



# **CHURCH WARD PROFILE**

## **2025**

## Church Ward Profile

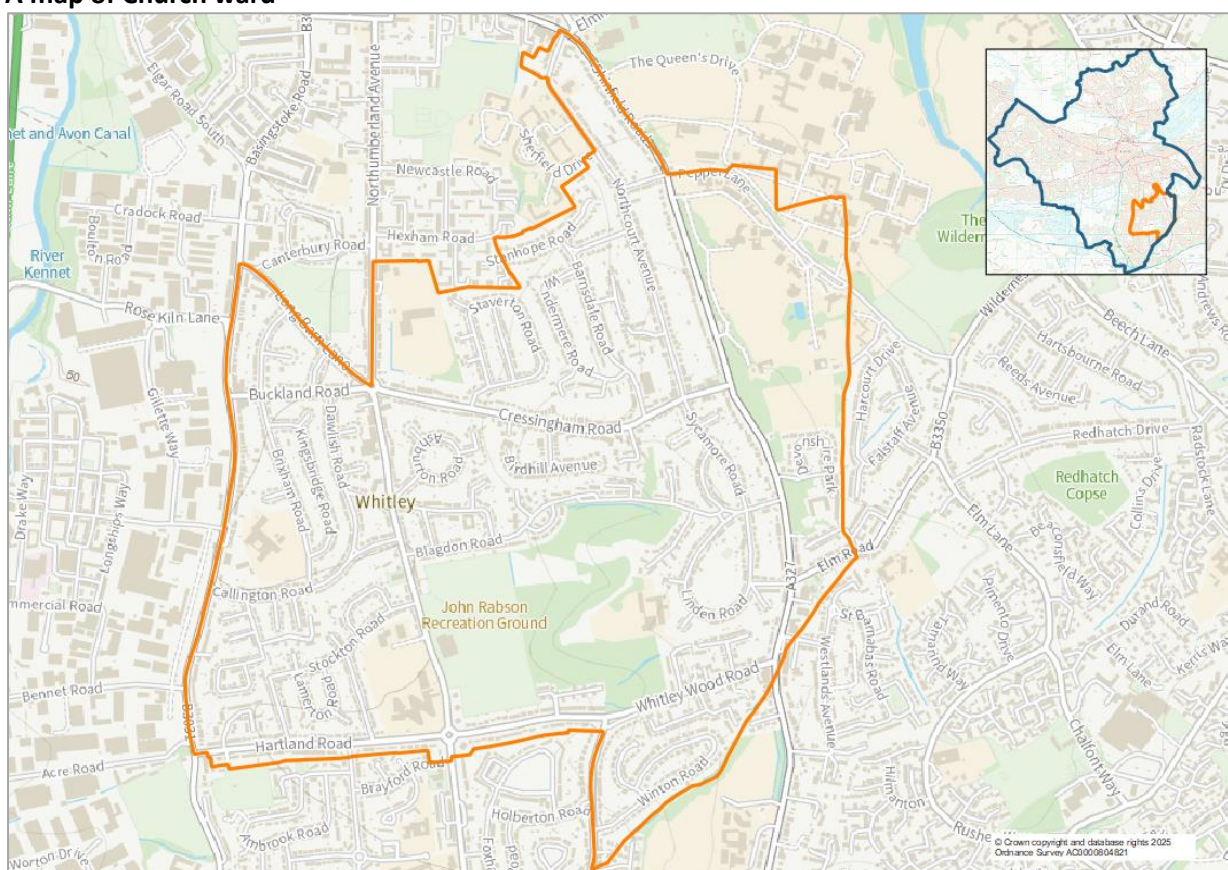
This profile presents data, information and intelligence about the health and health needs of people living in the Reading ward of Church. The profile highlights both the many opportunities for local people in Church alongside some of the challenges faced.

A range of people and organisations can use the Church profile. This includes health and social care commissioners who can use the information to help plan services and understand local needs; voluntary and community groups to ensure community needs and views are represented; by the public to help understand local needs and as a means of challenge and vehicle of accountability to local authorities and partner organisations.

This ward profiles provides a range of information around six areas:

- Who we are
- What we do
- How we live
- Health and health needs
- Community assets
- Voices, activities, and aspirations

### A map of Church ward



Source: Public Health Intelligence Team, Reading Borough Council

## Life in Church – top issues

### A different view

Church is seen as a special place to live, a close-knit community, with diversity as its strength. It is a place characterised by:

- access to a range of community assets
- lots of local activities
- aspirations among young people and parents
- satisfaction with local area
- sense of neighbourhood belonging
- ethnic diversity and complementary cultural influences
- people employed in a range of professions

### Opportunities for challenge and change

Church, just like other areas, faces its challenges. However, these challenges present opportunities to change and improve outcomes. Some of these challenges include:

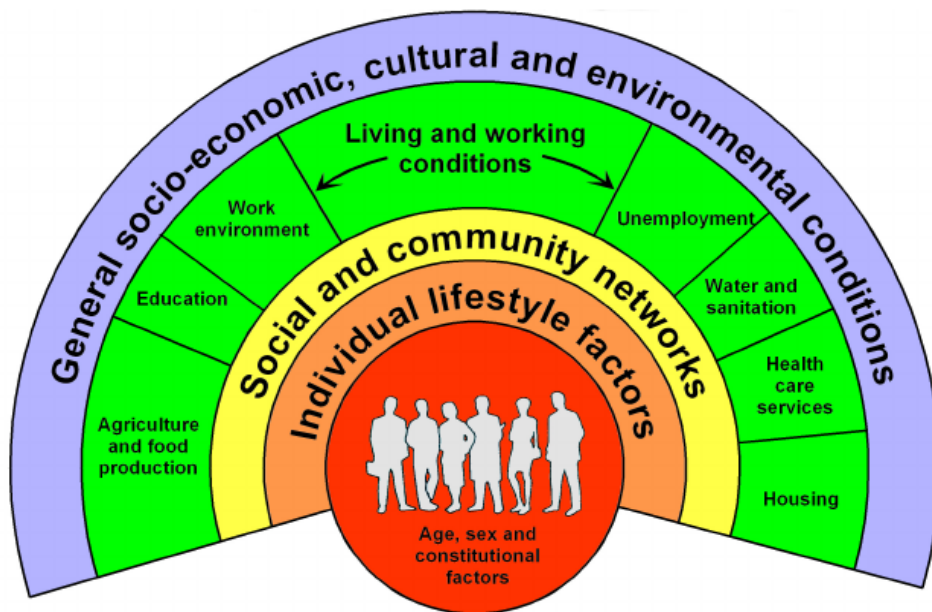
- poorer general health across all age groups
- health deprivation
- child poverty
- increasing number of claimants aged 16-24
- participation in education (18-20 year olds)
- satisfaction with Reading Borough Council
- local people feeling tired of being unfairly stereotyped

### Church in context

The ward profile for Church should not be read in isolation. It needs to be understood, located and centred around the following:

- wider national, regional, and local structural issues (such as employment, housing, education)
- the [Council Plan 2025-28](#)
- health in all places: making every setting a health promoting space
- strengthening primary prevention: addressing risk factors early
- co-production with communities: involving people with lived experiences in designing solutions
- workplace interventions: supporting healthier working environments, particularly in lower paid sectors
- tackling the wider determinants of health and health inequalities (see diagram below)

## The Wider Determinants of Health<sup>1</sup>



Source: Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991)

<sup>1</sup> The wider determinants of health are a diverse range of social, economic, and environmental factors which influence people's physical and mental health, often leading to inequalities in health (unfair and avoidable differences in health outcomes across the population and between different groups).

## Who we are

Understanding the population characteristics of an area is important when providing for both current and planning for future services. Different age groups, ethnic groups, and households have different health and social care needs and require and use services in different ways. This section of the profile explores who the people of Church are and includes a range of demographic information.

### Population

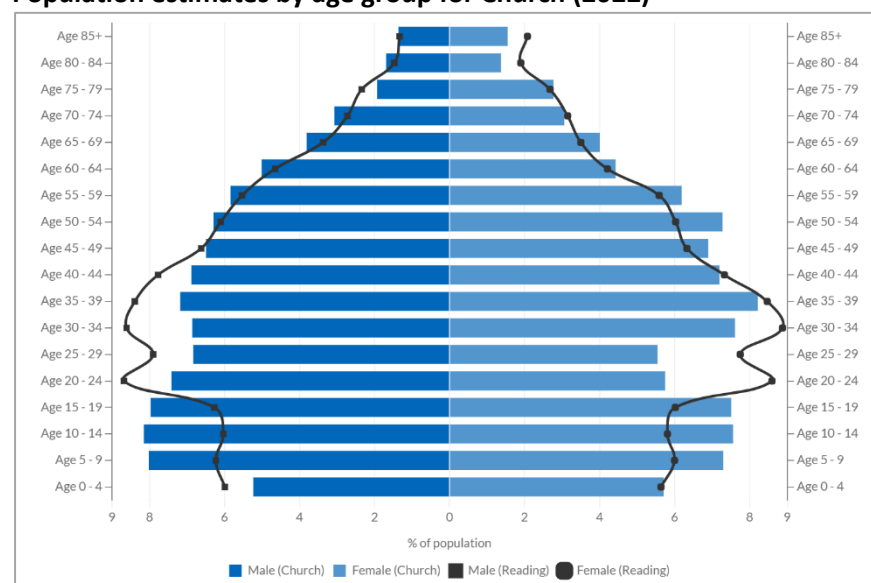
There were an estimated 12,018 people living in Church in 2022. Just over one fifth of the population were aged under 16, whilst 12.3% were aged 65 and over.

#### Population estimates for Church (2022)

Age group	Church		Reading		England %
	Number	%	Number	%	
0-15	2,699	22.5	33,150	19.0	18.5
16-64	7,839	65.2	120,222	68.8	62.9
65+	1,480	12.3	21,448	12.3	18.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,018</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>174,820</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Office for National Statistics ([Population Estimates](#))

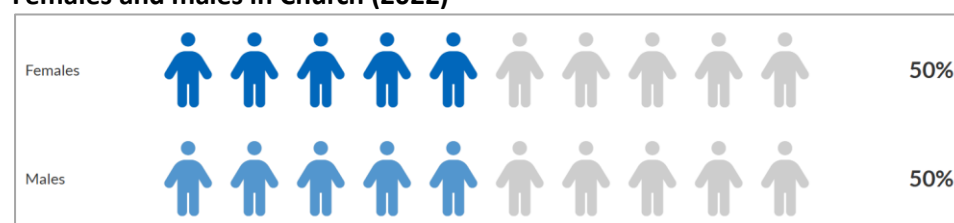
#### Population estimates by age group for Church (2022)



Source: Office for National Statistics ([Population Estimates](#))

There were an estimated 6,055 females and 5,963 males in Church in 2022. 50% of the population were female and 50% were male, the same as Reading.

#### Females and males in Church (2022)

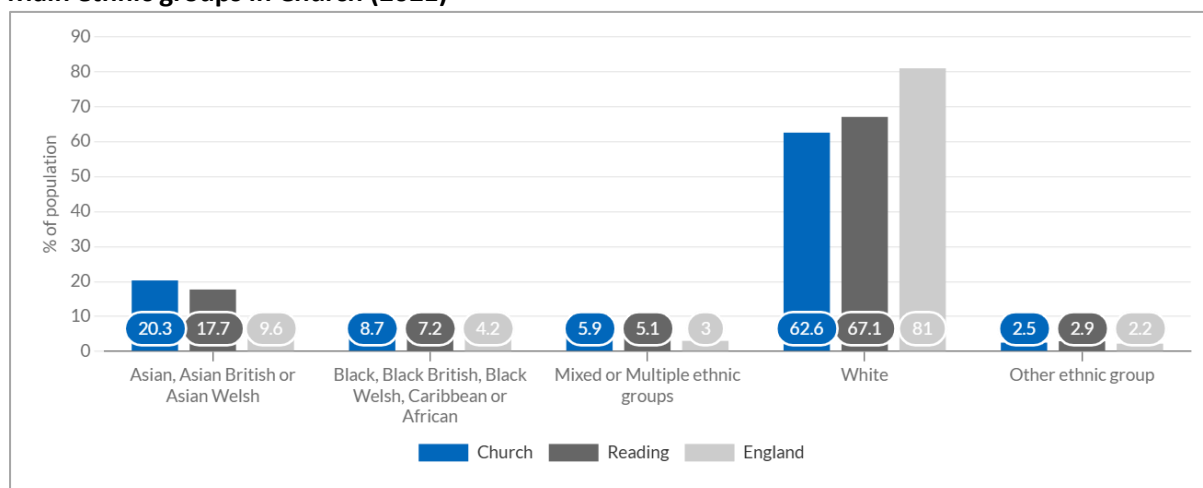


Source: Office for National Statistics ([Population Estimates](#))

## Ethnicity

The way people describe their ethnic group is based on their culture, family background, identity, and is integral to what people do every day. Around 6 in 10 people (62.6%) in Church (7,617 people) were White based on the 2021 Census, with the largest minority ethnic group being Asian – 20.3%, 2,473 people. The proportion of non-White ethnic groups in Church was higher than Reading, 37.4% versus 32.9%.

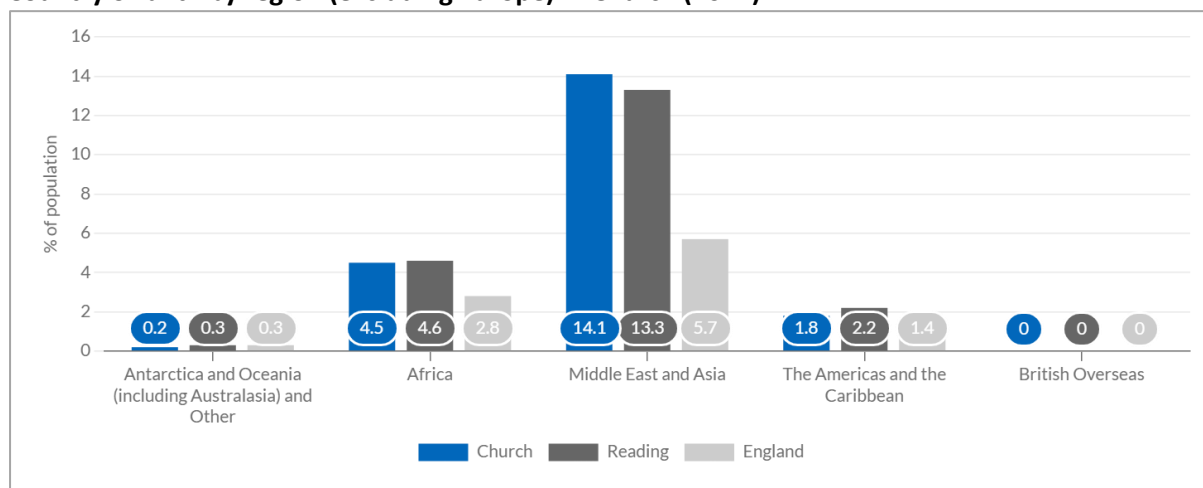
### Main ethnic groups in Church (2021)



Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

7 out of 10 people (70.7%) living in Church were born in the UK, which is 8,602 people, higher than the Reading proportion of 66.5%, whilst an additional 894 people (7.4%) were born in EU countries (Reading, 11.3%). Among people not born in the UK, the largest group in Church were those born in the Middle East and Asia – 14.1%, 1,710 people.

