

# Gravesham Community Profile

## 1. Introduction

To effectively plan and run our services, it is essential the council fully understands the socio-demographic needs of the borough. The findings from this Community Profile ultimately help us establish an evidence base to tailor our corporate priorities and better target our resources when designing interventions, and in our role of community representatives as we lobby for improved services and resources for Gravesham.

### What is a Community Profile?

For Gravesham Borough Council, the Community Profile acts as a key marker in our Equalities agenda. With a Corporate Plan that commits us to “strengthen Gravesham’s social fabric”, undertaking such a study helps identify where inequality exists and to overcome social challenges to:

- stop unlawful discrimination.
- improve equal opportunities; and
- encourage good relationships.

More broadly, a Community Profile delivers in a number of areas:

- makes publicly available a summary of data and information on the quality of life for local residents
- helps public service providers identify both where improvement is most needed and in the design of targeted service interventions for the local community; and
- enables government and wider regulators to concentrate strategically on those areas that most need support.

## 2. How is a Community Profile compiled?

In reviewing this Community Profile, it is worth considering:

- content is sourced through the research and analysis of key material from a wide range of stakeholders across central and local government, partner organisations and a series of independent bodies, including:
  - Office for National Statistics (ONS)
  - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
  - Kent County Council (KCC)
  - Valuation Office Agency (VOA).
- it is a snapshot of the borough at the time of writing. Wherever possible the latest available data and statistics have been used.

- profiling is a continuous process as the council seeks to identify any growing trends within the various sectors of the community. The information outlined in this Community Profile is therefore reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the latest and most accurate data is analysed.
- in presenting Gravesham's position within Kent, this refers to the council comparatively against all 12 Kent district councils.

### 3. Overview

Gravesham Borough is located in the north of Kent. It is approximately 32 kilometres (20 miles) east of London and covers an area of 105 square kilometres (40 square miles), stretching from the River Thames in the north to the crest of the North Downs in the south.

Gravesham is bounded by the local authorities of Dartford and Sevenoaks to the west, Tonbridge, and Malling to the south and Medway to the east. Home to an attractive natural environment, including the Kent Downs AONB, it has strong transport connectivity to central London.

#### Key policy challenges

##### *People*

- Gravesham is a comparatively young and diverse population, with nearly 1 in 3 people identifying as non-white British, and over 2,600 households having no occupants with English as their main language.
- Alongside international migration, in recent years the borough has experienced a large inflow of new residents from Outer London and Dartford, and a pattern of outward migration by existing residents, potentially a result of housing affordability and employment options.
- Gravesham presents the third highest population density in Kent, with 80% of residents living in Gravesend and Northfleet in the north of the borough (c20% of the area).

##### *Place*

- Economically, Gravesham presents challenges of low productivity, a high proportion of low pay jobs, low qualifications levels and above average unemployment levels, indicating issues with the mix of sectors and available employment.
- Despite comparatively strong performance at Key Stage 4 (GCSEs), Gravesham presents below average figures for residents with Level 3 (A-Level) and above qualifications. Over 1 in 5 Gravesham residents have no qualifications.
- Gravesham has significant health inequalities, with a clear north-south divide relating to child and adult health across; life expectancy, physical activity, and personal wellbeing outcomes, including wider health determinants such as crime levels.
- Over 40% of households live in relative poverty, with deprivation largely concentrated in the northern parts of Gravesham.
- Historical housing delivery indicates that the borough is not keeping up with demand, presenting challenges to housing affordability, both in terms of private and rental markets, and status, with Gravesham having Kent's highest proportion of homes over-occupied.

#### Scorecard

The following scorecard presents a headline selection of key social, public health, housing and wider place-based metrics used in this document, to provide a snapshot 'health of the borough' profile.

District	Safety	Economy					Education		Health		Housing	
	Crimes/ 1,000 population	Unemployment rate	Average full-time weekly resident wages	Enterprise growth rate 2010-23	Job Density (jobs/ resident)	GVA/ hour	% of secondary schools rated as good/ outstanding	% of residents with Level 4 and above qualification	% of adults overweight or obese	% of physically inactive adults	% of homes over- occupied	% of residents own their home
Ashford	89.0	3.0%	£668.40	26.6%	0.87	£30.00	85.7%	30.1%	62.1%	20.6%	3.4%	66.4%
Canterbury	99.1	3.2%	£658.80	27.1%	0.76	£30.30	88.9%	33.1%	65.4%	18.2%	3.0%	64.8%
Dartford	111.2	2.9%	£732.10	60.8%	1.11	£37.40	100%	32.4%	64.5%	20.9%	5.6%	65.6%
Dover	95.7	3.8%	£670.30	28.8%	0.6	£38.20	55.5%	27.0%	69.4%	20.3%	3.1%	66.2%
Folkestone and Hythe	95.3	3.9%	£684.30	21.1%	0.71	£34.90	100%	27.4%	72.8%	27.3%	3.1%	65.8%
Gravesham	108.7	4.3%	£660.90	54.4%	0.57	£35.70	100%	26.7%	68.3%	28.8%	6.0%	62.2%
Maidstone	91.1	3.0%	£615.10	29.8%	0.84	£35.20	100%	29.9%	66.6%	19.2%	3.4%	67.4%
Sevenoaks	66.9	2.0%	£731.90	15.6%	0.83	£46.00	100%	37.3%	58.5%	16.8%	2.5%	71.5%
Swale	101.5	3.6%	£663.30	28.4%	0.63	£42.40	87.5%	23.7%	66.3%	21.3%	4.0%	67.0%
Thanet	127.4	5.3%	£591.80	42.5%	0.66	£28.00	75.0%	26.3%	72.0%	22.6%	3.7%	61.4%
Tonbridge and Malling	67.3	2.2%	£703.60	30.7%	0.94	£43.70	81.8%	32.5%	63.3%	19.1%	2.5%	70.0%
Tunbridge Wells	69.3	2.4%	£676.70	12.2%	0.92	£37.00	88.9%	41.1%	57.0%	15.2%	2.9%	65.1%

## 4. People

Gravesham is a vibrant and culturally rich borough located in north Kent, renowned for its physical and social diversity.

Central to understanding the local community and its socio-demographic picture is the national Census, undertaken by the ONS every 10 years. The last national Census was taken on 21 March 2021 and the results are used throughout this Community Profile.

Understanding our local community is essential for us to effectively deliver on our Public Sector Equality Duty; ensuring we provide an equal and fair service to all residents and helping to remove barriers that people face in everyday life. As such, the key demographic content analysed in this chapter is based upon the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability

- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

[Read details of our work to deliver the Public Sector Equality Duty.](#)

## Overall

Gravesham has a comparatively young resident population of 107,000, the lowest figure across the 12 Kent district areas. This represents a growth rate of 5.0% in the last 10 years, below the equivalent Kent (7.6%) and national (6.4%) figures, with natural growth (more births than deaths) and an established history of inward migration Gravesham's primary sources of population expansion (**Table 1**).

