The estimates are as at Census Day, 21 March 2021.

Figure 4: Proportion (%) of households where one person in the household previously served in UK armed forces by London Local Authorities, in 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), Census 2021

Havering had a lower proportion of households with *two or more* veterans (2.2%, 105 households), than London (2.7%) and England (4%).

Veterans living in communal establishments⁶

Havering had a lower percentage of veterans residing in communal establishments (1.8%, 89 veterans), than London (2.3%) and England (2.0%).

In addition to Queens Hospital being located in the borough, Havering has a high number of care homes, which are a large proportion of the borough’s communal establishments.

Conclusion

The new Census question was introduced in support of the Armed Forces Covenant⁷, a promise by the nation ensuring that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly.

Havering is one of the top three London local authorities with the highest proportion of residents who previously served in the UK armed forces. As such, the Council and its partners will need to consider what [action might be taken](#) in order to implement the covenant locally and to assess the impact. The data provided by this Topic Summary is a good starting point, providing an estimate of the size and geographic spread of the local veteran community, which will be further enhanced by future data releases. These will cover other characteristics of the veteran population, such as their housing situation, general health indicators and their activity in the labour market.

3 Further information

In 2023, ONS will be releasing further statistical information on the veteran population broken down by other census variables, such as age, health and labour market characteristics. Further details are available at [UK armed forces veterans analysis plans](#) and the [release plans for Census 2021](#).

ONS and the Office for Veterans' Affairs have launched a new dedicated Veterans' Survey. This is the first-ever exercise to collect feedback from the veterans community across the UK. The online survey launched on the 10th of November and will be live for 12 weeks, giving ex-UK Armed Forces personnel and their families the opportunity to provide direct feedback to the government on their experiences, access to and use of services for veterans. The survey can be completed online [here](#).

⁶ A Communal Establishment is an establishment providing managed residential accommodation. Types of communal establishments include: hospitals, care homes, prisons, defence bases, boarding schools and student halls of residence.

⁷ <https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/>