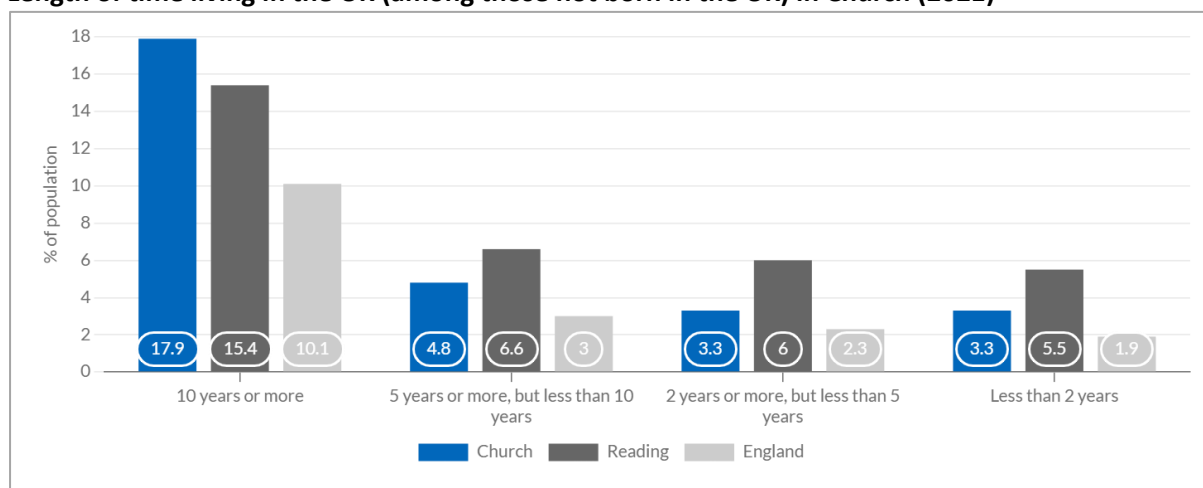
### Country of birth by region (excluding Europe) in Church (2021)



Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

Of the 3,559 people not born in the UK and living in Church, 396 people had been living in the ward for less than two years, 991 people had been living in the ward between 2 and up to 10 years, whilst 2,172 people had been living in Church for more than 10 years.

### Length of time living in the UK (among those not born in the UK) in Church (2021)

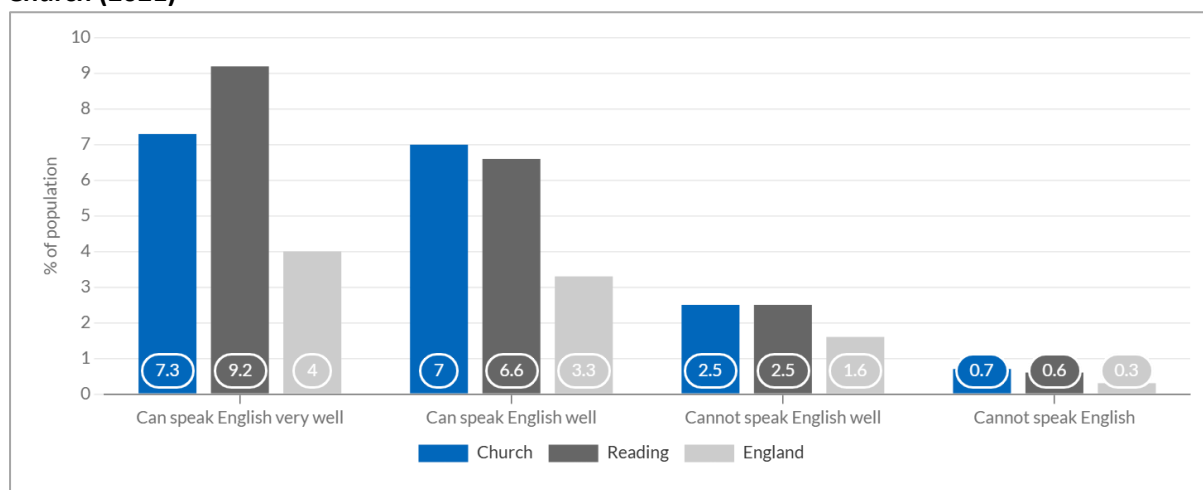


Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

Language is a key defining characteristic of people's identity, and information on main languages spoken can help to plan and provide both statutory and voluntary services for local people. Among people aged three years and over in Church, English was the main language spoken by 9,680 people, which is 82.5% compared with 81.1% in Reading and 90.8% in England.

Among people in Church whose main spoken language was not English (2,059 people), 859 people could speak English very well, 819 could speak English well, whilst 381 people could not English well or not at all.

### How well people (aged 3 and over) can speak English where it is not the main language spoken in Church (2021)



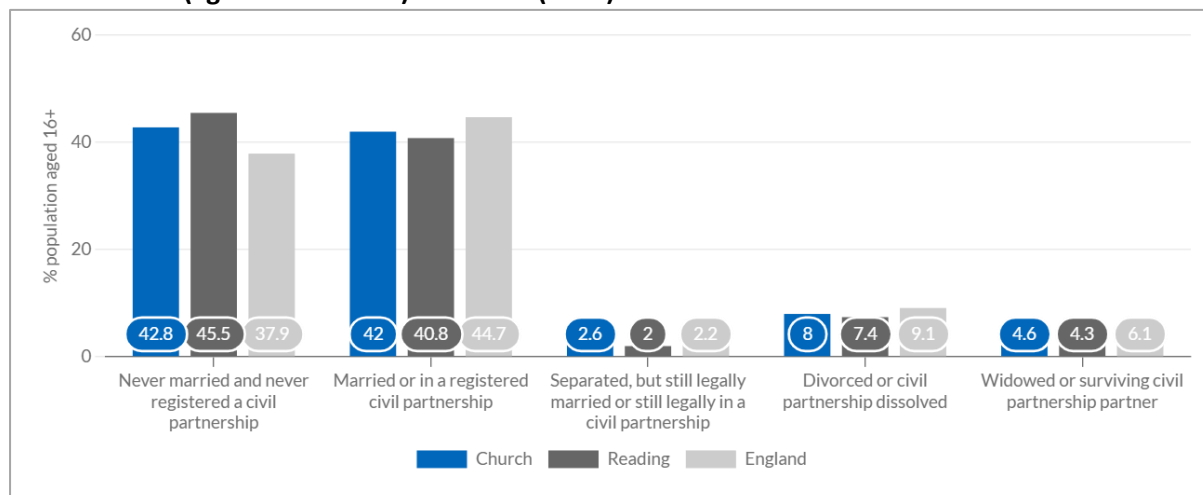
Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

### Marital status

Among people aged 16 and over in Church, 42.8% (4,012 people) had never married and never registered a civil partnership, whilst 3,934 people (42.0%) were married or in a registered civil partnership. A total of 428 people (4.6%) were widowed or surviving civil partnership partner in 2021.



### Marital status (aged 16 and over) in Church (2021)

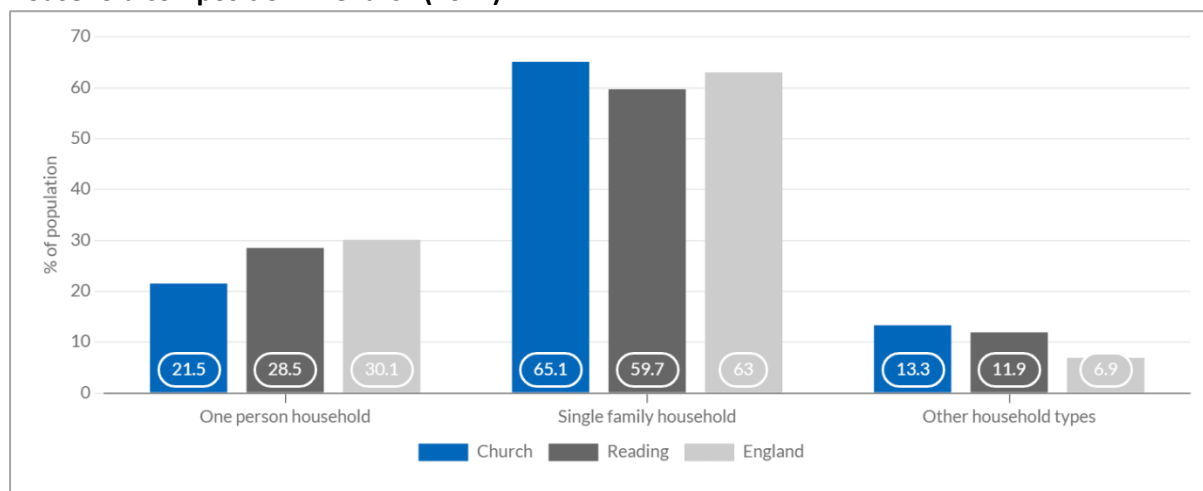


Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

### Households

Based on the 2021 Census, 21.5% of households in Church were one person households, 65.1% were single family households (couple with or without children, single parent with child(ren)), whilst the remaining 13.3% of households were classified as other types, such as multi-person households. 402 of the 906 one person households were comprised of an elderly person aged 66 years and over.

### Household composition in Church (2021)



Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

Among the different households in Church, 6 out of 10 (60.8%, 2,555 households) did not contain any dependent children, whilst the remaining 4 households out of 10 (39.2%, 1,649 households) contained a dependent child aged between 0-18 years old ([NOMIS](#)). This compared with 69.3% and 30.7% in Reading. Among households with dependent children, 607 households (36.8%) contained children aged 0-4, 447 households (27.1%) contained children aged 5-9, 430 households (26.1%) contained children aged 10-15, whilst 165 households (10.0%) contained dependent children aged 16-18 years old in Church.

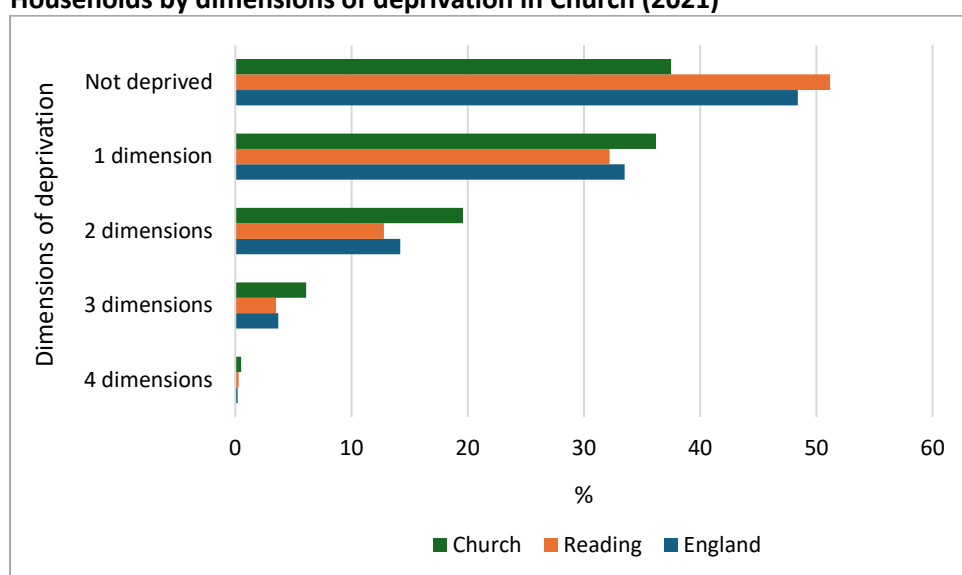


## Deprivation

People living in the most deprived areas of England face the worst healthcare inequalities in relation to healthcare access, experience, and outcomes. Deprivation can affect people in many different ways, and measures of deprivation often explore its impact across multiple domains. The 2021 Census measure of deprivation is based on four household characteristics: education, employment, health, and housing.

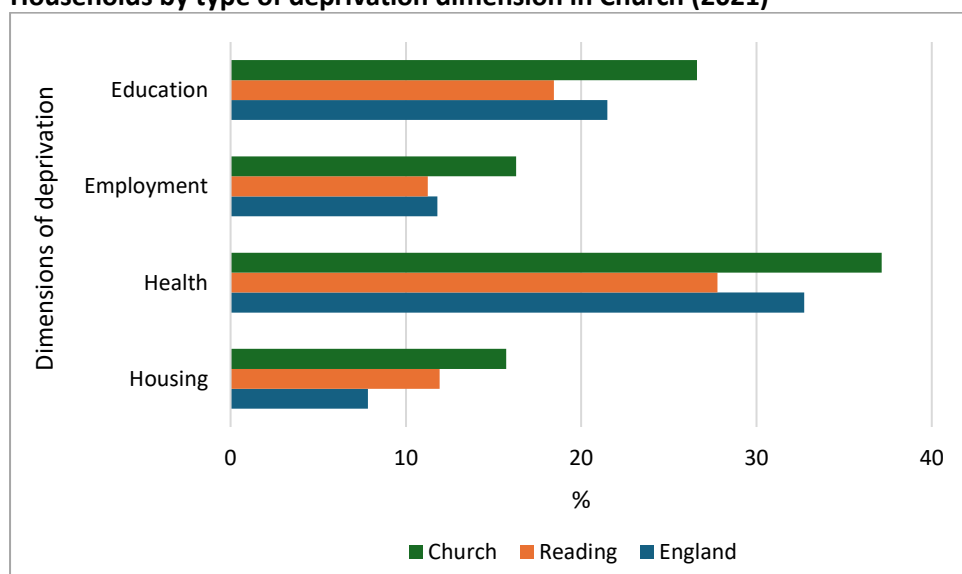
In Church, 37.5% of households were not deprived on any of the four dimensions of deprivation (1,581 households), whilst 62.5% were deprived on at least one of the four dimensions (2,630 households). Across the four different dimensions of deprivation, households in Church were most likely to be deprived on the health dimension (37.1% of households). This dimension looks at people experiencing poor health or those whose day-to-day activities are limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses (and are considered disabled).

### Households by dimensions of deprivation in Church (2021)



Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

### Households by type of deprivation dimension in Church (2021)



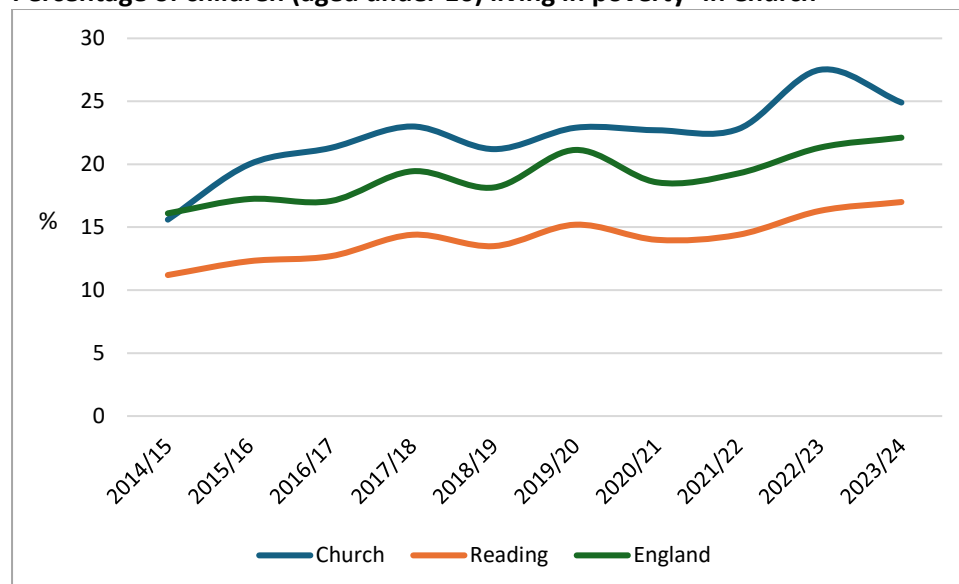
Source: Office for National Statistics ([Create a Custom Dataset](#))

## Child poverty

Childhood poverty can lead to premature mortality and poor health outcomes for adults. Reducing the numbers of children who experience poverty should improve these adult health outcomes and increase healthy life expectancy. Children who live in poverty are also exposed to a range of risks that can have a serious impact on their mental health.

