



NHS Lothian

**2022 Scottish Census Data:
Health, Disability and
Unpaid Care**

Public Health and Health Policy

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On 3rd October 2024, Scotland's Census released [Scotland's Census 2022 - Health, disability and unpaid care | Scotland's Census \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](https://scotlandscensus.gov.uk). This report presented data from the 2022 census, mainly at a national level, and compared it to data from the 2011 census. NHS Lothian's Public Health Intelligence Team (PHIT) have used [census data released at a smaller geography level](#) to compare the findings for Scotland with Lothian and its four local authorities. PHIT have created a series of graphs illustrating the census data summarised below for Lothian and its local authority areas. These are available upon request by contacting the team at loth.phintelligence@nhs.scot

Health conditions

The report showed that the most common type of health condition reported was a 'long-term illness, disease or condition', and this has increased from 18.7% of people in Scotland in 2011 to 21.4% in 2022. Long-term illness is also the most frequently reported condition in Lothian and across all four local authorities. Rates in Lothian have increased from 17% to 19.4%. City of Edinburgh had a lower rate of people with a long-term illness than the three other local authorities but this likely reflects the younger population in Edinburgh.

Mental health

The largest increase across condition types from 2011 to 2022 was in people reporting a mental health condition, rising from 4.4% to 11.3% for all of Scotland and from 4.2% to 11.6% for Lothian. It is important to note that changes in reporting of mental health conditions may in part reflect changes in awareness and stigma around mental wellbeing. However increases in specific mental health conditions have been reported [elsewhere](#) and decreases in mental wellbeing as a result of the COVID19 pandemic have also been reported.

While the rate of people reporting mental health conditions increased across all age groups from 2011 to 2022, the largest increase was in the 16-24 age group which rose from 2.5% to 15.4% for all of Scotland and from 2.5% to 16.9% for Lothian. City of Edinburgh had a higher rate than Scotland for 16-24 year olds and West Lothian had a higher rate for 25-34 year olds.

In both Scotland and Lothian and across all age groups females were more likely than males to report a mental health condition. The biggest difference was seen amongst 16-24 year olds, where in some cases twice as many females as males reported a mental health condition.

General health

From 2011 to 2022 there has been an increase in the percentage of people reporting bad or very bad health across all age groups for both Lothian and Scotland, with 5.5% of people in Lothian reporting bad or very bad health in 2022. When all 32 council areas in Scotland were ranked from lowest 2022 age-standardised rates of self-reported bad or very bad health to highest, Edinburgh was 11th, East Lothian 12th, Midlothian 17th, and West Lothian 22nd.

Activity-limiting health problems or disabilities

The number of people who reported a health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities a little or a lot has increased across all age groups for both Scotland and Lothian between 2011 and 2022. However looking at percentages instead of counts there has been a slight decrease for those aged 65 and over and the largest increases are in 16-34 year olds. The increased number reflects an ageing population, but the changing percentages likely reflects that those in the oldest age group are tending to be healthier - possibly as a result of national and local policies and practice supporting the health of older people as well as older people with pre-existing health problems having an increased risk of dying from COVID19 (hence disproportionately leaving those with fewer health problems).

Provision of unpaid care

Across all age groups and for both Scotland and Lothian there has been an increase between 2011 and 2022 in the number people providing unpaid care, particularly in the 50-64 age group. And across all age groups and for both Scotland and Lothian a higher percentage of females provide unpaid care than males.