

# **Armed Service Veterans: Estimates for Wirral 2017**

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**Wirral Intelligence Service**

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## Armed Service Veterans: Estimates for Wirral 2017

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### Content overview

<b>Abstract</b>	A brief overview of former armed military veterans in Wirral, including estimates of numbers and some basic demographics.
<b>Intended or potential audience</b>	<b>External</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health</li><li>• Voluntary and Community Sector</li></ul> <b>Internal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public Health</li><li>• Communications</li><li>• Housing</li><li>• Corporate</li></ul>
<b>Links with other topic areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Employment</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Housing</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Long-term health conditions</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Smoking</a></li></ul>

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## Key Findings

- There are an estimated 14,600 veterans living in Wirral in 2017, just over half of whom (7,483 or 51%) are aged under 65
- The majority of those aged 65+ (almost 7,000) are from a group of men who were obliged to complete their National Service between 1947 and 1963. This means numbers are likely to reduce significantly during the next 5 to 10 years as this cohort will now be aged 70+
- An estimated 1,500 of the total 14,600 veterans living in Wirral are female (around 10%).
- An estimated 75% of armed service military veterans within the working age bracket in Wirral are likely to be employed, a further 20% are likely to be economically inactive (studying or in ill-health for example) and the final 5% unemployed
- Around 75% of veterans are likely to own their own home through either a mortgage, loan or outright, while 23% are renting. Those remaining include those in care homes, hostels, homeless or living with their parents
- Health conditions such as CVD and leg or feet related problems are more common in veterans over the age of 65, with 72% reported having one or more long term condition (LTC) compared to 40% of veterans aged below that age bracket, which is to be expected as health generally deteriorates throughout the life course
- Smoking tends to be more common amongst military veterans with veterans smoking status being at 24% compared to 16% of non-veterans within Wirral. This could be related to cigarettes being subsidised for members of the military while they are serving.

Using estimates provides some insight into local numbers of former armed service personnel but is not ideal as it may not take into account regional or local variations such as regimental or service branch ties with certain areas. It is however, necessary, as definite information on the number of veterans in the community is still lacking, both from NHS sources and elsewhere.

## Introduction

This document updates previous estimates on the number of veterans in Wirral produced by the Wirral Intelligence Team, Wirral Council in 2013 which can be found through the following link: <https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/jsna/armed-services-ex-military-personnel-or-veterans/>. Previously, local estimates were produced using an Office for National Statistics (ONS) report, which in turn had used the Adult Psychiatric Survey [1]. More recently, the 2015 Annual Population Survey (APS) now includes questions for veterans, allowing more up to date estimates to be produced, whilst also providing estimates on other demographic and health issues covered by the APS, including smoking prevalence for example [2].

## Estimated number of veterans in Wirral

There continues to be no definitive figures on the total number of armed service veterans in the UK. Estimates have now been produced by the Ministry of Defence using the Annual Population Survey (APS) reported by the Office of National Statistics. Those estimates have been used in this document to extrapolate figures on the potential armed service veteran population in Wirral. It should be noted however, that those estimates are now two years old, and a greater proportion of the older cohorts in particular, will no longer be alive. These new estimates therefore, will have a

greater margin of error than previous estimates, particularly for the older cohorts of veterans. The new estimates are shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1:** Estimated numbers of veterans in Wirral by gender and 5-Year age band, 2015

Age Range	Male	Female	Persons
16 – 19	15	*	17
20 – 24	124	15	139
25 – 29	302	25	337
30 – 34	369	43	412
35 – 39	332	39	371
40 – 44	639	75	714
45 – 49	1,042	122	1,164
50 - 54	1,474	173	1,647
55 – 59	1,344	158	1,502
60 - 64	1,056	124	1,180
65 – 69	1,245	146	1,391
70 – 74	849	100	949
75 – 79	2,131	250	2,381
80 – 84	1,493	175	1,668
85 – 89	515	60	575
90+	142	17	159
<b>All Ages</b>	<b>13,072</b>	<b>1,534</b>	<b>14,606</b>

**Source:** ONS, MoD and 2015 Mid-year population estimates.

**Note:** numbers <5 suppressed.

As Table 1 shows, Wirral now has between 14,000 and 15,000 armed service veterans of all ages, with around half of this number (7,123 or 49%) aged over 65. The large number of older veterans reflects the fact that there is still a considerable cohort of surviving veterans who were obliged to complete National Service (compulsory until 1963).