The percentage of children under 16 living in poverty in Church increased from 15.6% in 2014/15 to 24.9% in 2023/24. This is a relative increase of 59.6% in the percentage of children living in poverty in Church, which is higher than the increase seen across Reading (51.8%) and England (37.3%). During this time, the numbers of young children living in poverty in Church has increased from 426 to 679.

**Percentage of children (aged under 16) living in poverty<sup>1</sup> in Church**



Source: Department for Work and Pensions ([Children in Low Income Families](#))

1 Relative low income families

## What we do

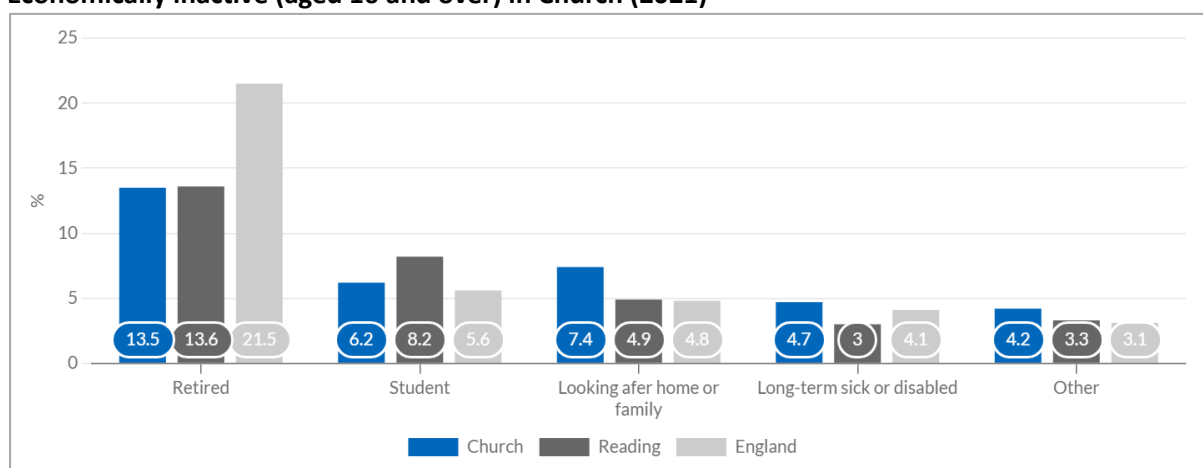
The success of a local economy is influenced by many factors such as a skilled and experienced workforce, quality of the infrastructure, natural resources, strong links with the wider economy, and the successful distribution of wealth. This section of the profile explores what the people of Church do and includes a range of information about employment and education.

### Economic activity

6 out of 10 people (61.2%) aged 16 and over in Church in 2021 were economically active, which is 5,733 people, compared with 63.6% in Reading and 58.6% in England. Economic activity is a measure of whether or not someone is actively participating in the labour market and includes both people working and those who are unemployed (but actively looking for work). 3.8% of people in Church were unemployed compared with 3.2% in Reading and 2.9% in England ([NOMIS](#)).

Of the 3,372 people aged 16 and over who were economically inactive in Church, people (excluding students) were most likely to be either retired, looking after the home or family, or long-term sick or disabled.

### Economically inactive (aged 16 and over) in Church (2021)



Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

Based on the 2021 Census, one third (34.3%) of people aged 16 and over in Church who were not in employment had never worked (1,307 people) compared with 28.3% in Reading and 25.6% in England ([NOMIS](#)).

In 2024, a Resident Engagement Project called 'Levelling up South Reading' ([Reading Welfare Rights](#)), which covers the wards of Church and Whitley, found that the main barriers to work among people aged 16 and over included: ill health, lack of suitable jobs, caring responsibilities, lack of suitable childcare options, and transport to work.

### Socio-economic classification

NS-SEC (National Statistics Socio-economic classification) is a system that classifies people into a number of categories based on their occupation and employment conditions. It reflects, in large, the changing landscape of the labour market and the complexities of socio-economic status. Based on the 2021 Census, 1 in 5 people (22.9%) in Church aged 16 and over were classified as being in managerial and professional occupations compared with 36.0% in Reading and 33.1% in England. On the other hand, 32.0% of people in Church were classified as being in semi-routine and routine occupations compared with 21.9% in Reading and 23.3% in England.

### Socio-economic classification percentage (aged 16 and over) in Church (2021)

Classification	Church	Reading	England
Higher managerial/administrative/professional occupations	8.6	16.7	13.2
Lower managerial/administrative/professional occupations	14.3	19.3	19.9
Intermediate occupations	10.1	10.3	11.4
Small employers and own account workers	9.2	8.3	10.6
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	6.0	4.5	5.3
Semi-routine occupations	14.8	10.6	11.3
Routine occupations	17.2	11.3	12.0
Never worked and long-term unemployed	11.3	7.7	8.5
Full-time students	8.6	11.3	7.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

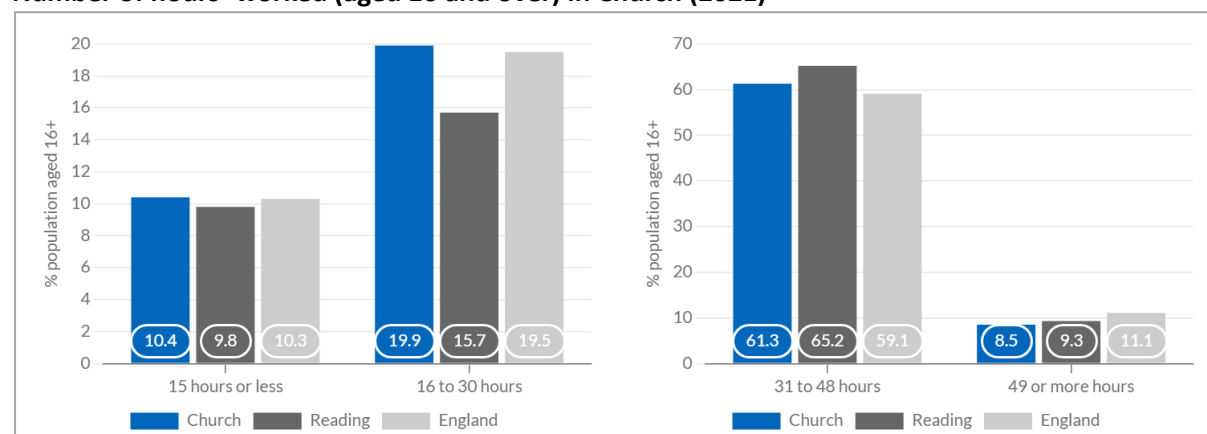
Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

Based on the 2021 Census, the top five industries people aged 16 and over in Church were employed in were: the wholesale and retail trade (18.2%), health and social work activities (15.3%), education (10.2%), administrative and support services (8.4%), construction (8.0%). Between them, these five industries employed 3,334 people, 60.1% of employed people ([NOMIS](#)).

### Working hours

Nearly one third (30.2%) of people aged 16 and over who were in employment in Church in 2021 worked part-time, whilst the remaining two thirds (69.8%) worked full-time. The majority of people working part-time worked between 16-30 hours, whilst among those working full-time, the majority worked between 31-48 hours.

### Number of hours<sup>1</sup> worked (aged 16 and over) in Church (2021)



Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

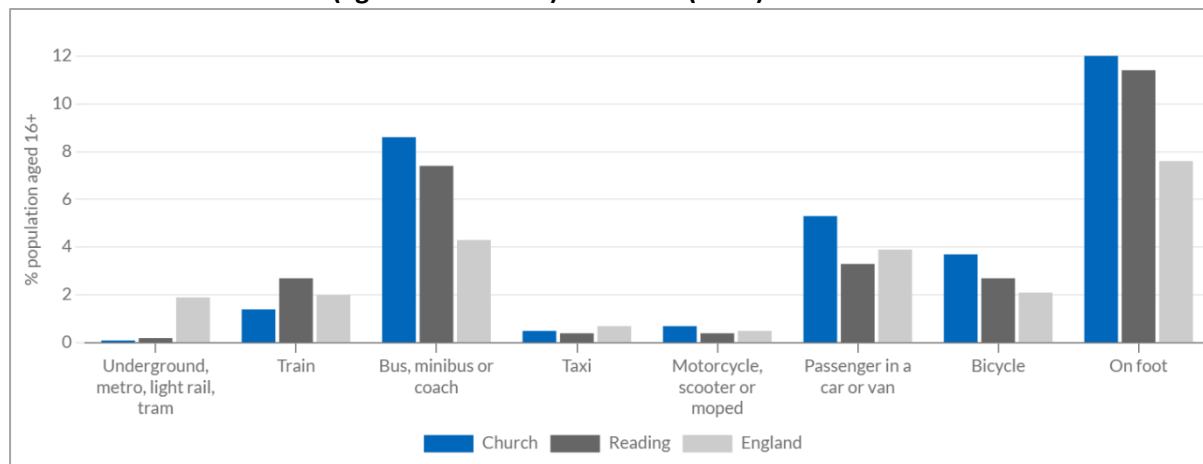
<sup>1</sup> Up to 30 hours (part-time); 31+ hours (full-time)

### Getting to work

In Church, 23.0% of people aged 16 and over and in employment worked mainly from home (based on the 2021 Census), which is 1,280 people (Reading 39.3%, England 31.5%), whilst 43.5% (2,414 people) drove to work in a car or van (Reading 31.4%, England 44.5%). Among those who did not work from home or who drove to work, 12.0% walked to work (665 people), 8.6% took a bus, minibus or coach to work (475 people), 5.3% were a passenger in a car or van (295 people), whilst 3.7% (207 people) cycled to work.

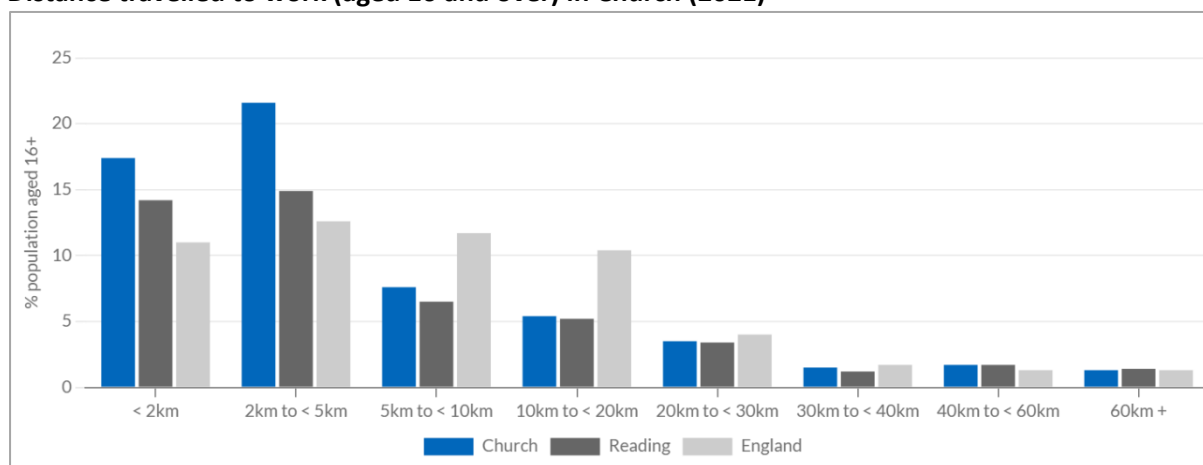
Among people aged 16 and over and in employment in Church, 17.4% had to travel less than two kilometres (1.2 miles) to work, whilst a further 21.6% had to travel between 2 and less than 5 kilometres to work (between 1.2 and 3 miles). Overall, nearly half (46.6%) of people in employment in Church had to travel less than 10 kilometres to work (6 miles) compared with 35.6% in Reading.

### Methods of travel to work (aged 16 and over) in Church (2021)



Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

### Distance travelled to work (aged 16 and over) in Church (2021)



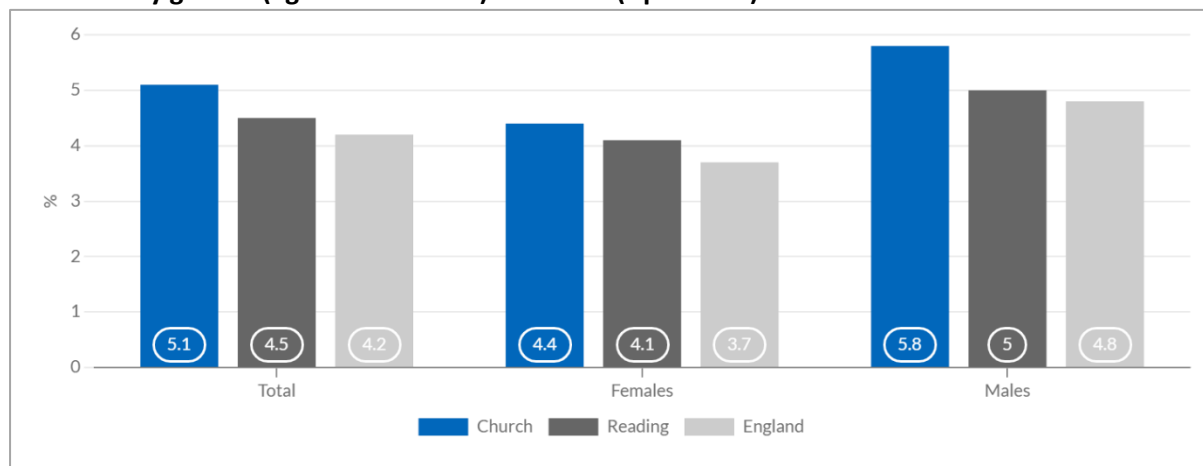
Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

### Financial support

At any point in time, and for many different reasons, someone may be working or not working, employed or unemployed. The claimant count looks at the number of people claiming benefit principally for the reason of being unemployed. In April 2025, 400 people aged 16 and over in Church were claiming financial support as a result of being unemployed – 175 were females and 225 were males. Overall, 5.1% of people in Church were claiming financial support compared with 4.5% in Reading and 4.2% in England.

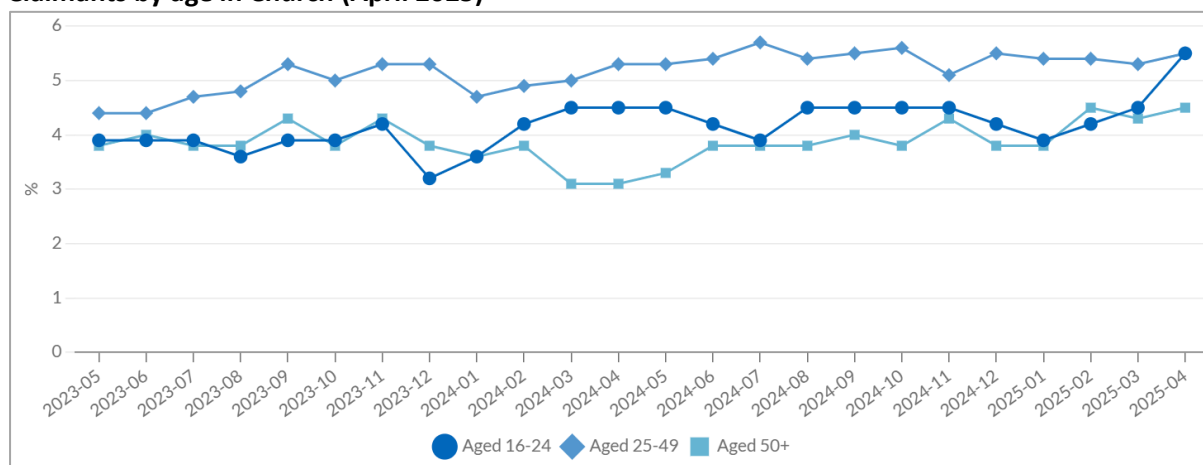
Over the past two years, the proportion of claimants aged 16-24 in Church has increased from 3.9% to 5.5%, from 4.4% to 5.5% among 25-49 year olds, and from 3.8% to 4.5% among people aged 50 and over.

