

A summary picture of Children & Young People in Birmingham: Older Teenagers & Young Adults

This document provides a summary of the key facts and figures on older teenagers and young adults aged 16-24 years. For detailed information and a wider range of data (including sources), please see the JSNA Older Teenagers & Young Adults Dashboard.

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There are 163,736 16-24 year olds living in Birmingham, representing around 14% of the population. Almost 60% are from ethnic minority groups, 11% are living with a disability and 5% report their sexual orientation as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other (LGB+).



While over half of young people in the city have Level 3 or 4 qualifications as the highest level of qualification (equivalent to 2 A-levels or degree respectively), 11% (over 17,600) have no qualifications. Around 2 in 5 (41%) are in employment in Birmingham, lower than the England average of 54%. The largest proportions are employed in elementary (unskilled or semi-skilled) occupations (20%) and sales and customer service (18%). Less than 1 in 10 (7%) older teenagers and young adults in Birmingham claim benefits due to being unemployed.



In Birmingham's older teenagers and young adults, rates of hospital admissions for substance misuse, self-harm, accidents and injuries, and eating disorders are all lower than in England as a whole. The rate of emergency admissions for injuries to car occupants is higher than England.

What does the 16-24 year old population look like in Birmingham?

There are 163,736 people aged 16-24 years living in Birmingham, representing around 14% of the population. The wards with the largest proportions of this age group are Bournbrook & Selly Park and Edgbaston, both of which are close to the universities and have large student populations. (Figure 1).

Ethnic diversity is greatest in younger age groups in Birmingham, and in the 16-24 age group, 60% are from ethnic minority groups, compared to less than a quarter in the over 65s. Around 84% of young people (aged 16-24 years) in Birmingham identify as straight or heterosexual, 5% as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (LGB+), and 11% chose not to answer this question in the 2021 Census. Around 11% in this age group live with a disability and of these, around two thirds report their day-to-day activities are limited a little, and a third that their activities are limited a lot.

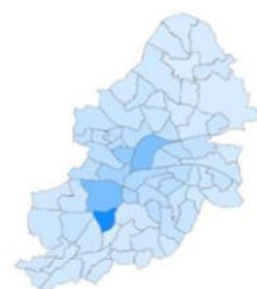


Figure 1: 16-24 year olds by ward

What is the highest level of educational attainment among older teenagers and young adults in the City?

Level 3 qualifications (2 or more A levels; 4 or more AS levels) are the highest level of qualification for over a third of older teenagers and young adults in Birmingham (36%) and this is higher than the England average (31%). Around one fifth (20%) achieve Level 4 qualifications (degrees; PhDs; NVQ4/5), similar to the England average. Around 1 in 10 (over 17,600) report having no qualifications at all, which is similar to the average in England.

How many older teenagers and young adults are employed?

According to the 2021 Census, around 2 in 5 (41%) 16-24 year olds are in employment in Birmingham (including employees, self-employed, government employment and training programmes and unpaid family workers). This is lower than the England average of 54%. The largest proportions of working 16-24 year olds are employed in elementary (unskilled or semi-skilled) occupations (20%), sales and customer service (18%), professional occupations (15%), and caring, leisure, and service occupations (13%). In Birmingham, 7% of young people are employed in skilled trades, lower than the England average of 11%.

Less than 1 in 10 (7%) 16-24 year olds in Birmingham claimed benefits due to being unemployed in 2023. Of the 69 Birmingham wards, 58 have larger proportions of young people claiming unemployment benefits than the England average of 4%. The wards with the largest proportions of young people claiming unemployment benefits are Handsworth (16%), Stockland Green (13%), and Aston (13%).

What sexually transmitted infections are diagnosed in older teenagers and young adults?

In the period 2020-2023, chlamydia was the most commonly diagnosed sexually transmitted infection (STI) in 16-24 year olds, representing around 6 in 10 of all STI diagnoses. In 2022, around 13.1% of young females (aged 15-24) were screened for chlamydia in Birmingham, equivalent to 11,784 tests. This was significantly lower than the England average of 21%. To reduce the incidence of chlamydia infection, the UK Health Security Agency recommends local authorities work towards achieving a detection rate of 3,250 per 100,000 female population aged 15-24. In 2022 this was only 1,484 diagnoses per 100,000, significantly lower than the England rate of 2,110 per 100,000. In this age group, gonorrhoea was the second most commonly diagnosed STI in 2020-2023, representing around one quarter of all STI diagnoses in Birmingham.