This cohort of men are now all aged over 70, so this combined with changes in the population and re-organisation within the Armed Services means that overall, the number of veterans is likely to decline significantly in future years. The total number of veterans has already decreased significantly since the last estimates for Wirral were produced – down from 24,206 to 14,606 in 2015 (but this could also be due to the change in the source estimates used). Armed services veterans below the age of 65 years are estimated to number around 7,500 and make up the remaining 51% of the total estimated veteran population for Wirral.

## Employment Status

Other available data supplied by the APS estimates the employment status of veterans between the standard working ages of 16-64. It is estimated that just over 75% or 5,621 of the armed service veterans recognised themselves as employed. See Table 2 below.

**Table 2:** Estimated employment status in in armed service veterans in Wirral aged 16-64

Employment Status	Number	%
Employed	5,621	75.1
Unemployed	389	5.2
Economically Inactive	1,473	19.7

<b>Total</b>	<b>7,483</b>	<b>100</b>
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**Source:** ONS, MoD and 2015 Mid-year population estimates.

**Note:** Those aged 65 and over (7,123) have all reached the retirement age and so will be classed as economically inactive.

Estimates suggest that most veterans of working age are employed, with three in four (75%) likely to be in employment and just a small proportion (5%) being unemployed.

Fewer than 1 in 5 armed service veterans in Wirral are estimated as being economically inactive (19.7%) – the definition of which provided by NOMIS, states that these are people who are neither in employment nor unemployed and includes for example, all those who may be unavailable to work because of family commitments, retirement or study, or unable to work through sickness or disability.

**Table 3:** Estimated economic inactivity in armed service veterans in Wirral aged 16+

All people	Wirral (Level)	Wirral (%)	North West (%)	Great Britain (%)
<b>Student</b>	10,400	20.5	24.2	26.8
<b>Looking after family/home</b>	10,600	20.9	23.2	24.5
<b>Temporary sick</b>	*	*	2.2	1.9
<b>Long-term sick</b>	16,100	31.8	26.7	22.0
<b>Discouraged</b>	*	*	0.6	0.4
<b>Retired</b>	9,200	18.1	13.9	13.5
<b>Other</b>	4,000	8.0	9.1	10.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,700</b>	<b>26.3</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>22.0</b>

**Source:** NOMIS

**Note:** \*Some estimates unavailable, since sample size is disclosive

Almost 1 in 3 cases of economic inactivity within Wirral is due to long-term sickness (31.8%) compared to 26.7% in the North West. However, these figures differ greatly to the national average, in which only 22.0% are economically inactive due to long-term sickness. Instead being a student (26.8%) and looking after family/home (24.5%) rank higher than having a long-term illness within Wirral.

## Accommodation

**Table 4:** Estimated accommodation status in armed service veterans in Wirral aged 16+

Accommodation Status	Number	%
<b>Owned outright/bought with a mortgage/loan</b>	11,083	75.9
<b>Rent/Part rent</b>	3,383	23.2
<b>Other</b>	140	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,606</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** ONS, MoD and 2015 Mid-year population estimates.

**Note:** Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Estimates suggest that more than 3 out of 4 armed service veterans (75.9%) own their own home (either outright or bought with a mortgage/loan).

Around 23% veterans are estimated to be renting their property. This could be because they do not have a sustainable income to purchase their accommodations linking back to Table 2; which

showed 1 in 5 veterans were likely to be economically inactive.

Finally, those who do not fit into either of the above categories may include young student veterans who still live with their parents, those in care homes and those who are homeless. Estimates suggest that 3% of the street-homeless population has a Service history.