### Claimants by gender (aged 16 and over) in Church (April 2025)



Source: Office for National Statistics ([Claimant Count](#))

### Claimants by age in Church (April 2025)



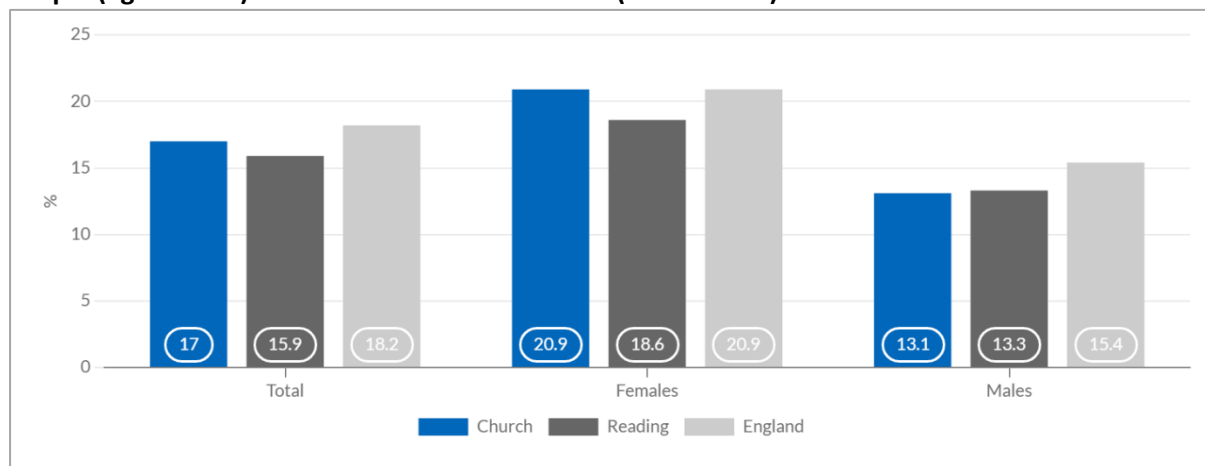
Source: Office for National Statistics ([Claimant Count](#))

Universal Credit is a single payment for each household to help with living costs for those on a low income or out of work. In March 2025, 1,630 people aged 16-65 in Church were claiming Universal Credit – 994 were females and 631 were males.

Over the past two years, the proportion of people aged 16-24 in Church claiming Universal Credit has increased slightly from 3.2% to 3.4%, from 21.5% to 29.0% among 25-49 year olds, and from 17.7% to 22.5% among people aged 50 and over.

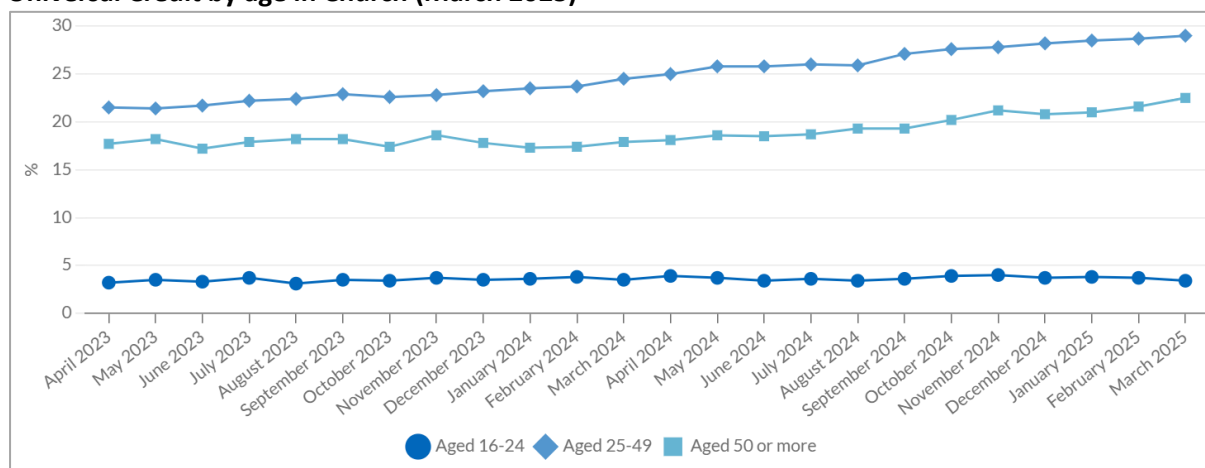
Overall, 4.1% of people aged 16-65 in Church had been on Universal Credit between 1-3 years compared with 4.2% in Reading and 4.9% in England, whilst 7.9% had been on Universal Credit for over three years compared with 7.0% in Reading and 8.0% in England.

### People (aged 16-65) on Universal Credit in Church (March 2025)



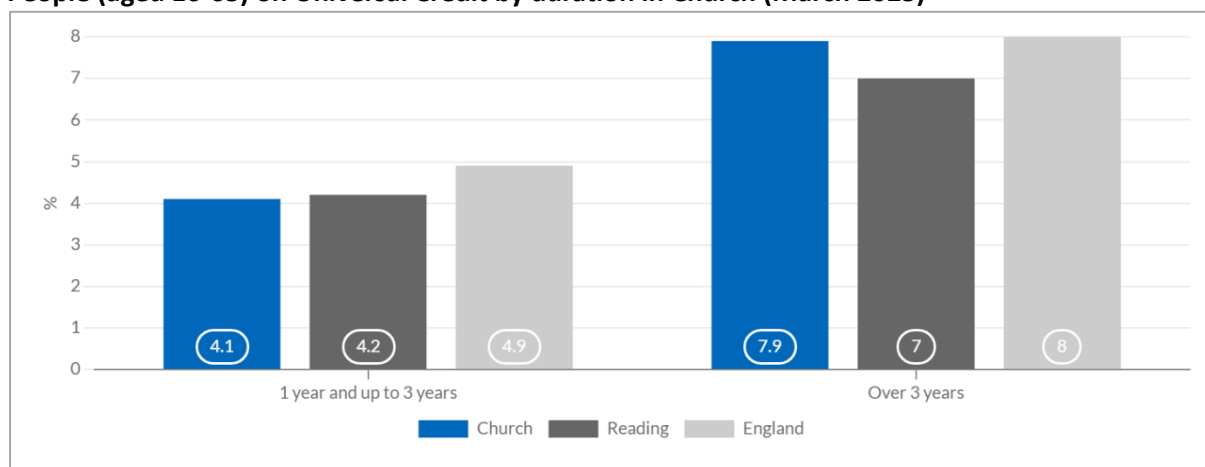
Source: Department for Work and Pensions ([Universal Credit](#))

### Universal Credit by age in Church (March 2025)



Source: Department for Work and Pensions ([Universal Credit](#))

### People (aged 16-65) on Universal Credit by duration in Church (March 2025)



Source: Department for Work and Pensions ([Universal Credit](#))



## Education

Improving education and skills are central to promoting life-long learning opportunities and enhancing individual development, as well as employability. Good quality education remains one of the key drivers in reducing health inequalities – differences in health outcomes between people.

One quarter (24.9%) of the population of Church were schoolchildren and full-time students (2,835 people) compared with 23.5% in Reading and 20.4% in England in 2021. Excluding schoolchildren aged 5-15, 8.6% of adults aged 16 and over in Church were in full-time education compared with 11.3% in Reading and 7.7% in England. Apart from 16-17 year olds, participation in education was lower in Church among the different age groups. For instance, one half (50.1%) of adults aged 18-20 in Church were full-time students compared with 74.8% in Reading and 59.5% in England.

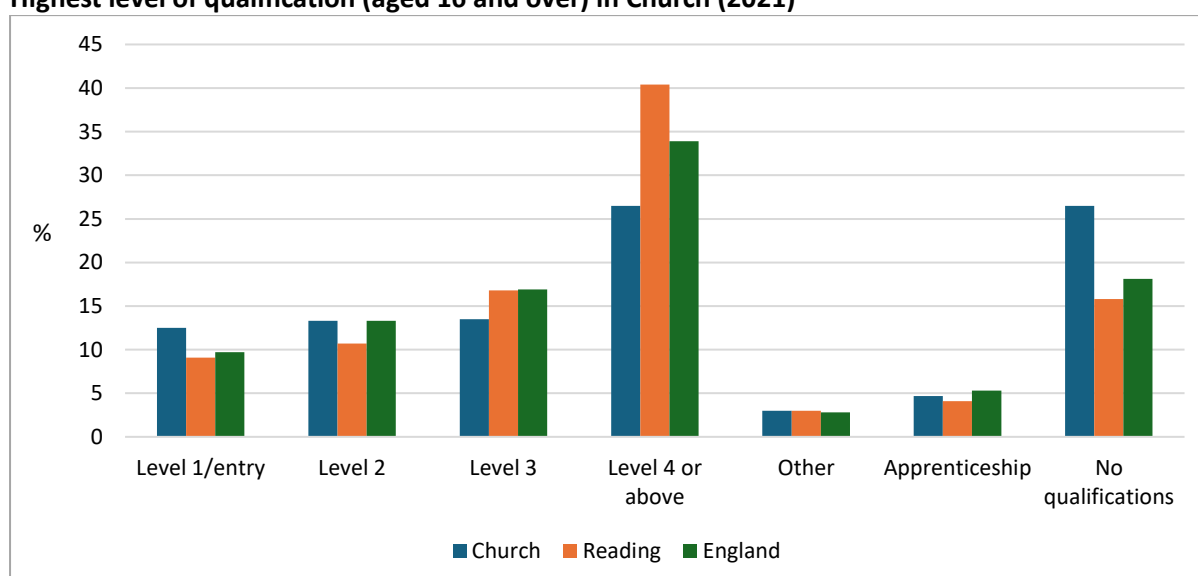
### Full-time students in Church (2021)

Age	Church		Reading	England
	Number	%	%	%
16-17	343	94.8	93.2	93.0
18-20	234	50.1	74.8	59.5
21-24	124	19.4	35.6	24.8
25-29	31	3.7	6.3	5.5
30 and over	71	1.0	1.1	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>803</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>7.7</b>

Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

In Church, people aged 16 and over were more likely to have Level 1 or Level 2 qualifications (1-4 or 5 or more GCSEs at A\*-C or grade 9-4) compared with Reading, whilst they were less likely to have Level 3 qualifications (2 or more A levels) or Level 4 qualifications (degree or above). More than 1 in 4 people in Church (26.5%) had no formal qualifications (2,481 people) compared with 15.8% in Reading and 18.1% in England.

### Highest level of qualification (aged 16 and over) in Church (2021)



Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

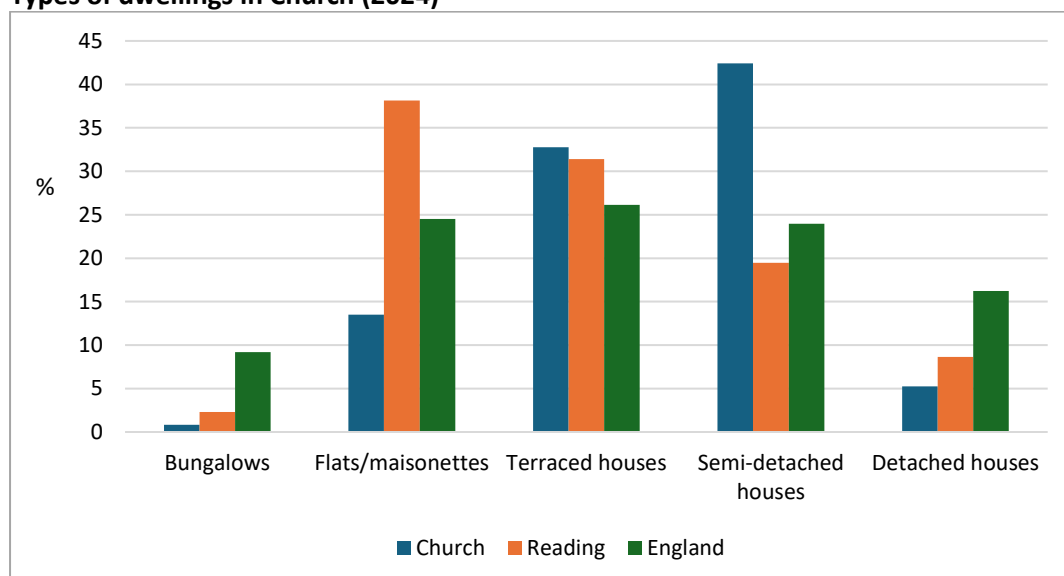
## How we live

The health and wellbeing of people is influenced by many important factors. The types and quality of the houses in which people live, and the safety of the area in which people's everyday lives are lived and experienced, are some of the key drivers of these outcomes. This section of the profile explores how the people of Church live and includes a range of information about housing and crime.

### Housing

Information on housing and households allows us to identify areas where people may be at risk of social exclusion, due to the type and condition of their housing or their household structure. There were an estimated 3,630 properties in Church in 2024. One third of properties (32.8%) were terraced houses, whilst a further 13.5% were flats or maisonettes. 42.4% were semi-detached properties.

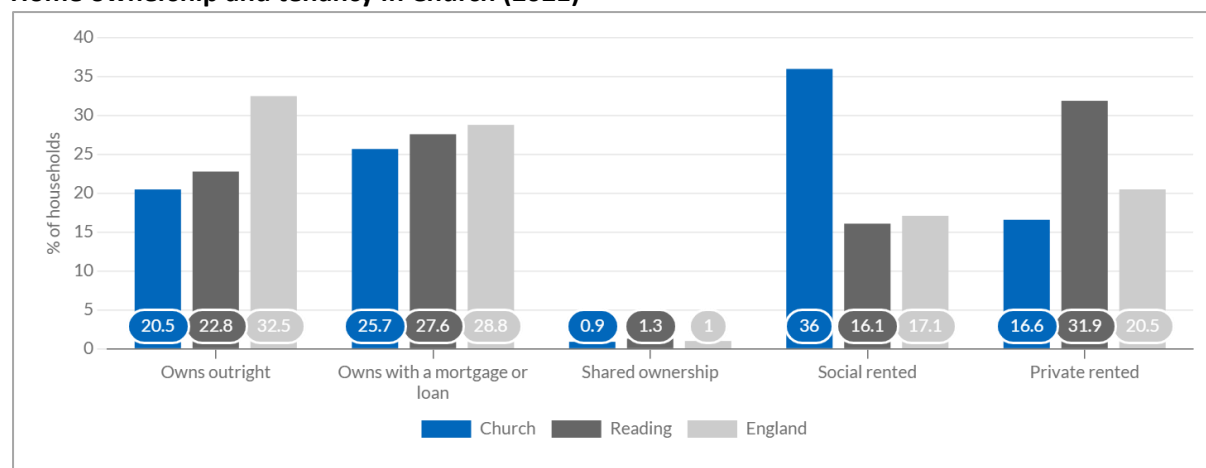
#### Types of dwellings in Church (2024)



Source: Valuation Office Agency ([Council Tax Statistics](#))

Based on the 2021 Census, 20.5% of households in Church owned their accommodation outright. Over half of households (52.6%) lived in rented accommodation, split between social and private rented accommodation compared with 48.0% in Reading and 37.6% in England.