As a borough, Gravesham presents the third highest population density in Kent (10.8 persons per hectare (p/h)). However, with 80% of residents living in in Gravesend and Northfleet in the north of the borough (c20% of the area), Gravesham's defined urban area presents a density of 37.43 persons / hectare, the most densely populated equivalent area across Kent districts (**Table 2**).

## Age

The mean average age for a Gravesham resident is 39.5 years, up from 38.7 years in 2011 and 38.2 years in 2001. Gravesham's position is however the second lowest in Kent behind Dartford (37.5 years) and presents a younger figure than the county (41.6 years) and national (40.6 years) averages. The borough's largest age cohort is 30 to 34 (**Table 3**).

Gravesham presents a General Fertility Rate (GFR) (live births per 1,000 women) of 61.0, the fourth highest rate in Kent and ahead of the county (58.2) and national (54.1) averages. As a borough with a relatively young demographic, the GFR has contributed to 23.3% of Gravesham residents now being identified as aged under 18, ahead of the national average (20.8%). Despite this, an estimated 18,500 residents (17.3%) in Gravesham are aged over 65 years and, in line with local and national population growth in the past 10 years, this figure is projected to increase by over a third by 2040 (**Table 4**).

## Households

26.9% of households consist of one person, below both Kent (28.3%) and national (30.2%) averages. 65.2% of households consist of families and 33.5% are households with dependent children. 12.5% of households are families with non-dependent children living with them, the highest level in Kent and ahead of the national position (10.5%). 12.2% of households in the borough are lone parent families, again the highest figure in Kent and ahead of the national average (11.1%).

Census 2021 captured the legal partnership status of usual residents aged 16 and over. Within Gravesham, 39,560 people were married or in a civil partnership, representing a rate of 46.8%, down from 48.8% in 2011. Gravesham outturn is slightly below the Kent average of 46.9%, but ahead of the national position (44.7%).

Over 2,600 households within Gravesham have no occupants with English as their main language. This equates to 6.4% of all households, the highest proportion of all Kent districts and ahead of the national position (4.8%) and an advancement of 5% as at Census 2011 (**Table 5**).

## Sex

The proportion of males to females in the borough is recorded as (48.9% - 51.1%) in keeping with the Kent average of (48.7% - 51.3%). All age groups over 65 records more females than males, with the '90+' age bracket seeing the highest proportionate share of females (65.5% - 600) than males (34.5% - 300). Conversely there are 800 more males than females in the 0-24 bracket.

For monitoring and supporting anti-discrimination duties under the Equality Act 2010, the Census 2021 presented broader personal categories for residents in the borough. The results of the Census conclude that 0.7% of residents do not have the same gender identity as sex registered at birth, the highest figure in Kent, and slightly ahead of the national position of 0.6%. Conversely, in terms of sexual orientation, the results identify that 2.5% of Gravesham residents are non-heterosexual, below the Kent (2.9%) and national (3.4%) positions (**Tables 6 & 7**).

## Ethnicity

Census 2021 identifies that Gravesham presents 33,872 (31.7%) residents as being from a minority (non-White British) ethnic group, ahead of the Kent (16.8%) and national (25.6%) figures. The Census recorded the largest individual minority group as Indian at 7.6% of all residents – the highest proportionate figure in Kent. In terms of change, the fastest growing individual minority group from the 2011 Census is record as Black (British, Caribbean, or African), moving from a share of 2.8% to 6.5% (**Table 8**).

Gravesham's changing demographic is influenced by two clear factors: internal (UK) and external (overseas) migration. Internally, in recent years Gravesham has overseen an influx of residents, primarily those previously located in London. ONS data for 2016-2020 indicates all but one of the top ten local authorities for inflows of residents to the borough over the period were via London. At the same time, internal migration has seen a net outflow of Gravesham residents, largely to Medway and other parts of Kent. In 2021, 148 more UK nationals left Gravesham than moved into the borough.

In terms of external migration to Gravesham, one measure available is that for overseas nationals allocated a National Insurance Number (NINo) to work or claim benefits in the UK. Data in 2022 reveals that 1,602 NINos were allocated in Gravesham, with India (499), Nigeria (301), and Belize (146) the top-3 countries of origin. 65.5% of NINo applicants in 2022 were under the age of 35, ahead of the Kent position (61.3%).

Data for 2022 represents a significant change on equivalent 2019 figures – the last period before the impact of movement restrictions (Covid-19), and the UK's withdrawal from the European Union took effect. Following the adoption of the government's new immigration policy, in 2022 there was an additional 445 NINo allocations (38.5%) on the 2019 position, with 40.4% of allocations to applicants from Asia. Conversely, in 2022 there were 240 NINos allocated to applicants from the EU, a reduction of 658 (73.3%) on the equivalent 2019 figure (**Table 9**).

## Religion

Census 2021 identified that, for the first time, there is no single majority religion within Gravesham. The Christian faith is still the largest declared religion in the borough with 52,565 residents (49.2%) – a reduction of 15.1% on the 2011 Census finding, with those declared as 'no religion' being the second largest group (32.1%), both reflective of Kent and national trends.

Across Kent, Gravesham has the highest proportion of Sikh residents with 8,560 or 8.0% of residents, and the second largest proportion of Muslim residents with 3,326 or 3.1% of the population (**Table 10**).

## Disability

Census 2021 details that people who assessed their day-to-day activities as limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses and are considered disabled. The results of the Census demonstrate that 17,509 (16.4%) in Gravesham are disabled, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, below both Kent (17.9%) and national (17.5%) rates (**Table 11**).

## 5. Participation

Gravesham has a strong sense of community cohesion with a long history of resident participation.

This chapter presents an overview of the levels of participation in both formal elections and local resident forums. Political activity within Gravesham follows traditional patterns across both Kent and nationally with the highest electoral turnout at general elections, ordinarily decreasing across local council and county council elections, respectively.

### General Elections

The Gravesham parliamentary constituency has previously been called a 'Bellwether' constituency as, historically, in parliamentary elections Gravesham constituents have voted for an MP from the winning party. This was again the case in the general election held in December 2019.

At the most recent general election for the Gravesham parliamentary seat, electoral turnout was 64.9%, slightly below the national average of 67.3%. In terms of results, the incumbent Conservative candidate Adam Holloway MP regained his parliamentary seat.

### Borough Elections

Gravesham Borough Council has 39 elected Members representing 17 electoral wards.

Following the local council elections on 4 May 2023, the council is represented by two political groups, with the Labour group holding an overall majority and forming the controlling administration.

The council's current elected representation is as follows:

- Labour: 22 Members
- Conservative: 17 Members.

### County Elections

Elections to Kent County Council took place on 6 May 2021, with Gravesham contributing five councillors across the following divisions: Gravesham East (x2), Gravesham Rural (x1), and Northfleet and Gravesend West (x2). The 2021 elections saw the Conservative Party win four seats and the Labour Party win one (Northfleet and Gravesend West).