What are older teenagers and young adults admitted to hospital for in Birmingham ?

In young people, hospital admissions to A&E are lower than in the rest of England. In 2022/23, for every 100 A&E attendances by young people in England, there were 94.8 in Birmingham. In the same time period, the most common reason for A&E attendance was for soft tissue injury or wound, which accounted for 17% of all attendances in 16-24 year olds.

- **Substance misuse:** Fewer young people in Birmingham are admitted substance misuse than across England. In the period 2018/19-2020/21, there were 280

hospital admissions due to substance misuse in 15-24 year olds. This was equivalent to a rate of 51.0 per 100,000 population, significantly lower than the England rate of 81.2 per 100,000 population.

- **Self-harm:** Rates of self-harm in Birmingham are also lower than England. In 2021/22, there were 255 hospital admissions due to self-harm 20-24 year olds, equivalent to a rate of 274.1 per 100,000 population. This was significantly lower than the England rate of 340.9 per 100,000 population.
- **Accidents & Injuries:** In 2021/22, there were 1,654 hospital admissions due to unintentional and deliberate injuries in 15-24 year olds in Birmingham, equivalent to a rate of 92.4 per 10,000 population. This was significantly lower than the England rate of 118.6 per 10,000 population. In the period 2016/17-2020/21, there were 9,470 emergency admissions for injuries in 15-24 year olds, equivalent to a rate of 102.6 per 10,000 population. This was significantly lower than the England rate of 127.9 per 10,000 population. Of the 69 Birmingham wards, 25 had emergency admission rates that were higher than the national average for injuries in young people (aged 15-24 years).
- **Eating disorders:** In the period 2018/19-2022/23, the rate of emergency hospital admissions for eating disorders in 16-24 year olds in Birmingham was 40.1 per 100,000 population, which was significantly lower than the England rate of 82.4 per 100,000 population.
- **Road injuries/admissions:** In the period 2018/19-2022/23, the rate of emergency admissions for car occupants aged 16-24 years was 33.3 per 100,000 population, higher than the England rate of 28.2 per 100,000 population and higher than all Core Cities.



Figure 2: Emergency hospital admissions for injuries, aged 15-24 years

How many older teenagers and young adults engage in unhealthy behaviours in Birmingham?

Local data is not available on behaviours for the Birmingham population. Therefore, estimates have been made based on 2021 national data. It is important to note that in some cases Birmingham will do better or worse than the England average.

- **Alcohol use:** The estimated prevalence of 16-24 year olds who consume more than 14 units of alcohol per week (higher risk consumption) is 15%, equivalent to around 24,308 young people in Birmingham.
- **Smoking:** The estimated prevalence of 16-24 year olds who are current smokers is around 1 in 10, equivalent to around 16,205 young people in Birmingham. An estimated 85% of young people have never smoked cigarettes, equivalent to around 137,746 young people.
- **E-cigarette use/vaping:** The estimated prevalence of 16-24 year olds who currently use e-cigarettes or vapes is 6%, equivalent to around 9,723 young people in Birmingham.

How many older teenagers and young adults are physically active?

Over 50,000 16-24 year olds (26.8%) in Birmingham are physically inactive (i.e. complete less than 30 minutes activity a week), which is higher than the England average of 18.3%. The Chief Medical Officers recommend children (aged 5-18 years) maintain an average of

at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day and adults (aged 19-64 years) should undertake at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week. In Birmingham, around 64% of older teenagers and young adults meet recommended levels, lower than the England average of 73%.

How many older teenagers and young adults are reported missing or are victims of exploitation and modern slavery?

In 2022/23, a total of 1,357 children and young people (aged 15-18 years) were reported missing in Birmingham. The breakdown by ethnicity shows 32% were white, 21% were of 'other' ethnicity, and 19% were of Black ethnicity. The proportion of Asian young people reported missing (15%) is under-represented compared to the whole population.

Around 640 young people (aged 16-24 years) were victims of exploitation and modern slavery in Birmingham, and almost three quarters of these were male (73%). The breakdown of victims by exploitation type shows criminal exploitation accounts for more than half (56%), sexual exploitation accounts for almost one fifth (18%), and exploitation through labour accounts for around 13%.