#### Home ownership and tenancy in Church (2021)



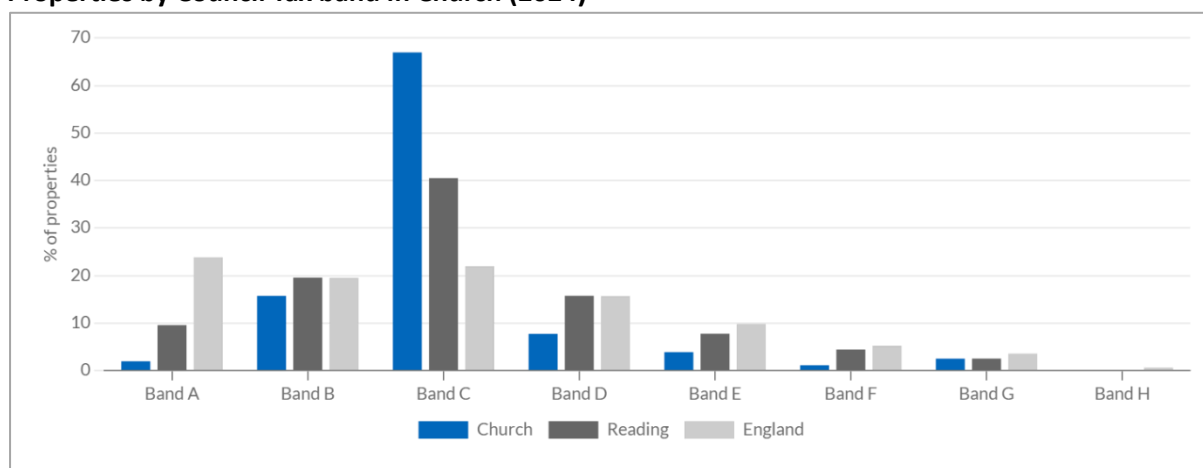
Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

## Council Tax

Council Tax was first introduced in 1993. The tax uses the relative value of homes to determine each household's contribution, with a higher level of tax being charged for homes in a higher band, with band A being the lowest and H being the highest.

In Church in 2024, the majority of properties (66.9%) were in Council Tax Band C (2,430 properties). This compares with 40.5% in Reading and 21.9% in England. 3.6% of properties were in the three highest Council Tax Bands (F-H) compared with 7.0% in Reading and 9.3% in England.

### Properties by Council Tax band in Church (2024)



Source: Valuation Office Agency ([Council Tax Statistics](#))

## Overcrowding

Between one and two households in Church (14.4%) were overcrowded in 2021, that is, had fewer rooms than required for everyone living in the accommodation. In Reading it was 10.1% and 6.4% in England. In regard to the numbers of bedrooms available, 12.0% of households in Church were overcrowded compared with 7.1% in Reading and 4.4% in England.

### Household overcrowding in Church (2021)

Occupancy	Church		Reading	England
	Number	%	%	%
<b>Rooms</b>				
Under-occupied	2,346	55.7	62.0	72.0
Ideal number	1,257	29.9	28.0	21.5
Overcrowded	607	14.4	10.1	6.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,210</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Bedrooms</b>				
Under-occupied	2,219	52.7	57.5	68.8
Ideal number	1,486	35.3	35.5	26.8
Overcrowded	505	12.0	7.1	4.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,210</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

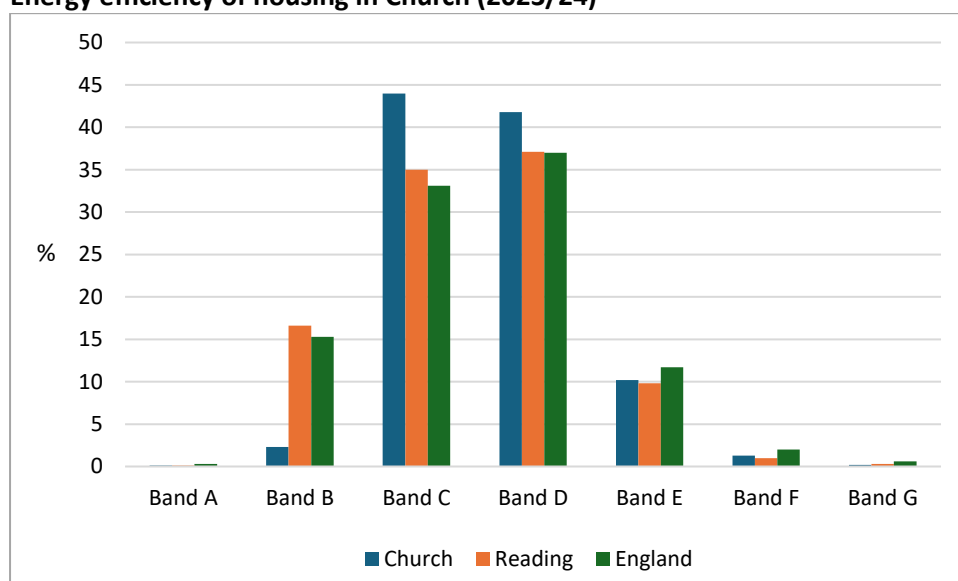
Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

## Quality of housing

Poor quality housing impacts people's health. Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) indicate the energy efficiency of dwellings and are based on information about a building's energy features, such as the building materials used, the heating systems, and insulation. EPCs typically range from 1-100, with Band A being the most efficient (92-100) and Band G (1-20) the least efficient.

Of the 911 properties assessed in Church in 2023/24, one property fell into Band A (although across the whole of Reading, there were only 53). The majority of assessed properties in Church had energy efficiency ratings of either Band C (69-80) or Band D (55-68), whilst 107 assessed properties (11.7%) had energy efficiency ratings of Bands E, F or G (Reading 11.1%, England 14.2%).

### Energy efficiency of housing in Church (2023/24)

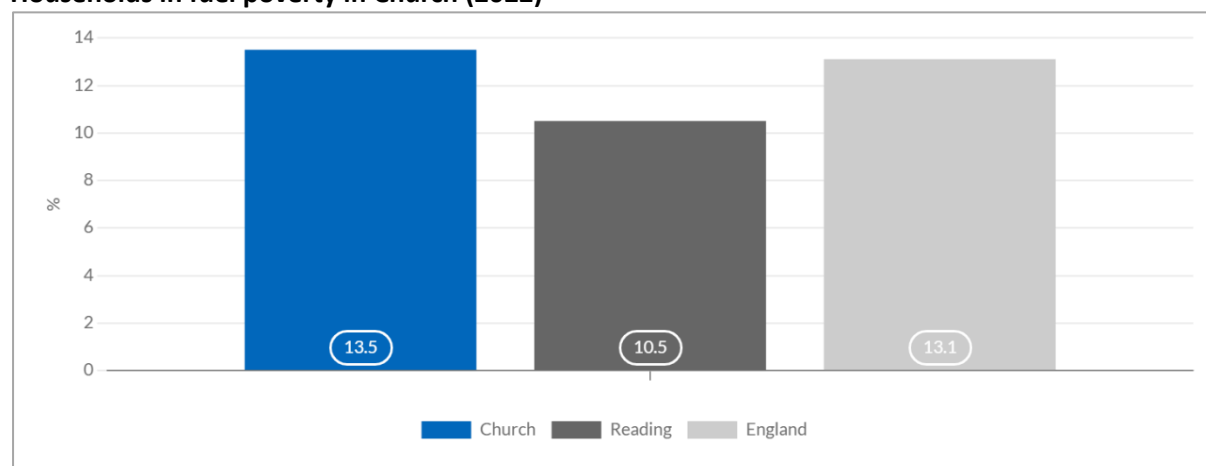


Source: Office for National Statistics ([Build a Custom Area Profile](#))

## Fuel poverty

Fuel poverty refers to a situation where a household is unable to afford adequate heating. Living in cold homes is linked to poor health outcomes and an increased risk of morbidity and mortality for all age groups. Some of the key drivers of fuel poverty include low income, poor energy efficiency, and energy prices. In 2022, 13.5% of households in Church were experiencing fuel poverty, which was 483 households. This compares with 10.5% of households in Reading and 13.1% in England.

### Households in fuel poverty in Church (2022)



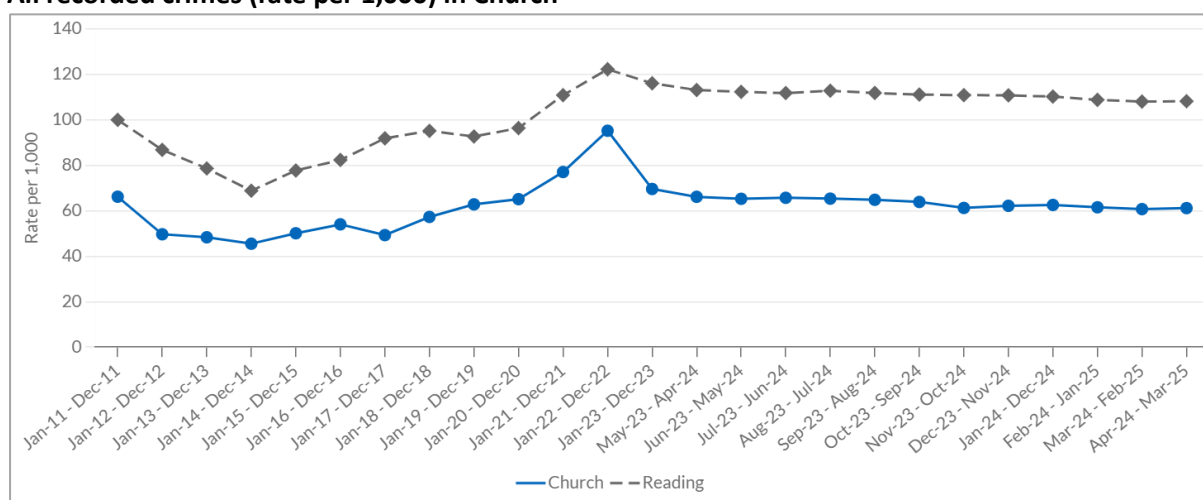
Source: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero ([Fuel Poverty](#))

## Crime

The absence of a safe and secure place in which to live can have a dramatic impact on people's physical and emotional health and wellbeing, along with impacting their sense of belonging to and willingness and ability to engage with their local community.

Between April 2024 and March 2025, there were 835 recorded crimes in Church. The rate of recorded crimes continues to fall in Church, and since 2011, the rate has fallen from 66.2 (per 1,000) to 61.2. The gap in the recorded crime rate between Church and Reading has changed little over the past two years.

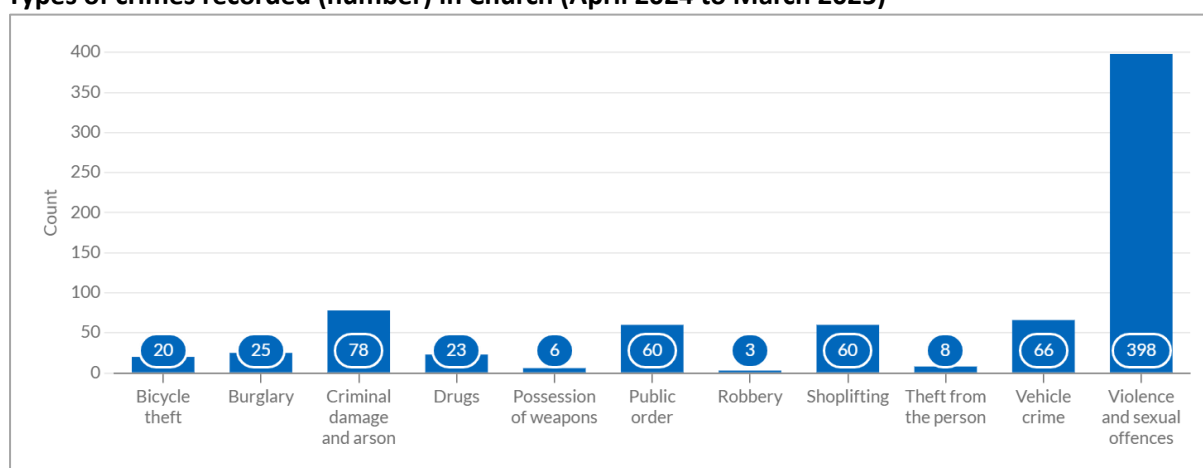
### All recorded crimes (rate per 1,000) in Church



Source: data.police.uk ([Crime Statistics](#))

The five most common types of crime committed in Church between April 2024 to March 2025 were violence and sexual offences (398 crimes), criminal damage and arson (78), vehicle crime (66), public order (60), shoplifting (60). Violence and sexual offences, followed by shoplifting, were the most common types of crimes recorded across Reading.

### Types of crimes recorded (number) in Church (April 2024 to March 2025)



Source: data.police.uk ([Crime Statistics](#))

Over the past two years (May 2023/April 2024 to April 2024/March 2025), rates of crime (per 1,000) have increased in Church among 3 of the 12 types of crime examined. Increases in crime rates were seen in shoplifting, vehicle crime, and anti-social behaviour. This compares with Reading where rates have increased among 4 of the 12 indicators.

**Trends in recorded crimes in Church (May 2023/April 2024 to April 2024/March 2025)**

Type of crime	Church	Reading
Bicycle theft	↓	↓
Burglary	↓	↓
Criminal damage and arson	↓	↓
Drugs	↓	↓
Possession of weapons	↓	↑
Public order	↓	↓
Robbery	↓	↑
Shoplifting	↑	↑
Theft from the person	↓	↑
Vehicle crime	↑	↓
Violence and sexual offences	↓	↓
Anti-social behaviour	↑	↓
<b>All crime</b>	↓	↓

Source: data.police.uk ([Crime Statistics](#))

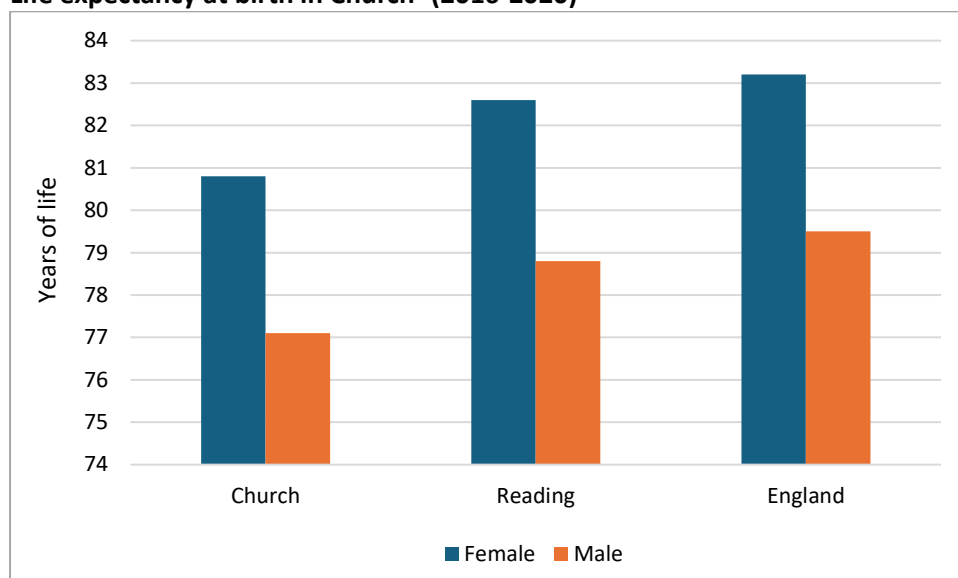
## Health and health needs

This section of the profile looks at the health of people in Church and provides a summary of a number of high level indicators which can be used to help understand local health and health needs.