[Read details of election results in Gravesham.](#)

## Community Engagement

Within Gravesham there is a healthy participation of residents in a variety of citizen panels, voluntary groups, and community events. Directed by an adopted Community Engagement Strategy, our efforts enable us to help develop community organisations, provide a platform for residents to engage in civic life, and further develop a cohesive local community.

This council's diverse engagement programme includes:

- Gravesham Landlord Forum: working with the National Landlords Association, this forum supports and engages private sector landlords in the borough. Relunched in September 2021, our Private Sector Housing Landlord Forum showcases the latest news and views on key topics affecting the sector, with events attended by local landlords, agents, and guest speakers.

[Read details of the Gravesham Landlord Forum.](#)

- Gravesham Business Network: The idea of the group is primarily to stimulate local business activity and collaborations, and to promote special offers and services to members. Along with local business support partners, the network informs members of business support workshops, networking opportunities and other events. As part of the network, free business networking events are delivered on a quarterly basis.

[Read details of the Gravesham Business Network.](#)

- Gravesham's Big Conversation: Alongside the opportunities presented through the established forums, Gravesham's Big Conversation provides a programme of in-person and digital consultative opportunities enabling the community to help shape policy and service provision.

[Read details of Gravesham's Big Conversation.](#)

In addition, local Councillors provide community engagement opportunities through their open surgeries or online channels. Here residents can ask questions about the council and its policies or raise concerns with their local elected representative about problems in the local area. [Read details of Gravesham Borough Council Councillors.](#)

## 6. Safety

The council plays a significant role in addressing community safety, working as a key partner of Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue within the local Community Safety Partnership (CSP). Each year the CSP is required to conduct an audit of levels of crime and disorder in Gravesham known as the Strategic Assessment. This exercise allows the CSP to gain a better understanding of current community safety issues in our area based on information recorded by partner agencies. Annual data from the 2022 Strategic Assessment, covering the period 1 October 2021-30 September 2022, forms the basis of the findings presented in this chapter.

### Crime

- The number of offences recorded in Gravesham in the period amounted to 11,617 - a proportionate rate of 108.7 offences per 1,000 population. This represents the third highest recorded rate across Kent districts behind Thanet (127.4) and Dartford (111.2) (**Table 12**).



- The leading category of recorded crime in the borough is ‘violence against the person’. These crimes account for 5,036 recorded incidents, 43.4% of total crime in the borough over the period.
- Anti-social behaviour incidents in Gravesham fell by 38.0%, the third largest reduction recorded in Kent and set against a county reduction of 34.2%, in part influenced by the recording of Covid-19 restriction breaches in the two previous years. Despite the reduction, Gravesham’s rate (18.7 incidents per 1,000 population) remains second highest in Kent.
- Hate crime rose by 2.0% in the last year against an overall Kent rise of 13.3%. Gravesham’s total of 406 reported hate crimes (3.8 offences per 1,000 population) does however present the second highest rate in Kent - the vast majority racially motivated.
- The number of safeguarding concerns reported in Gravesham increased by 39.7%, slightly higher than the average increase seen across Kent of 34.6%. Despite this, at 7.0 Gravesham’s rate of reports per 1,000 population remains below the Kent average (8.1).

### Fires and Roads

- Comparatively, at 3.4 fires per 1,000 population Gravesham is recorded as having the third highest rate of fire incidents in Kent.
- Gravesham (1.9) has the highest rate of deliberate fires per 1,000 population in Kent and, at 55%, is the only area that records a greater proportion of deliberate rather than accidental fires in the county.
- On Gravesham’s roads there were 396 road traffic accidents (RTA) in the year to July 2022, an increase of 45% on the previous year and representing the highest such increase in Kent. In addition, the number of traffic casualties per 1,000 population in Gravesham also increased by 55.3% against a 1.3% average reduction recorded across Kent districts.

[Read details of the Gravesham Community Safety Partnership.](#)

## 7. Economy

Gravesham’s economic profile reflects a legacy of low-skilled employment and a dependence on now declining economic sectors, specifically manufacturing through historical river-based heavy industry. The current position therefore points to challenges of low productivity, a high proportion of low pay jobs, low qualifications levels and high unemployment levels, indicating issues with the mix of employment sectors and the nature of available employment.

Despite these historical issues, there are positive areas within the local economy; average resident and workplace earnings are above regional and national averages, and there has been strong business and employment growth in the last few years. Additionally, there are a number of important economic regeneration and house building projects being undertaken in and around the borough. Initiatives including Ebbsfleet Garden City, North Kent Enterprise Zone and significant town centre regeneration projects will create a wealth of new job opportunities for Gravesham residents, whilst delivery of key transport infrastructure developments will help attract inward investment, acting as a catalyst for future economic development.

### Demography

- As of 2023, Gravesham is home to 4,060 businesses, supporting 34,400 jobs. Gravesham’s business base has grown by 1,430 (54.4%) enterprises since 2010, the second highest proportionate figure in Kent, and significantly ahead of the county (28.9%) and national (30.4%) positions (**Table 13**).
- In terms of sectors, 6,400 employees (22.9%) work within the public sector, proportionately higher than the Kent average of 19.6%.



- As a proportion of the overall types of business in the borough, Gravesham's largest employment sectors are typically lower value in terms of productivity. The borough posts the highest percentage of businesses in Kent in the following sectors: Construction (23.2%) and Transport and Storage (9.9%) - both within the highest 25 authorities nationally (**Table 14**).
- Conversely, the 'knowledge economy' (Publishing, Scientific Research and Development and Higher Education) - seen as a key driver for economic growth - sees Gravesham record the lowest proportion of employees in Kent at 7.2% of all employees, within the lowest 20% nationally.
- 575 new companies were registered in the borough in 2022, with 580 companies dissolved during the same year. This represents a growth ratio of 0.99 enterprise 'births' to 'deaths'. The previous 5-year period had seen an average 1.14 growth ratio.
- In terms of sustainability, Gravesham's businesses have lower rates of survival across the short, medium, and long term. In 2022 Gravesham presented a figure of 39.8% for businesses surviving 5 years or more, the lowest rate in Kent (**Table 15**).
- Business data in 2022 identified that 20 Gravesham enterprises are classed as high growth – defined as those companies with ten or more employees which has seen at least 20% employee growth each year for the previous three-year period.
- A slightly higher proportion of Gravesham's businesses are micro businesses (employ up to 9 people) compared to Kent, regional and national averages. Resultantly, small, medium, and large businesses account for a comparatively lower proportion of total businesses. In 2023, 3,685 (90.8%) of Gravesham enterprises employed less than 10 people. Conversely, 10 (0.2%) enterprises in the borough were recorded as having over 250 employees (**Table 16**).