## Long Term Health Conditions

**Table 5:** Estimates of long term health conditions in veterans living in Wirral aged 16-64

	Number	%
<b>Yes</b>	3,004	40.1
<b>No</b>	4,452	59.5
<b>Don't know</b>	27	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,483</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** ONS, MoD and 2015 Mid-year population estimates.

**Table 6:** Estimates of long term health conditions in veterans living in Wirral aged 65+

	Number	%
<b>Yes</b>	5,136	72.1
<b>No</b>	1,949	27.4
<b>Don't know</b>	34	0.5
<b>Refusal</b>	4	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,123</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** ONS, MoD and 2015 Mid-year population estimates.

**Note:** Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

As the number of armed service veterans aged over 65 is almost identical to those veterans who are under the age of 65, it is useful to compare these two sets of data.

Between 16–64 years of age, just over 3,000 (40.1%) veterans have health problems lasting or expected to last more than 12 months; however this value is much greater in the over 65 population at 5,136 (72.1%). The top three long term health conditions for veterans aged 16 – 64 were associated with heart, blood, pressure and circulation (conditions such as CVD) and conditions associated with the legs or feet and back or neck. This was also true for veterans aged 65 and over.

**Table 7:** Estimates comparing long term health conditions between veterans and non-veterans

	Veterans (16-64)	Non-veterans (16-64)	Veterans (65+)	Non-veterans (65+)
<b>Yes</b>	40.1%	35.5%	72.1%	66.4%
<b>No</b>	59.5%	64.1%	27.4%	32.9%
<b>Don't Know</b>	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%
<b>Refusal</b>	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%

**Source:** ONS, MoD and 2015 Mid-year population estimates.

In comparison to non-veterans, 35% of those aged 16–64 had a health problem lasting or expected to last more than 12 months, compared to 66% of people aged 65+.

This data therefore shows that veterans appear more likely to suffer from long term health conditions than the general population. Veterans likely to *not* have a health problem reduced from

4,452 or 59% of those aged 16-64, to 1,949 (or 27%) of those aged 65+, which is to be expected as health generally deteriorates throughout the life course.

Finally, those who did not know if they did have a health problem lasting, or expected to last, longer than 12 months is insignificant collectively making up just over 1.5% of the total data. This may be because those taking the APS couldn't estimate the length of their respective health issue, as the only options to answer within the survey was 'Yes' or 'No'.

## Smoking

**Table 8:** Estimated smoking status in armed service veterans in Wirral aged 16-64

Smoking Status	Number	%
Yes	2,815	37.6
No	4,668	62.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,483</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** ONS, MoD and 2015 Mid-year population estimates.

**Notes:** Applies only to those who smoke cigarettes, cigars and pipes.

Over one third (37.6%) of military veterans between 16-64 year olds are likely to smoke at least one of cigarettes, cigars or pipes. This is higher than the Wirral average of 15.7% and the national average of 15.5%. One of the reasons behind this increase is that cigarettes are subsidised for armed military veterans whilst they are on active service.

Note: The Wirral average and national average figures obtained from the APS include all smokers aged 18+.

**Table 9:** Estimated smoking status in armed service veterans in Wirral aged 65+

Smoking Status	Number	%
Yes	737	10.3
No	6,386	89.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,123</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** ONS, MoD and 2015 Mid-year population estimates.

**Notes:** Applies only to those who smoke cigarettes, cigars and pipes.

On the other hand, smoking prevalence is likely to be lower amongst the over 65 age group at just 10.3% compared with the 16-64 age group at 37.6%. This is also lower than the Wirral and national average and the likely reason behind this is that the number of successful quitters around smoking increases when age increases i.e. the older you are the more likely you are to quit. Furthermore, smoking decreases a person's life expectancy and so more people will have died younger than those who are not currently smokers.

## References

1. Woodhead C et al. An estimate of the veteran population in England: based on data from the 2007 Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey. Office for National Statistics Population Trends Bulletin: Winter 2009. Available at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/population-trends-rd/population-trends/no--138--winter-2009/an-estimate-of-the-veteran-population-in-england--based-on-data-from-the-2007-adult-psychiatric-morbidity-survey.pdf>
2. Annual Population Survey: Estimates on number of veterans available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain-2015>
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