### Life expectancy

Life expectancy is an estimate of the number of years someone may live and is an important measure of poor health and mortality. Life expectancy at birth in Church was 80.8 years for females and 77.1 years for males in 2016-2020, both of which were significantly lower than England.

#### Life expectancy at birth in Church<sup>1</sup> (2016-2020)



Source: Department of Health and Social Care ([Local health, public health data for small geographic areas](#))

<sup>1</sup> Based on the pre-2022 ward boundary for Church

### Deaths

Deaths under the age of 75, or premature mortality, is a good indicator of the overall health of the population. Over a five year period, 140 people died prematurely in Church, which is an average of 28 people a year. The all-cause mortality ratio in Church was significantly higher than England, although the ratios for premature deaths from cancer, circulatory disease, and deaths from causes considered preventable, were similar to England.

#### Premature mortality under the age of 75 in Church<sup>1</sup> (2016-2020)

Cause of death	Church		Reading SMR	England SMR
	Number	SMR <sup>2</sup>		
All causes	140	125.9	111.1	100
Cancer	47	116.3	109.9	100
Circulatory disease	30	134.0	108.6	100
Preventable	63	123.9	109.1	100

Source: Department of Health and Social Care ([Local health, public health data for small geographic areas](#))

<sup>1</sup> Based on the pre-2022 ward boundary for Church

<sup>2</sup> Standardised Mortality Ratio (England = 100) – an SMR higher than 100 indicates higher deaths compared to England



## Hospital admissions

Across the majority of child and adult indicators, emergency admissions to hospital in Church were similar to England. For young people aged 15-24 with injuries, and for alcohol (narrow), admissions to hospital were significantly lower in Church compared with England.

### Emergency hospital admissions in Church<sup>1</sup> (2016/17-2020/21)

Type of admission	Church	Reading	England
Emergency admissions (under 5s) <sup>2</sup>	137.6	109.2	140.7
Injuries (under 5) <sup>3</sup>	126.2	89.0	119.3
Injuries (under 15) <sup>3</sup>	86.2	76.2	92.0
Injuries (15-24) <sup>3</sup>	61.4	120.7	127.9
All causes (all ages)	100.5	97.5	100 <sup>4</sup>
Intentional self-harm (all ages)	89.4	123.1	100
Hip fractures (65+)	111.9	89.3	100
Alcohol – broad (all ages) <sup>5</sup>	94.4	93.4	100
Alcohol – narrow (all ages) <sup>5</sup>	80.6	84.2	100

Source: Department of Health and Social Care ([Local health, public health data for small geographic areas](#))

<sup>1</sup> Based on the pre-2022 ward boundary for Church

<sup>2</sup> Crude rate per 1,000

<sup>3</sup> Crude rate per 10,000

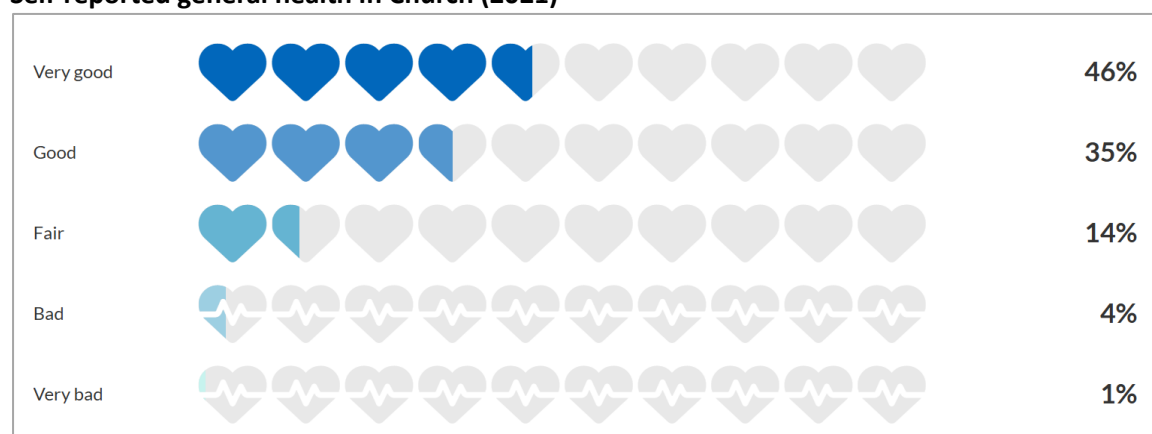
<sup>4</sup> Standardised Admission Ratio (England = 100) – an SAR higher than 100 indicates higher admissions compared to England

<sup>5</sup> Broad – primary or secondary diagnoses is for alcohol; Narrow – primary diagnosis is for alcohol

## General health

Just under half (46.1%) of people in Church reported that their health was very good, whilst a further 35.0% reported that their health was good, based on the 2021 Census. In total, more than 8 out of 10 people (81.1%) reported that their health was very good or good in Church (9,864 people) compared with 85.6% in Reading and 82.2% in England. In contrast, 5.0% (612 people) reported that their health was either bad or very bad in Church compared with 3.7% in Reading and 5.2% in England.

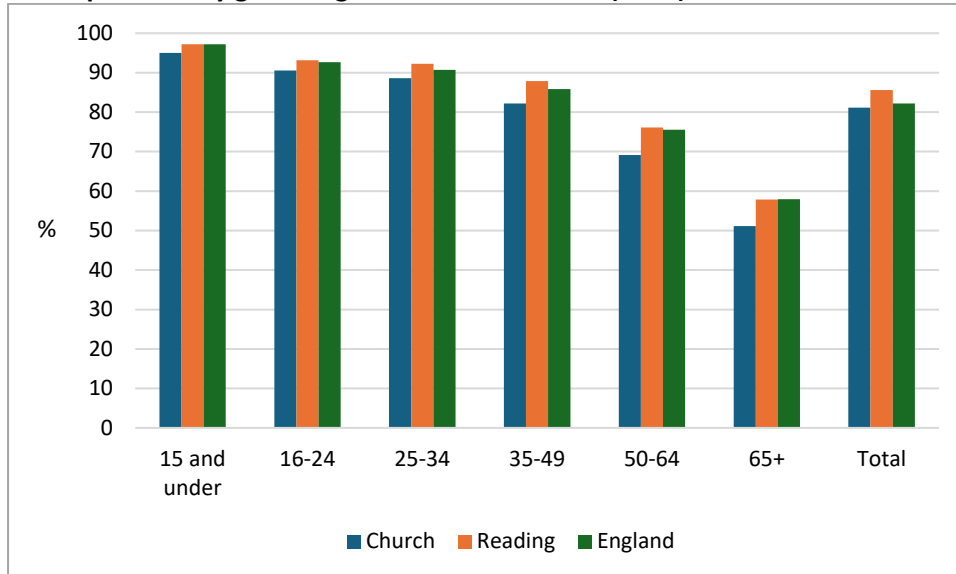
### Self-reported general health in Church (2021)



Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

Across all the different age groups in Church, the proportion of people who reported that their health was either very good or good was lower compared with Reading. Just over half of people aged 65 and over in Church (51.1%) reported that their health was either very good or good compared with Reading and England where it was 57.9% for both areas.

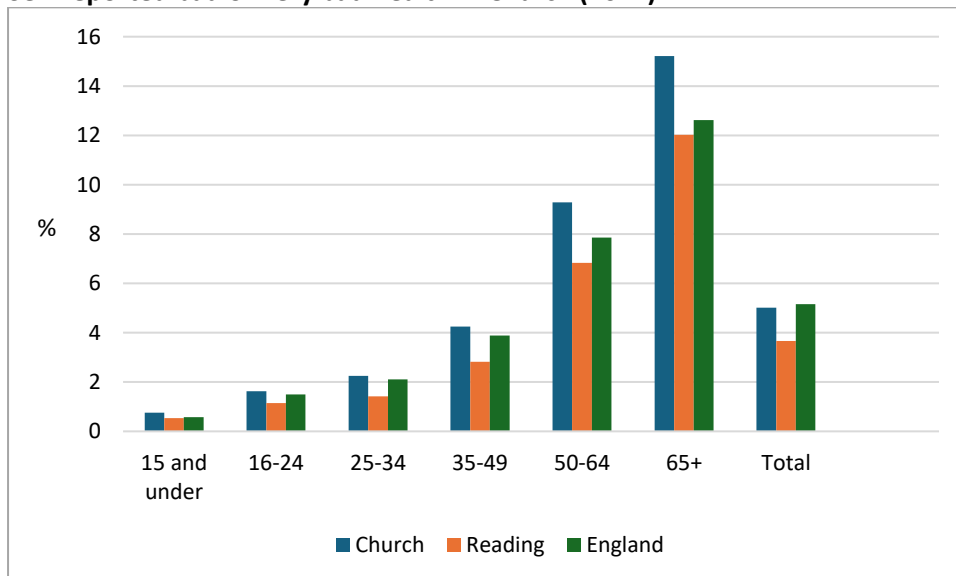
### Self-reported very good or good health in Church (2021)



Source: Office for National Statistics ([Create a Custom Dataset](#))

Levels of reported bad or very bad health were higher in Church across the different age groups compared with Reading. This was particularly the case among those aged 50-64 and those aged 65 and over.

### Self-reported bad or very bad health in Church (2021)



Source: Office for National Statistics ([Create a Custom Dataset](#))

### Disability

Based on the 2010 Equality Act, 17.0% of people in Church (2,068 people) were disabled compared with 13.8% in Reading and 17.3% in England in 2021. Of those disabled, the day-to-day activities of 844 people were limited a lot, whilst the day-to-day activities of 1,224 people were limited a little.

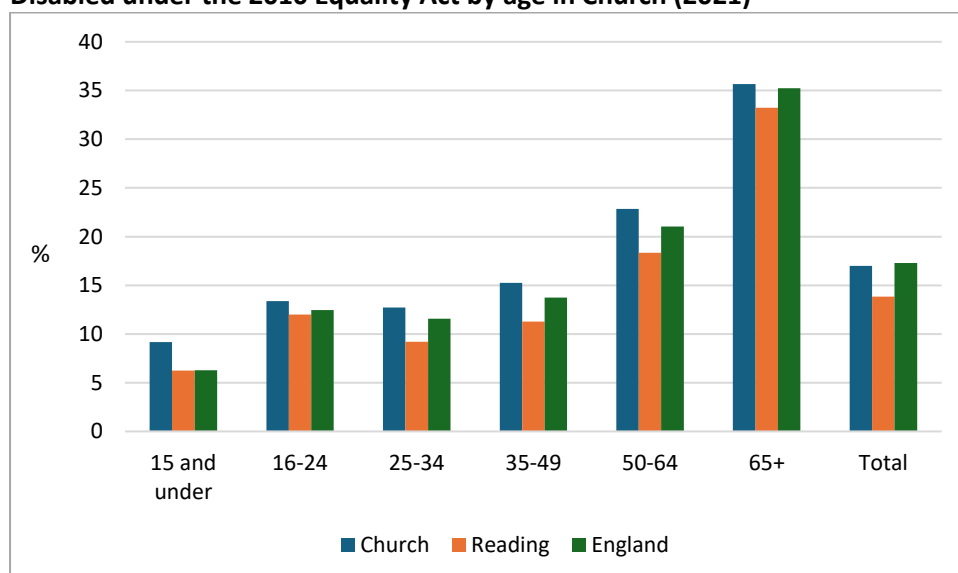
### Disabled under the 2010 Equality Act in Church (2021)



Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

Among the 2,068 people who were disabled in Church, levels of disability within the ward were higher than the proportions seen in Reading across all age groups.

### Disabled under the 2010 Equality Act by age in Church (2021)



Source: Office for National Statistics ([Create a Custom Dataset](#))

Whilst 17.0% of people in Church reported a disability, 83.0% did not. Among the 10,093 people who did not have a disability, 655 (6.5%) had a long term physical or mental health condition (although their day-to-day activities were not limited). This compared with 7.5% in Reading and 8.3% in England.

## Chronic diseases

Information about a range of common chronic diseases such as asthma, diabetes, and coronary heart disease are collected by GPs on QOF Registers (Quality and Outcomes Framework). This information can be used to help understand and provide insights into the types of chronic conditions which people are likely to be experiencing. In Reading, this information is collected on the Connected Care System Insights tool.

In Church, the most common chronic condition recorded by GPs was depression, followed by hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and chronic kidney disease. In Reading, depression, rather than hypertension, was the most common condition recorded.

### Chronic conditions recorded<sup>1</sup> on primary care registers in Church (June 2025)

Condition	Church		Reading
	Number	%	%
Depression	1,882	11.9	10.7
Hypertension	1,825	11.5	11.9
Diabetes	990	6.2	5.6
Asthma	744	4.7	4.7
Chronic kidney disease	415	2.6	2.7
Cancer	352	2.2	2.5
Coronary heart disease	301	1.9	1.7
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	214	1.3	1.1
Atrial fibrillation	182	1.1	1.4
Stroke/transient ischaemic attack	161	1.0	1.2
Heart failure	156	1.0	0.9
Mental Health	152	1.0	1.0
Learning Disability	113	0.7	0.5
Epilepsy	98	0.6	0.5
Rheumatoid arthritis	89	0.6	0.5
Dementia	71	0.4	0.6
Peripheral arterial disease	53	0.3	0.3

Source: Connected Care System Insights

<sup>1</sup> Not all conditions will be recorded on primary care registers

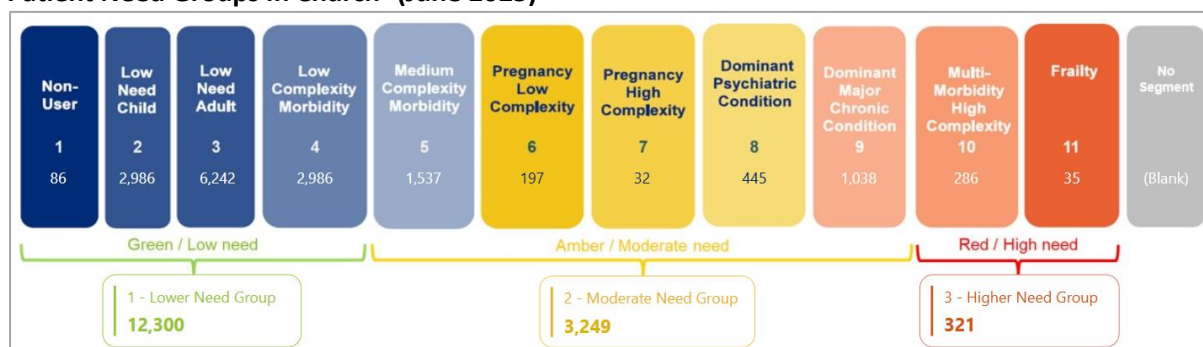
People in Church had an average of 1.2 chronic conditions, which was the same as Reading. The GP registers also showed that 11.9% of people in Church were current smokers compared with 11.3% in Reading, whilst 2.4% of people in the ward had medium or high levels of alcohol consumption, compared with 3.9% across Reading.

## Health needs

Connected Care provides health information about different groups or segments of people. Patient Need Groups, based on the [John Hopkins ACG Segmentation Model](#), classify people into 11 groups of need and can be used to help understand a population's health needs, develop clinical programming, understand patterns of care use and take targeted action to improve service use and costs.

In Church, 77.5% of people recorded on GP registers were classified into low need groups, 20.5% into moderate need groups, and 2.0% into high needs groups. In Reading, the corresponding proportions were 78.9%, 19.0% and 2.0%.

## Patient Need Groups in Church<sup>1</sup> (June 2025)



Source: Connected Care System Insights

<sup>1</sup> The size of GP population registers and those resident in an area often differ

Patient Need Groups for different chronic conditions in Church are shown below. Using asthma as an example, the table shows that 2.3% of patients with low need had asthma, 12.2% with moderate need had asthma, whilst 18.4% with high need had asthma. The overall prevalence of asthma recorded on GP registers in Church was 4.7%. The table helps highlight how need varies between different types of chronic conditions.