## Productivity

- Gross Value Added (GVA) is the traditional measure for the overall economic well-being of an area. Latest data for the total GVA in Gravesham indicates £1,825 million generated, the smallest total in Kent. Proportionately this equates to £17,800 per head of population, the 2nd lowest figure in Kent and amongst the lowest 20% in the southeast region. Lower productivity is also demonstrated in the GVA generated per filled job, whereby in 2021 each job in Gravesham generated £51,626, also lower than all comparator areas.
- The ideal model indicator of labour productivity is considered to be GVA per hour worked, the ONS' preferred measure at subnational level. In 2021 Gravesham presented a figure of £35.70 per hour, the seventh highest in Kent and below the Kent average (£36.60).
- Across the GVA suite, Gravesham's productivity outturns are reflective of direct challenges presented via the local industrial sector mix, and its ability to deliver higher value jobs, and also local job density whereby Gravesham, at 0.57, has the lowest available jobs per working age resident. More broadly, the current position is also a reflection of the nature of the Gravesham's proximity to London and outward commuting trends, with much resident productivity taking place in other areas (**Table 17**).
- Alongside GVA, the health and productivity of a local economy can be demonstrated by turnover data. In 2023, Gravesham saw 37.2% of its businesses record a turnover of less than £100,000, ahead of Kent, regional and national averages. Conversely, only 0.6% of companies recorded a figure of £10 million or over, below county, regional and national equivalents. This may well be reflective of the nature of the local business sector mix and the size of enterprises in the borough (**Table 18**).

## Activity

- Economic activity in the borough has fluctuated significantly in recent years. From a low of 69.6 in December 2016, a 20-year high of 90.1% of 16-64 years olds were economically active in the year to June 2023, significantly higher than Kent (79.2%), regional (81.2%) and national (78.6%) positions.
- As activity has varied, so too has inactivity, with the latest data for October 2023 presenting that Gravesham has the second highest rate of people claiming unemployment benefits (JSA or Universal Credit) at 4.3%, ahead of the county (3.3%) average (**Table 19**).
- In line with most other Kent districts the largest level of unemployment in terms of population age groups in Gravesham is found amongst those aged 18-24 with 6.6% unemployed as at October 2023, the fourth highest rate in Kent and ahead of the county average (5.2%).

- The three-core disability related benefits are: Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment and Attendance Allowance. As at the time drafting, Gravesham had 6.9% of its total population in receipt of a disability benefit, directly in line with the Kent average. Equally, in terms of employment, Gravesham had the highest rate in Kent of residents with a disability in active employment (80.8%).
- The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings presents that the average full-time weekly earnings for Gravesham residents were £660.90, representing the ninth highest figure across Kent districts and below the Kent district average (£669.30). In terms of workplace earnings for jobs located in the borough, Gravesham recorded the second highest full-time weekly earnings across Kent districts (£651.60), £47.90 higher than the Kent average. The difference in the two figures reflects the nature of Gravesham's proximity to London and outward commuting trends (**Table 20**).

## 8. Education

Gravesham has 39 schools covering all school-age pupils, ranging from community and voluntary aided, through to recently integrated academy schools. The borough has a strong profile of schools in terms of Ofsted ratings.

Despite this, challenges in the sector are presented by way of skills and qualifications. With below average figures for residents with qualifications at Level 3 (and above), and over 1 in 5 residents with no qualifications, Gravesham is behind its neighbouring authority areas.

### Demographics

- There are 10,331 primary school pupils in Gravesham, with the borough having capacity for 10,851. At a secondary level, Gravesham is the only oversubscribed district in Kent, with 9,211 pupils and a capacity of only 8,729 (**Table 21**).
- 23.2% of all pupils are eligible for Free School Meals in Gravesham, ahead of Kent (22.5%) and national positions (20.8%), representing a sizeable increase on the pre-Covid position of 16.9%.
- 13.8% of Gravesham pupils are identified as having special educational needs, with 3.1% of pupils in Gravesham allocated an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHC), the second lowest rate in Kent. This represents the second lowest conversion rate (22.5%) of EHC Plans issued for identified SEN pupils ahead of Dartford (21.5%), but considerably below the county average (29.6%) (**Table 22**).
- 24.6% of primary school pupils do not have English as their first language. Gravesham's figure is the second highest in Kent, and significantly ahead of the county average at 13.4%. In addition, 43.1% of pupils are identified as of a minority ethnic background, the second highest figure in Kent behind Dartford (45.3%).
- At secondary school level, 21.4% of pupils did not have English as their first language, the highest figure in Kent and substantially ahead of the county average of 10.9%. In addition, 42.4% of pupils are identified as of a minority ethnic background, again the second highest figure in Kent behind Dartford (47.2%).

### Profile

- Gravesham presents the third highest percentage of primary school pupil absences in Kent at 4.0%, with 10.7% of pupils classed as persistently absent (missing 10% of sessions or above), both figures ahead of Kent and national averages.
- At a secondary level, 5.5% of pupils in Gravesham presented authorised or unauthorised absences, in line with county and national positions. For pupils classed as persistently absent (10% or above) the secondary school figure was recorded as 14.8% of pupils.
- 96.3% of Gravesham's primary schools had an Ofsted rating of 'good' or 'outstanding', the third highest level in Kent. At a secondary level, all eight of Gravesham's mainstream schools present a 'good' or 'outstanding' rating, one of five districts to present a 100% level. Both tiers are ahead of national averages at 88% (**Table 23**).

## Attainment

- Latest Key Stage 4 (Attainment 8) data identifies the average score of Gravesham pupils was 47.6, the fifth highest in Kent, and ahead of the Kent (47.4) and national (46.8) averages. Gravesham also consistently presents the smallest gap in the level of attainment between girls and boys, with the latest position seeing girls achieve an average 2.1 higher score, significantly below Kent and national positions.
- For Level 3 students, the average point score per entry in Gravesham was 29.7, the tenth highest in Kent, behind the county (33.1) and national (32.8) averages. Similarly, Gravesham presents an average point score for A-Levels of 30.2, above only Thanet across Kent, and again significantly below Kent and national averages.
- When considering achievement at higher education levels, the 2021 Census reveals that within Gravesham 26.7% of residents have 'Level 4 qualifications and above' i.e. Degree level (and equivalent) and above. This is the third lowest figure across Kent districts, albeit a positive increase on the 2011 (20.0%) and 2001 (12.5%) Census, respectively. Conversely, when considering the number of residents who have no qualifications, Gravesham recorded a figure of 20.3% at the 2021 Census, again representing a positive improvement on the respective 2011 (24.4%) and 2001 (31.4%) Census (**Table 24**).

## 9. Health

Recent years has seen considerable improvement to the overall levels of public health experienced by Gravesham residents. Despite this, Gravesham still performs poorly across various indicators compared with county, regional and national averages, mirroring the socio-economic challenges presented elsewhere in this Community Profile. This is particularly true in consideration of the scale of inequality experienced by people, evidenced by the variation in deprivation across the borough and direct health outcomes, such as average life expectancy rates.