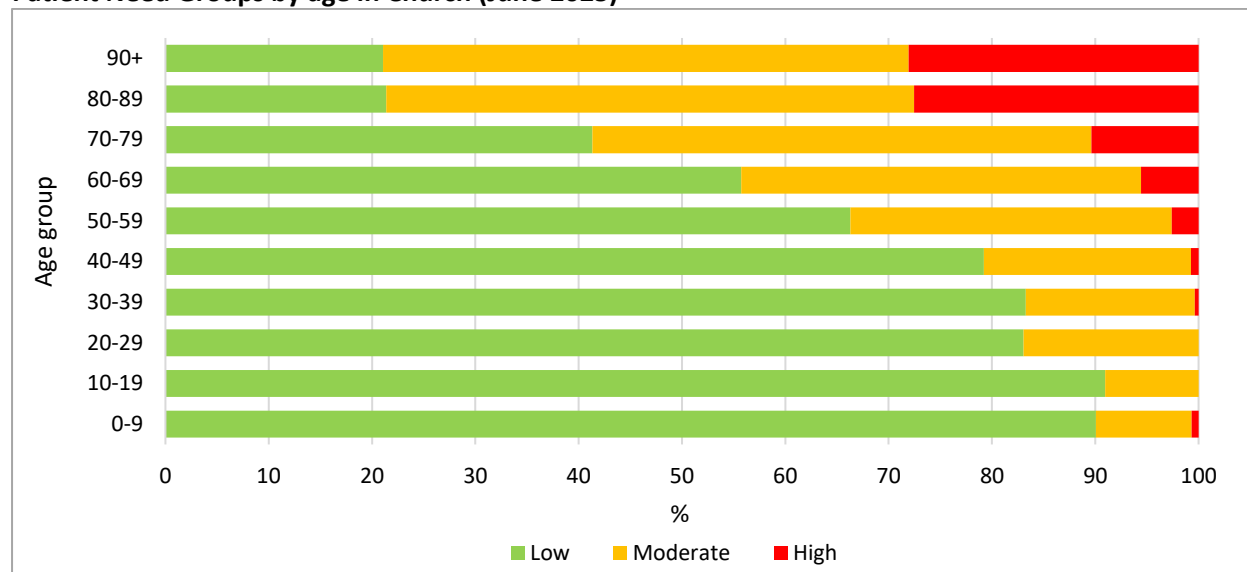
## Patient Need Groups and chronic conditions recorded on primary care registers in Church (June 2025)

Condition	Patient Need Group			Population %
	Low	Moderate	High	
Asthma	2.3%	12.2%	18.4%	4.7%
Atrial fibrillation	0.2%	3.5%	15.6%	1.1%
Cancer	0.6%	5.9%	24.6%	2.2%
Chronic kidney disease	0.5%	7.8%	31.5%	2.6%
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	0.1%	3.8%	21.5%	1.3%
Coronary heart disease	0.3%	5.5%	27.4%	1.9%
Dementia	0.0%	1.0%	12.1%	0.5%
Depression	6.5%	29.5%	37.1%	11.9%
Diabetes	2.0%	19.5%	33.6%	6.2%
Epilepsy	0.2%	1.7%	4.0%	0.6%
Heart failure	0.1%	3.0%	15.0%	1.0%
Hypertension	6.0%	27.3%	60.4%	11.5%
Learning Disability	0.3%	2.1%	1.9%	0.7%
Mental Health	0.0%	3.6%	7.8%	0.9%
Peripheral arterial disease	0.0%	0.8%	4.4%	0.3%
Rheumatoid arthritis	0.1%	2.1%	3.4%	0.6%
Stroke/transient ischaemic attack	0.2%	2.2%	19.3%	1.0%

Source: Connected Care System Insights

Patient need, as expected, increases with age. Among people aged under 20 in Church, for instance, over 90% were in low Patient Need Groups whilst less than 1% were in high need groups. On the other hand, 10.4% of 70-79 year olds were in high need groups, 27.5% of 80-89 year olds were in high need groups, whilst 28.1% of patients aged 90 and over were in high need groups.

### Patient Need Groups by age in Church (June 2025)



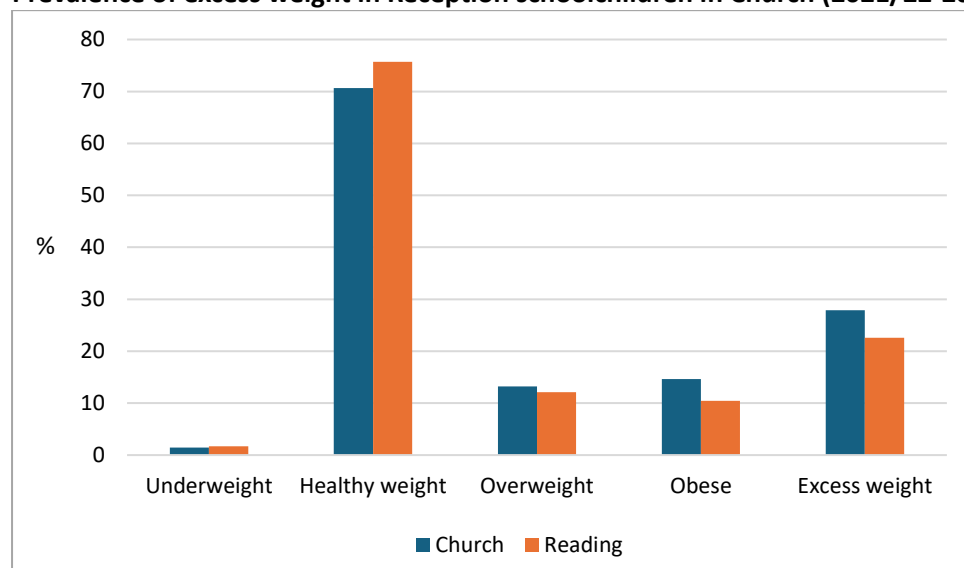
Source: Connected Care System Insights

### Obesity and physical activity

The rise of childhood obesity and the implications of obesity persisting into adulthood are concerning. The health consequences of childhood obesity include increased blood lipids, glucose intolerance, Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, increases in liver enzymes associated with fatty liver, exacerbation of conditions such as asthma and psychological problems such as social isolation, low self-esteem, teasing and bullying.

Among Reception schoolchildren aged 4-5 in Church, 70.7% were recorded as having a healthy weight based on the annual National Child Measurement Programme. In Reading, it was 75.7%. In total, 27.9% of Reception schoolchildren in Church were recorded as being either overweight or obese ('excess weight') compared with 22.6% in Reading.

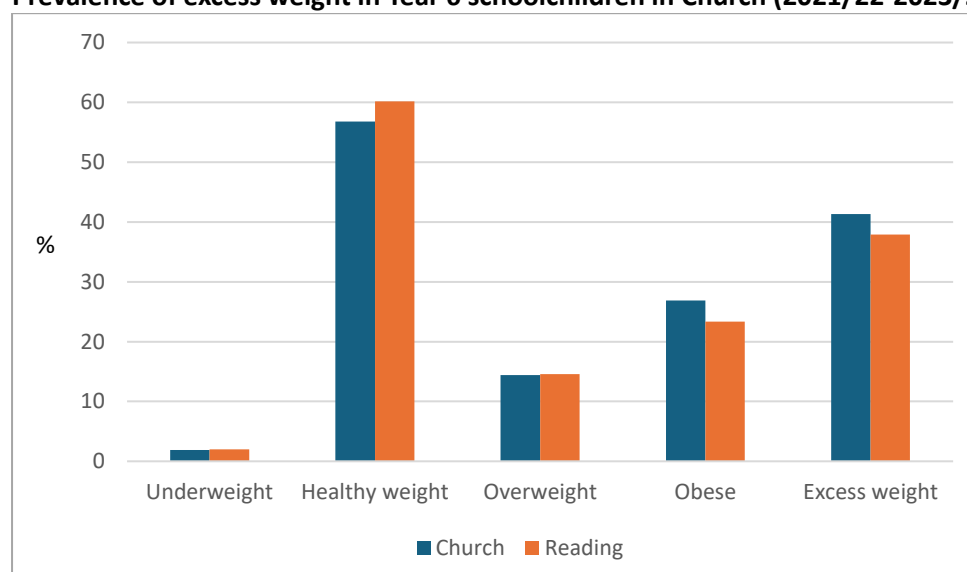
### Prevalence of excess weight in Reception schoolchildren in Church (2021/22-2023/24)



Source: Public Health Intelligence Team, Reading Borough Council

Among Year 6 schoolchildren aged 10-11 in Church, 56.8% were recorded as having a healthy weight compared with 60.1% in Reading. In regard to excess weight, 41.3% of Year 6 schoolchildren in Church were recorded as being either overweight or obese compared with 37.9% in Reading.

#### Prevalence of excess weight in Year 6 schoolchildren in Church (2021/22-2023/24)



Source: Public Health Intelligence Team, Reading Borough Council

Based on figures for Reading ([Obesity, Physical Activity and Nutrition](#)), there were an estimated 3,168 adults aged 18 and over in Church who were overweight, and a further 2,304 who were obese in 2023/24. In total, 5,472 adults were estimated to be either overweight or obese in Church, which is 6 out of 10 adults.

Physical inactivity is the 4th leading risk factor for mortality in the world accounting for 6% of deaths. People who have a physically active lifestyle have a 20-35% lower risk of cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease and stroke compared to those who have a sedentary lifestyle. Regular physical activity is also associated with a reduced risk of diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis, colon and breast cancer, and with improved mental health. In older adults physical activity is associated with increased functional capacities.

Based on figures for Reading ([Obesity, Physical Activity and Nutrition](#)), there were an estimated 6,354 adults aged 19 and over in Church who were physically active (around 73%), whilst 1,497 were estimated to be inactive (around 17%) in 2023/24.

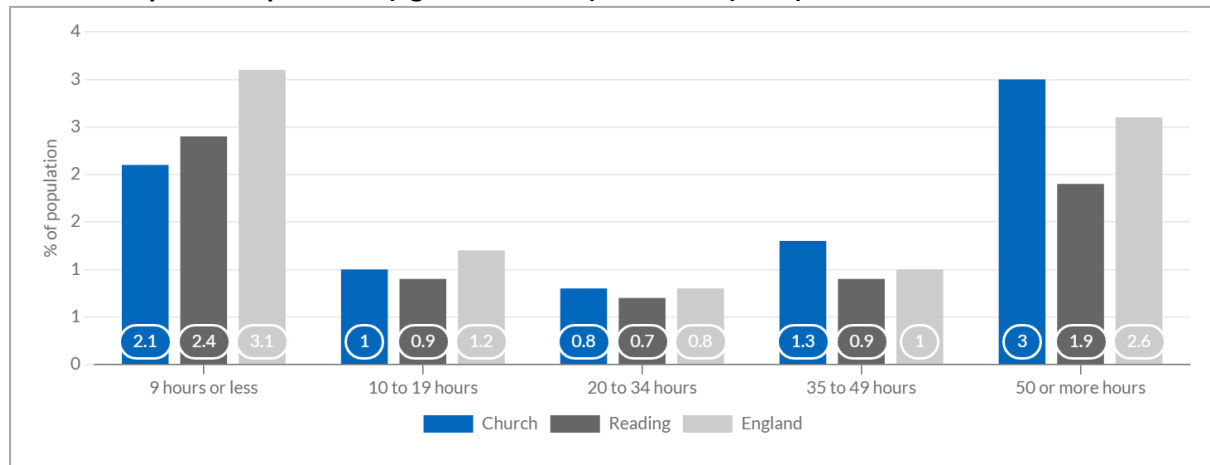
#### Provision of unpaid care

A carer is anyone, including children and adults, who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid. Unpaid carers who provide high levels of care for sick, or disabled relatives and friends, are more than twice as likely to suffer from poor health compared to people without caring responsibilities.

In Church, 937 people aged 5 and over (8.2%) provided unpaid care each week to family and friends in 2021 compared with 6.7% in Reading and 8.8% in England. People in Church were most likely to provide 50 hours or more of unpaid care a week.



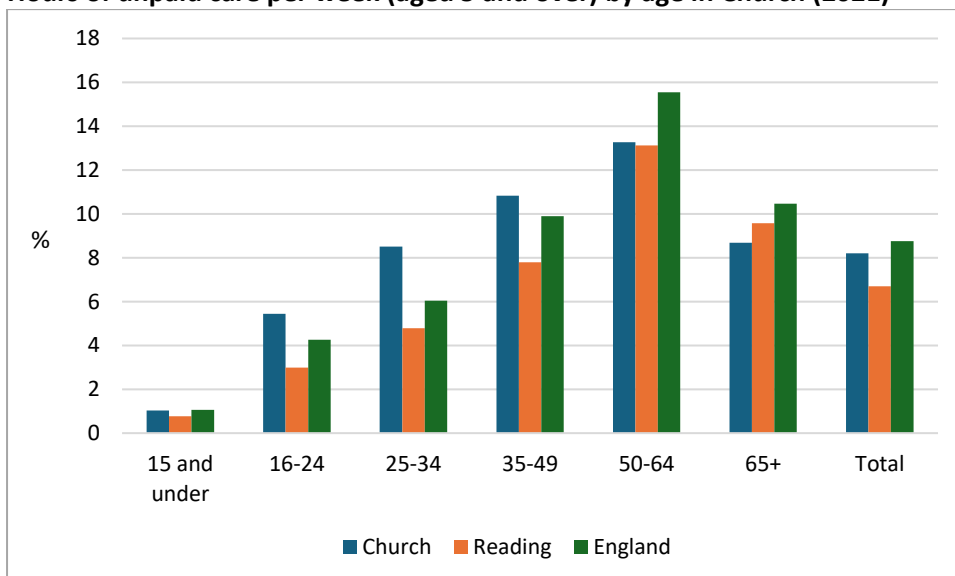
### Hours of unpaid care per week (aged 5 and over) in Church (2021)



Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

Among people who provided unpaid care to family and friends each week in Church, care was most likely to be provided by people aged 50-64 (13.3%). A total of 21 children aged 15 and under provided care each week across the ward (1.0%), whilst among older adults aged 65 and over, 126 (8.7%) provided care.

### Hours of unpaid care per week (aged 5 and over) by age in Church (2021)



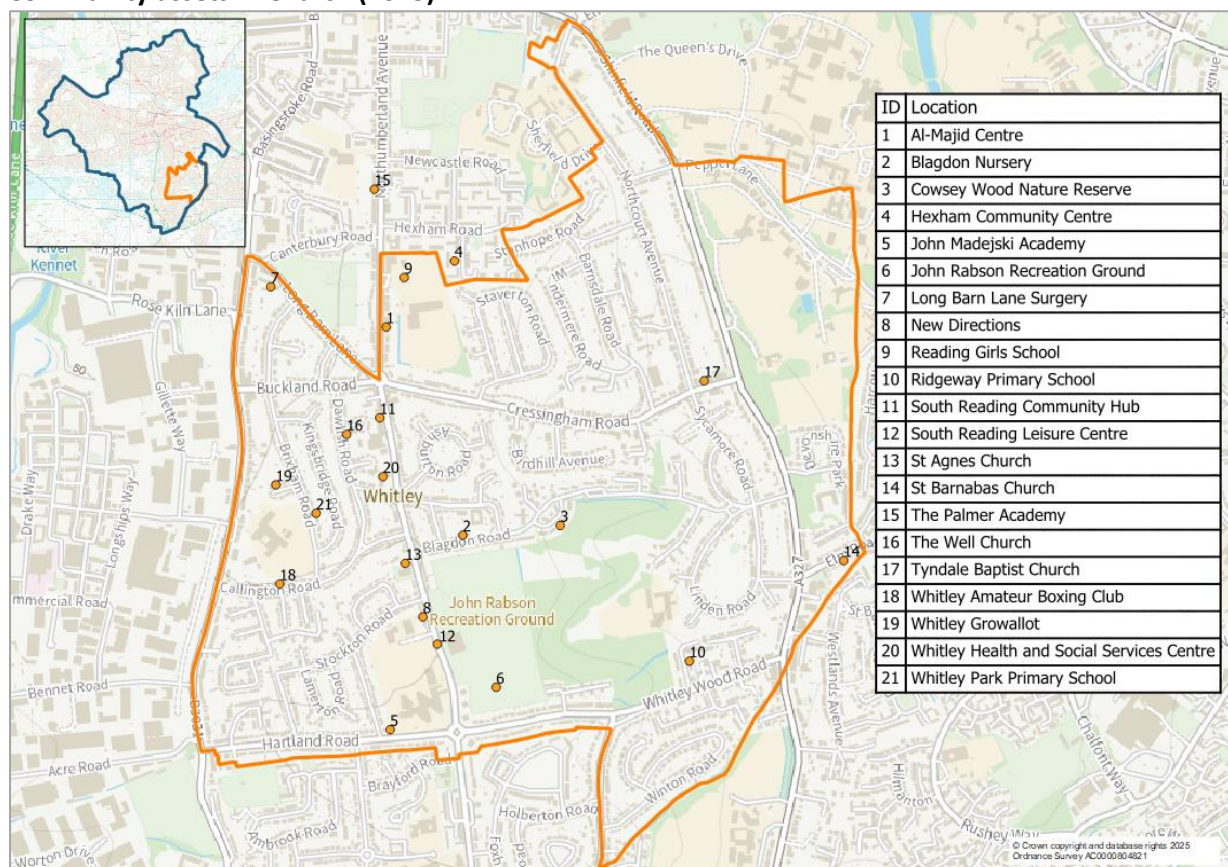
Source: Office for National Statistics ([NOMIS](#))

## Community assets

The environments in which people live and work impact their physical and mental wellbeing in both positive and negative ways. Our environments can encourage or discourage how we interact with other people, influence people's health risk behaviours like diet and physical activity, can impact our motivation to act, as well as influencing our moods.

A list of key community assets in Church are shown in the map below.

### Community assets in Church (2025)



Source: Public Health Intelligence Team, Reading Borough Council

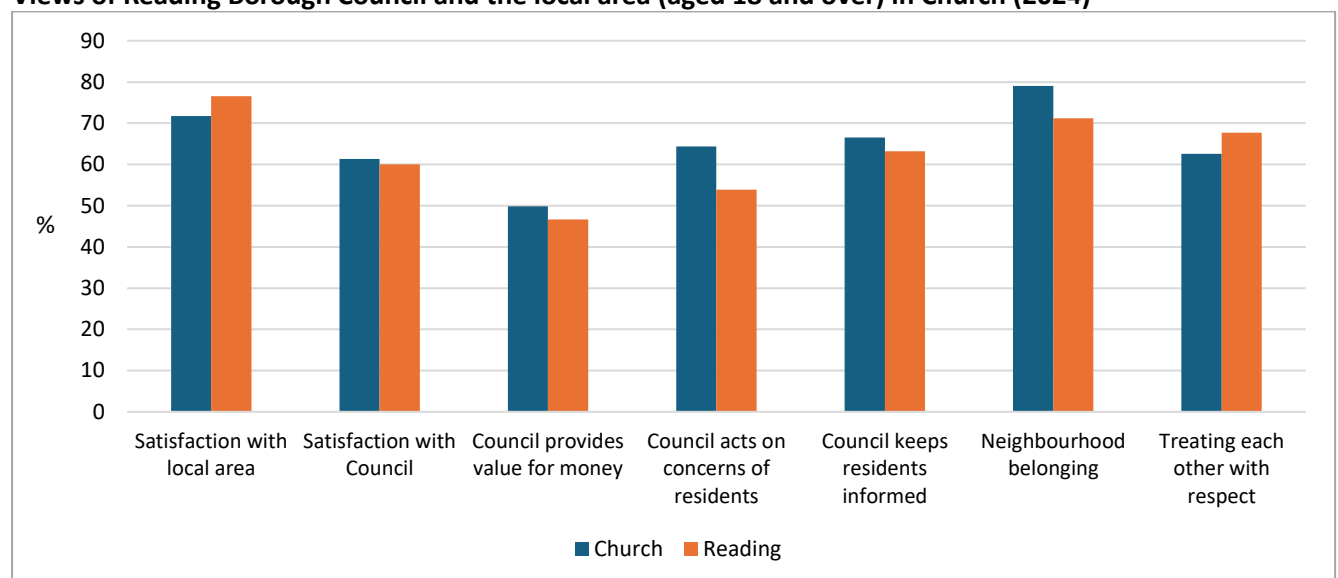
## Voices, activities, and aspirations

Listening to the voice of the community is important. Improvements in health and wellbeing, targeting of services, increased engagement with marginalised groups, and an increased sense of being 'listened to' rather than being 'done to' can be achieved and improved by actively listening to people and involving them in decisions that affect their lives. This section of the profile explores the many voices of people in Church and highlights some of the day-to-day activities and aspirations that make up the daily lived experiences of local people.

### Opportunities

The 2024 Residents Survey found that 7 out of 10 people (71.7%) aged 18 and over were satisfied with Church as a place to live, compared with 76.5% for Reading overall. People living in Church tended to be relatively satisfied with the council (61.3%), whilst feelings of belonging to their neighbourhood were relatively high.

#### Views of Reading Borough Council and the local area (aged 18 and over) in Church (2024)



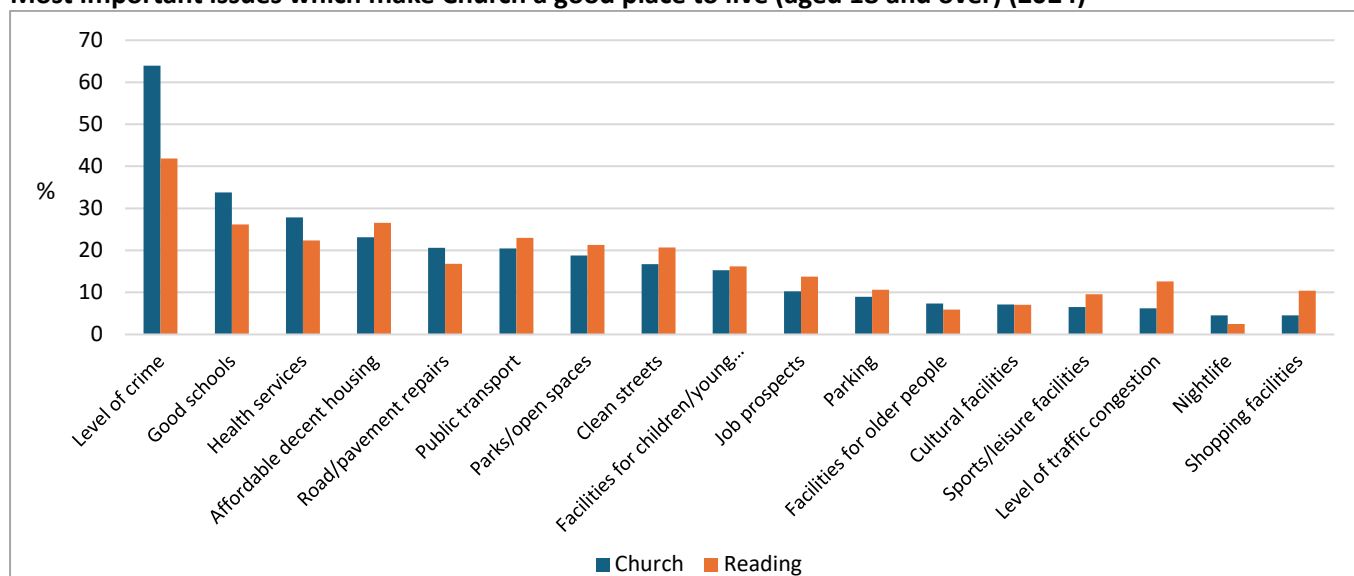
Source: 2024 Residents Survey, Reading Borough Council

The level of crime (63.9%), good schools (33.8%), and health services (27.9%) were the three most important issues given by residents for helping make Church a good place to live.

The three most important issues which need improving in Church were road and pavement repairs (43.0%), parking (29.7%), and the level of crime (27.0%).

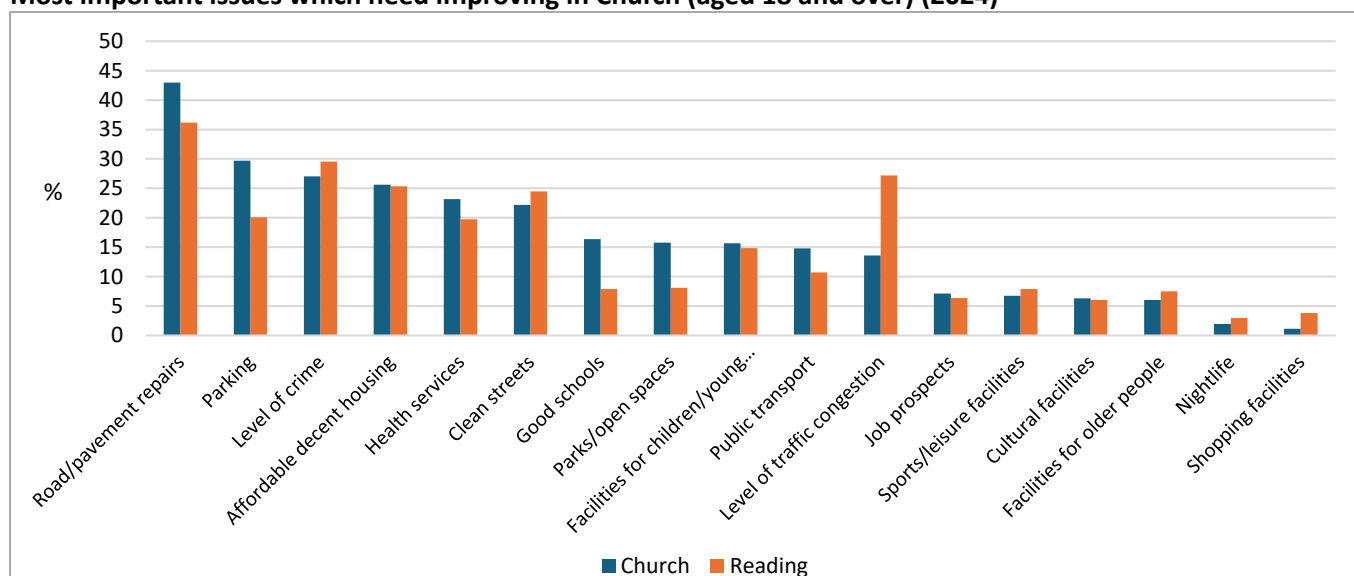
The Residents Survey highlights, in particular, the importance of crime as drivers of what makes Church both a good place to live in and also what needs improving most across the ward.

### Most important issues which make Church a good place to live (aged 18 and over) (2024)



Source: 2024 Residents Survey, Reading Borough Council

### Most important issues which need improving in Church (aged 18 and over) (2024)



Source: 2024 Residents Survey, Reading Borough Council

### Local action

People living in Church actively participate in a wide range of activities aimed at promoting engagement, increasing life skills, and giving people an opportunity to 'get up and do something'. Some of these activities are outlined below:

- **Reading Seeds** – Creative Lives, in partnership with Reading Borough Council, are providing opportunities for people to get involved in creative activities where they live and to enhance community engagement ([Creative Lives](#)). 19 of the 32 creative projects are based in the two priority wards of Church and Whitley.

As Adele Barnett-Ward, Reading Borough Council's Lead Councillor for Leisure and Culture, said:

"Creative activities play a crucial role in fostering community connections and individual wellbeing. The Seed Funding for Creative Activities initiative is a fantastic opportunity for local groups and businesses to bring people together through imaginative projects. The benefits to people this money will bring is just fantastic and I'm really looking forward to hearing back and seeing the difference this funding makes."

- **South Reading Community Information Ambassadors** – Information Ambassadors are residents who help the community, ensuring people are aware, understand, and up to speed on the information, services and activities important to their health and wellbeing. The Ambassadors provide a range of information to local people in Church and Whitley to help them participate in a range of activities. Some recent examples include:
  - cooking healthy on a budget
  - community walks
  - community health champions
  - free health checks
  - career hubs
  - communication skills for refugees
  - computer and coffee clubs
  - digital skills programmes
  - creative theatre
  - male mentors for fatherless boys
  - nature nurture econet at the Cowsey
  - therapeutic gardening
  - dance, sweat, repeat
  - community parent and carer support group
- **Whitley Researchers** – The Whitley Researchers is a partnership between Whitley Community Development Association, local residents (in Church and Whitley) and the University of Reading. The programme involves local residents in conducting their own research, voicing their own needs and devising solutions to local issues ([Whitley Researchers](#)). Examples of work include:
  - A Welcome Home
  - Aspiration in Whitley
  - Way to Health
  - Working better with Whitley
  - Food4families

### **A different view**

Top down assumptions about local communities, particularly those that are most disadvantaged, often miss the more relevant issues that impact on residents. Two examples from the Whitley community highlight the views of local people.

- **Aspirations in Whitley** – The [Aspiration in Whitley](#) project (2018) explored the aspirations of young people in the Whitley community (Church and Whitley) and considered the barriers they faced in realising their hopes and ambitions. It also explored how schools, families and the wider community could work better together to help young people reach their potential

and realise their aspirations. The report found widespread aspirations among young people and their parents, alongside a strong community spirit and a willingness to tackle local issues together.

As one community participant said:

“...Whitley, the community, has so much potential, so many people who want to make a difference, that anything is possible. People working together, people believing in each other and themselves is what will make the greatest difference. I think that is on the way to happening”.

- **Levelling up South Reading: A Resident Engagement Project (2024)** – The Engagement Project ([Reading Welfare Rights](#)) explored barriers to work among people aged 16 and over in the wards of Church and Whitley. Barriers to work were categorised into four themes: health, discrimination, education, and logistical barriers. The main recommendations of the work included:
  - **Health** – courses to help with confidence and self-esteem in the workplace; support for those on disability benefits to get into work if able
  - **Language and culture** – transitional courses for those new to the country and South Reading; more ESOL classes locally; protect residents from being discriminated against by employers
  - **Education and experience** – run careers and volunteering fairs in South Reading outside of working hours; hold training for residents in CV writing, interview skills and job searching
  - **Care** – promote affordable, wrap-around childcare for parents wanting to get back into work; support young carers into the workplace
  - **Geography and transport** – invest in a genuine local economy to create jobs in South Reading; investigate cheaper transport options for job seekers to central Reading

The Project found that many residents in South Reading felt out of touch with the Council and what they do, and highlighted the importance of meeting local people where they were and to recognise that Reading is not a ‘one size fits all town’. South Reading was seen as a special place, a close-knit community, with diversity as its strength. A key theme which emerged from the Project was that people were tired of the stereotypes about Church and Whitley, which they feel are unfair. As one person noted:

“South Reading has a lot to be proud of. It benefits from a lot of investment which doesn’t gain traction because we don’t treat people as individuals, and mark the neighbourhood as “deprived” – maybe we should reverse that, focus on the strengths and build on those and the good news stories”.