### Health inequality

- Latest outturns for life expectancy in the borough reveal an average age of 76.6 years for men, below the Kent (78.8) and national (78.7) averages, and the fourth lowest in the southeast region. Similarly, female life expectancy at 82.5 years is below Kent (83.0) and national averages (82.8), and presents the 14th lowest figure in the south east (**Table 25**).
- Gravesham also has evident spatial inequalities in terms of health outcomes, with the lowest life expectancy experienced in the north of the borough. There is a difference of 9.1 years in male life expectancy across Gravesham's population, with a female life expectancy inequality of 4.6 years.

### Healthy living

- 38.2% of Year 6 (10-11) children in Gravesham are identified as overweight or obese, above the Kent (35%) and national averages (36.6%) and presents the sixth highest figure in the southeast region. For adults in the borough, 68.3% are identified as overweight or obese. This is the ninth highest rate in the south east region, ahead of both Kent (65.8%) and national (63.8%) averages (**Table 26**).
- Linked to levels of obesity is the prevalence for physical activity amongst the resident population. In this area again, Gravesham finds itself worse off in comparison to local, regional, and national averages. In 2022, 28.8% of adults in Gravesham were identified as 'physically inactive' (less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week). This represents the highest outturn in the county, and in the top-30 worst performing areas in England, significantly in advance of Kent (20.6%), south east (18.8%) and national (22.3%) positions.
- Gravesham has successful recorded reductions in smoking prevalence in recent years. As of 2023, the borough presented a rate of 8.3% for smoking prevalence in adults, the third lowest in Kent, and a rate better than the county (11.6%), regional (11.5%) and national average at 12.7%. Conversely, Gravesham is above comparable positions for the rate of women smoking at the time of giving birth. Whilst directly in line with the Kent average (10.3%), Gravesham's figure is ahead of regional (8.1%) and national averages (8.8%).

- In terms of preventable mortality rates, Gravesham has a higher under age 75 rate for; all causes, cardiovascular causes, and cancer when compared to Kent, regional and national averages. At 208.0 per 100,000, the rate of mortality from all causes of death considered preventable is the ninth highest in the southeast region, ahead of Kent (184.8), regional (156.7) and national (183.2) positions.

### Healthy society

- The latest Indices of Multiple Deprivation study identified Gravesham as the fifth most deprived local authority in Kent, and 119th (317) nationally, with deprivation concentrated in neighbourhoods in the north of the borough.
- At a 'Lower Super Output Area' (1,500 residents), pockets of Northfleet and Westcourt are within the top-10% most deprived in England, with LSOAs in Singlewell, Central and Riverside ward also featuring in Kent's top-10% most-deprived areas. Conversely, parts of rural Gravesham are in the least deprived areas nationally.
- In terms of specific measured domains, 59% of neighbourhoods in Gravesham fall within the top 20% most deprived in terms of the crime domain. A high proportion of neighbourhoods also rank highly for education, skills and training deprivation (28%), income (17%) and employment (16%).
- As of March 2023, 43.5% of households were in relative poverty in Gravesham (defined as 60% of the median household income), equivalent to 2,818 households. In addition, 859 households are also in food poverty i.e., when a household's total minimum acceptable food expenditure is higher than their income after 'priority costs'.
- Within Gravesham, there has been a marked increase in the rate of people providing unpaid care. Census 2021 reveals that 2,965 (3%) of residents are providing over 50 hours a week in unpaid care, presenting a second successive rise in Census results. In 2001, Gravesham was behind the national average in this metric, yet by 2021 now finds itself proportionately ahead of Kent (2.9%), regional (2.4%) and national (2.6%) averages (**Table 27**).
- The ONS surveys progress on how we are doing as individuals, as communities and as a nation, and how sustainable this is for the future. The measures include estimates of life satisfaction, feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile, happiness and anxiety levels for Gravesham.
- As at 2023, Gravesham's residents reported lower levels of life satisfaction (7.48 out of 10) than in Kent (7.59) and the south east (7.53), but ahead of the national average (7.44). (**Table 28**).

[Read details of our sport and leisure services.](#)

## 10. Housing

This chapter presents a collection of statistics relating to the health of the local private and social housing sectors in Gravesham. Like many other areas, historical housing delivery indicates that the borough is not keeping up with demand, presenting challenges to affordability, both in terms of private and rental markets, and status, with Gravesham having Kent's highest proportion of homes over-occupied.

### Private housing

#### Supply

- Gravesham has a housing stock of 44,492 dwellings. This is the smallest figure in Kent, reflective of the borough's comparative level of population.
- In the year 2020-21, a net 240 homes were built in the borough, representing the second lowest figure across Kent districts. Of that figure, 88 were recorded as affordable dwellings – at 36.7% this provided the second highest proportionate outturn in Kent, and ahead of Kent (23.4%) and national

(24.1%) averages. In the 10 years between 2011 and 2021, the average annual number of completed dwellings in Gravesham at 230 is the lowest in the county.

- It was established from the 2021 Census that Gravesham had the highest proportion of homes in Kent deemed over-occupied in consideration of the number of bedrooms. At 6.0%, Gravesham's figure was also considerably ahead of the Kent (3.6%) and national averages (4.3%) (**Table 29**).

### *Tenure*

- At 82.6% of the total, Gravesham has the lowest proportion of homes in the private sector across Kent.
- Census 2021 identifies that 62.2% of Gravesham residents own their own property, down from 64.6% and 71.1% in the 2011 and 2001 Census, the second largest reduction in home ownership in Kent over the 20-year period (**Table 30**).
- Gravesham's 2021 figure represents the second lowest figure of home ownership in Kent, with a near equal split of those who own outright (31.2%) and those with a mortgage (31.0%). An additional 1.1% of residents have a shared ownership arrangement. Conversely, 36.7% of Gravesham's households rent their property, above the average for Kent (32.6%).
- Gravesham has the lowest total number of second homes owned in the borough in comparison to other Kent districts (29). This represents 0.1% of the overall housing stock in the borough, again the lowest figure in the county, and considerably below that of the Kent (1.3%) and national (1.0%) averages.

### *Costs*

- In the year to September 2023, the average house price paid in Gravesham was recorded as £326,561, the eight highest figure across Kent districts and below the Kent (£362,324) average. House prices were higher in Gravesham than Kent for detached houses, but lower across the categories of semi-detached, terraced and flats (**Table 31**).
- Where private sales prices are below local averages, Gravesham's average private sector rent cost (£975/month) is higher than that of both Kent and national averages and presents the fifth highest figure in the county. (**Table 32**).
- There are 833 vacant dwellings in the borough. This is the smallest total and proportionate (1.9%) figure of total housing stock across Kent districts. Of those vacant properties, 283 are identified as 'long-term vacant dwellings' (6 months+), equating to 34.0% of the total vacant dwellings, ahead of the equivalent total for Kent (31.3%) (**Table 33**).

### *Social housing*

- Gravesham has the highest number of council housing stock properties (5,660) across Kent districts. In addition, across all sectors Gravesham had the highest percentage identified as either council housing or other social rented housing in comparison (16.8%).
- Gravesham's average weekly council housing rent across all tenure types is £91.61. This total equates to 40.7% of the equivalent average private sector rent in the borough, the second lowest of the council housing providers in Kent (**Table 34**).
- As at 2022, there were 1,030 applicants on the council housing waiting list in the borough. At 18.2%, Gravesham's is the lowest waiting list in Kent proportionate to the total council housing stock.
- With an average purchase price of £160,000, Gravesham saw 16 council properties sold under the 'Right to Buy' scheme in 2020-21, a rate of 2.8 per 1,000 dwellings, below Kent (2.9) and national (4.3) averages.

[Read details of our housing services.](#)

## Index

The social, public health, housing and wider place-based evidence used in this document is designed to enable us to understand the socio-demographic needs of the borough. All material is benchmarked against Kent districts (inc. county), regional and national positions.

People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ONS (2021) - Census 2021</li> <li>• ONS (2022) - Population estimates for the UK, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland</li> <li>• ONS (2021) - Birth Summary data</li> <li>• ONS (2020) - Moves between English and Welsh local authorities</li> <li>• Department for Work and Pensions (2022) - National Insurance Recording System</li> </ul>
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gravesham Borough Council (2023) - Election results</li> </ul>
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gravesham Community Safety Partnership - Annual Strategic Assessment 2022</li> </ul>
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ONS (2023) - Business Demography</li> <li>• ONS (2022) - Business Register and Employment Survey</li> <li>• ONS (2022) - UK Business: Activity, Size and Location</li> <li>• ONS (2023) - Subnational indicators explorer</li> <li>• ONS (2023) - Subregional productivity in the UK</li> <li>• ONS (2023) - Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings</li> <li>• ONS (2023) - Claimant Count by Sex and Age</li> <li>• ONS (2023) - Annual Population Survey</li> <li>• Department for Work and Pensions (2023) – Benefit claimant National Insurance Recording System</li> </ul>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent County Council (2022) - School Census</li> <li>• Department for Education (2022) - Pupil Characteristics</li> <li>• Department for Education (2023) - Performance Tables</li> <li>• Ofsted (2023) - Inspection Reports</li> </ul>
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office for Health Improvements &amp; Disparities (2023) - Local Authority Health Profiles</li> <li>• Office for Health Improvements &amp; Disparities (2023) - Public Health Outcomes Framework</li> <li>• Census 2021 - Provision of Unpaid Care</li> <li>• ONS (2023) - Personal well-being in the UK</li> <li>• Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2019) - English Indices of Deprivation</li> <li>• Sport England (2023) - Active Lives Survey</li> </ul>
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent County Council - Housing Information Audit</li> <li>• Census 2021 - Occupancy rating for bedrooms &amp; Housing tenure</li> <li>• ONS (2022) - Private Rental market statistics</li> <li>• Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2023) - Live housing tables</li> <li>• HM Land Registry (2023) - Open Data Standard Reports</li> </ul>

## Tables

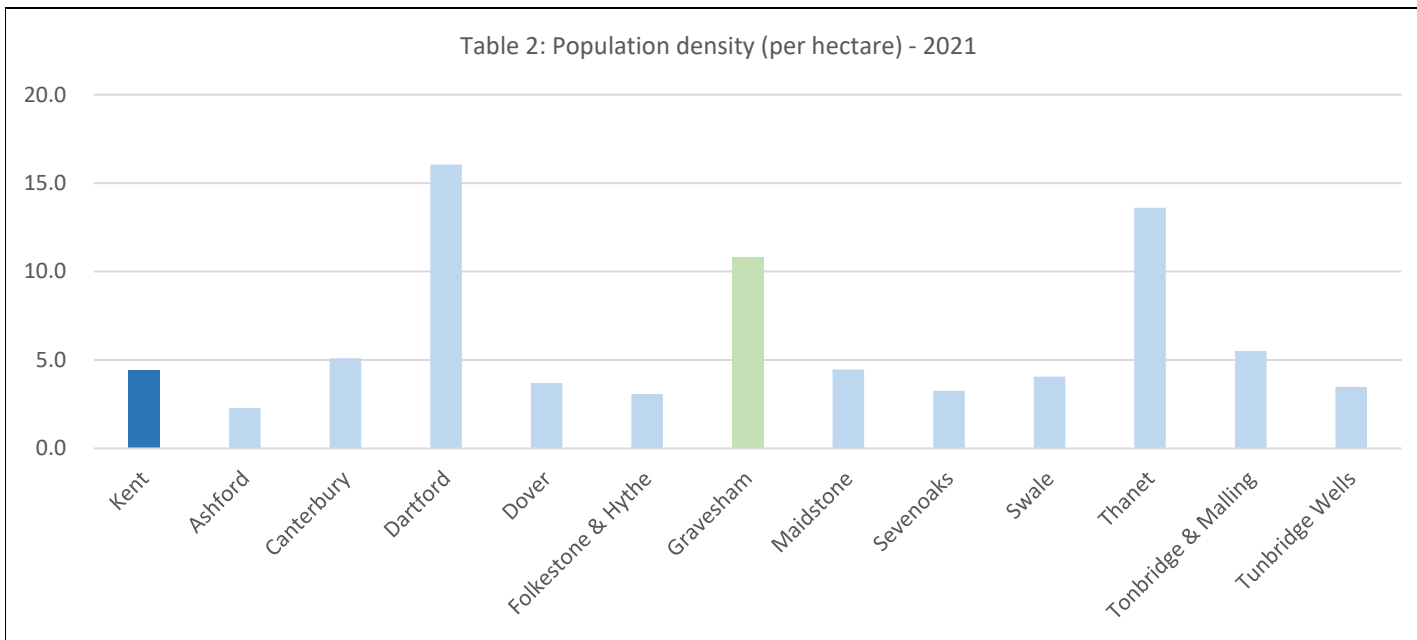
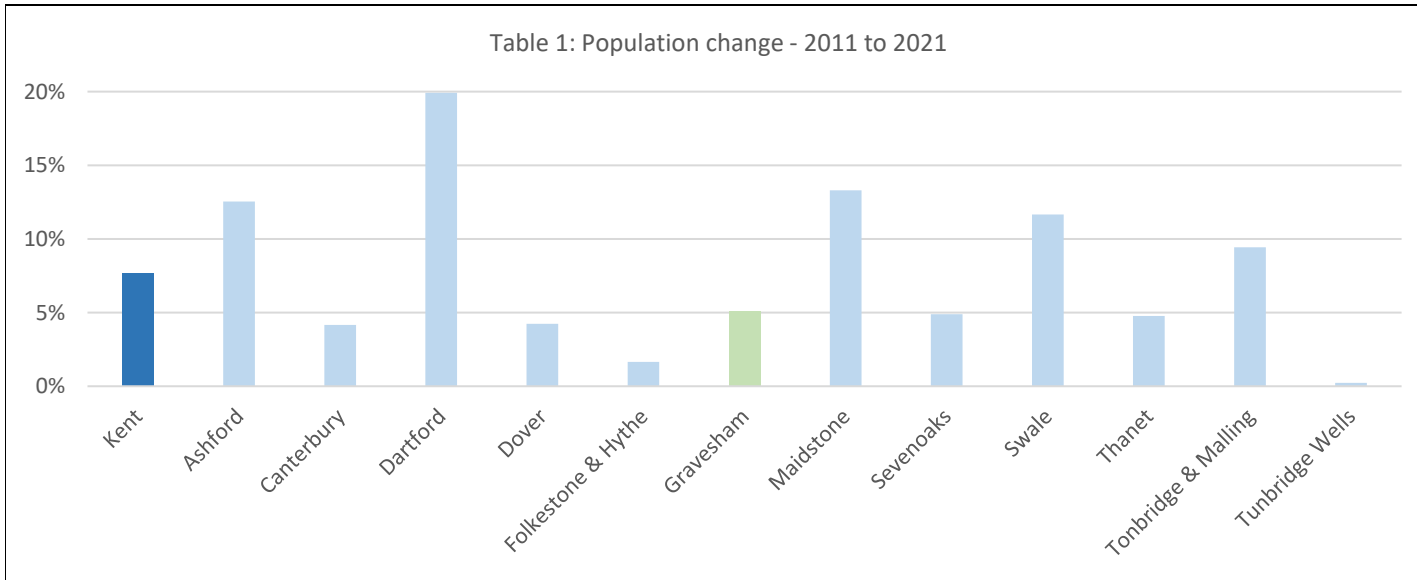




Table 3: Mean age of population - 2021

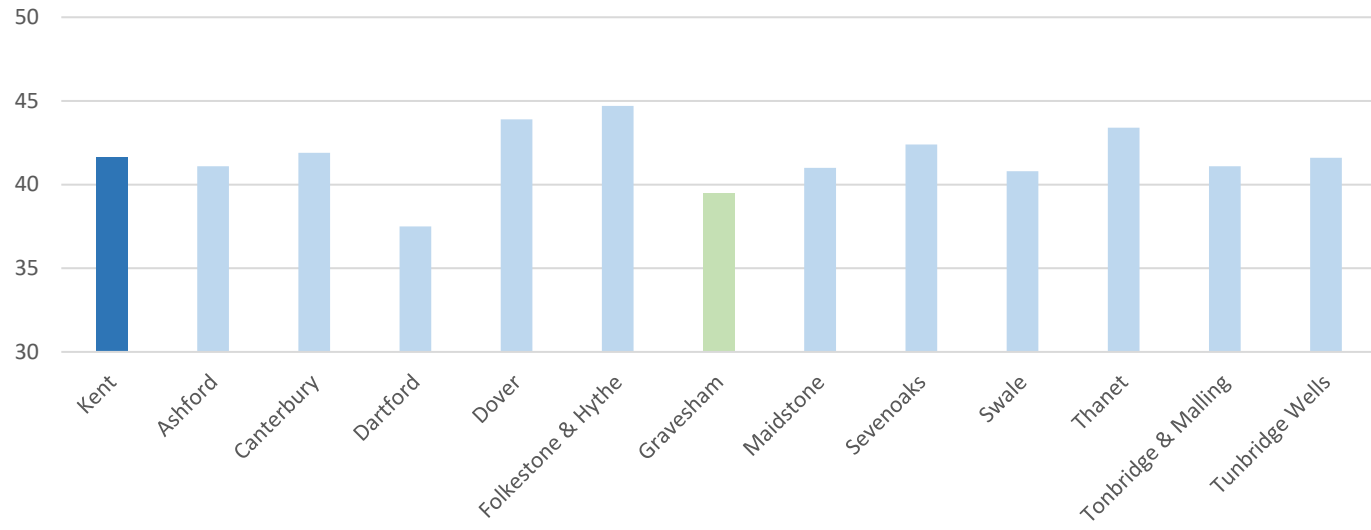


Table 4: General Fertility Rate - 2021

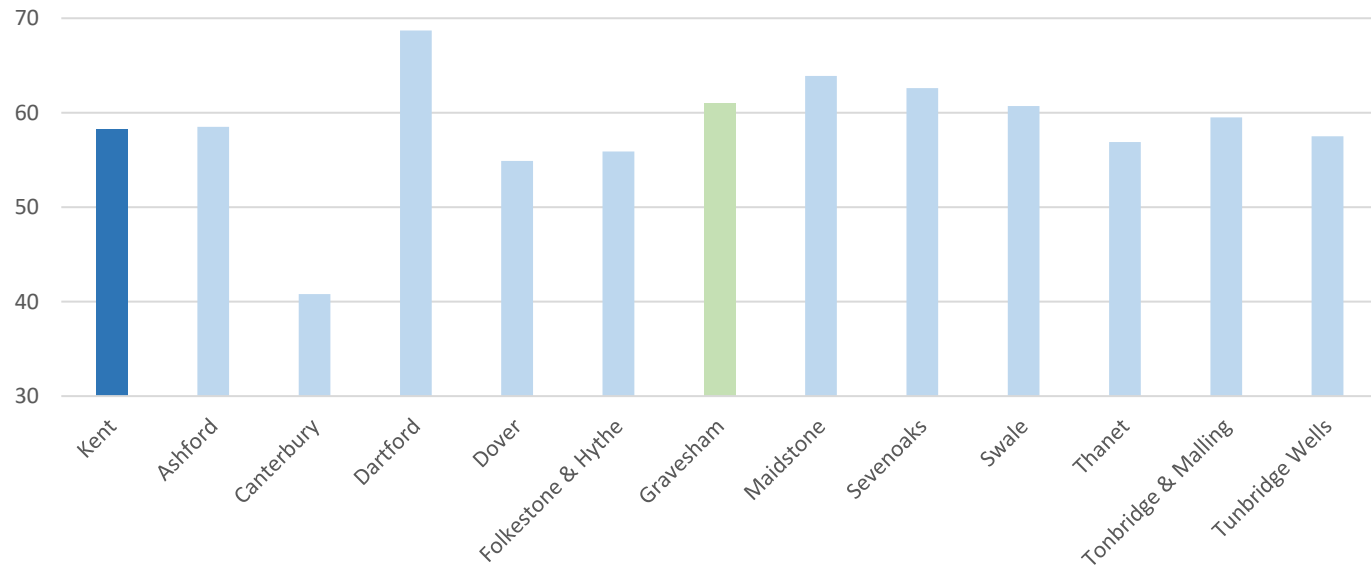


Table 5: Households without English as main language

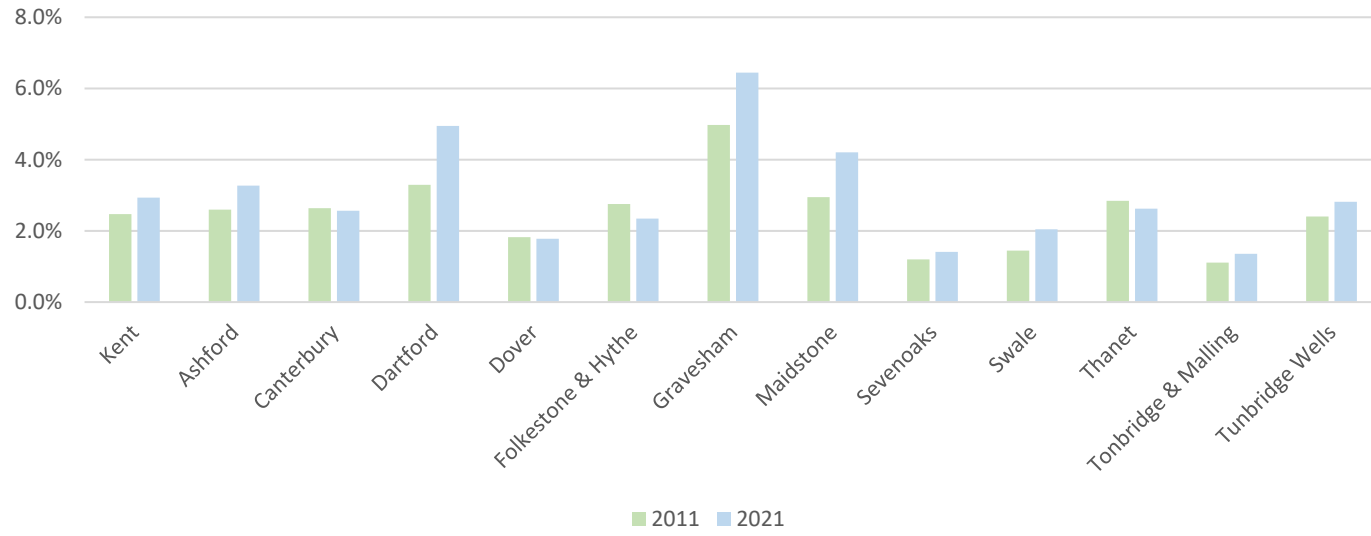


Table 6: Gender identity different from sex registered at birth - 2021

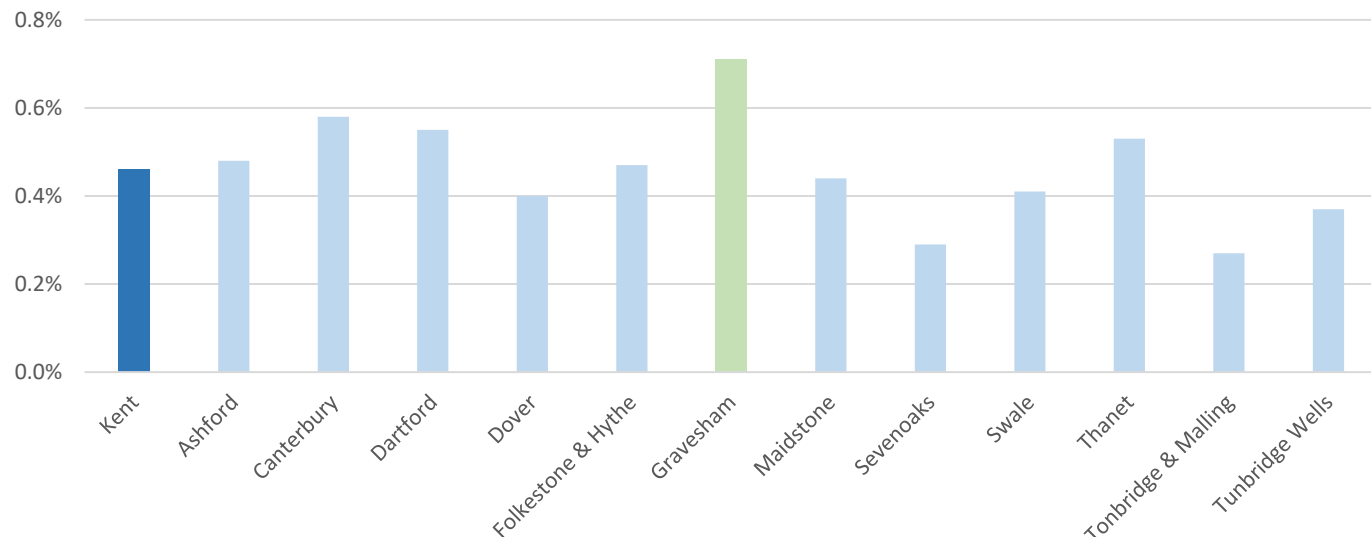


Table 7: Non-heterosexual residents - 2021

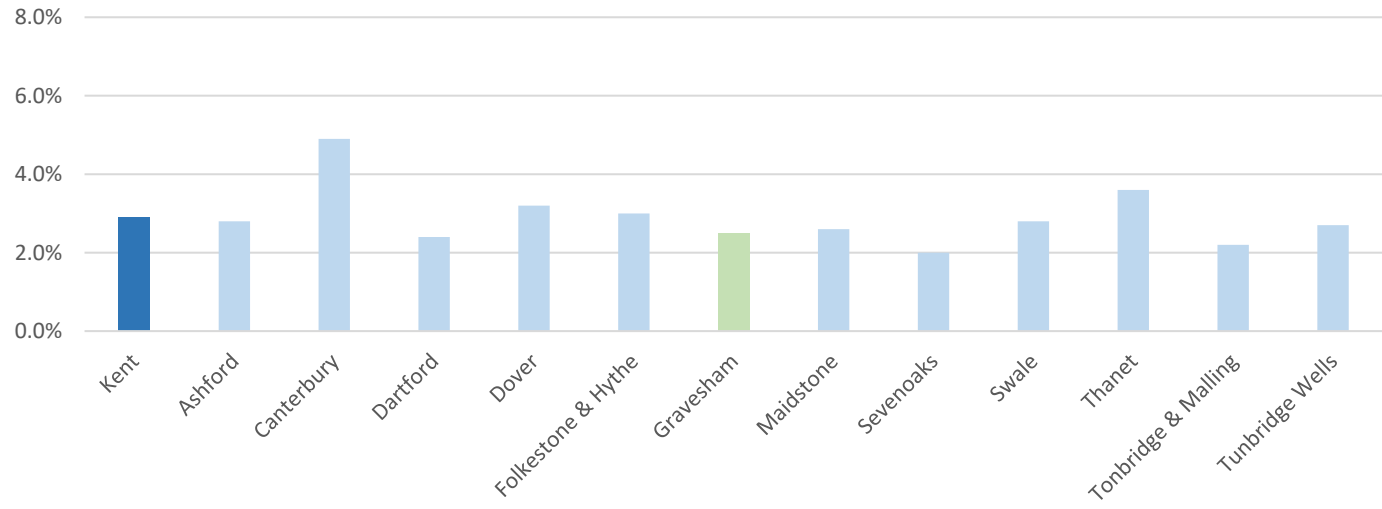


Table 8: Non-white British residents

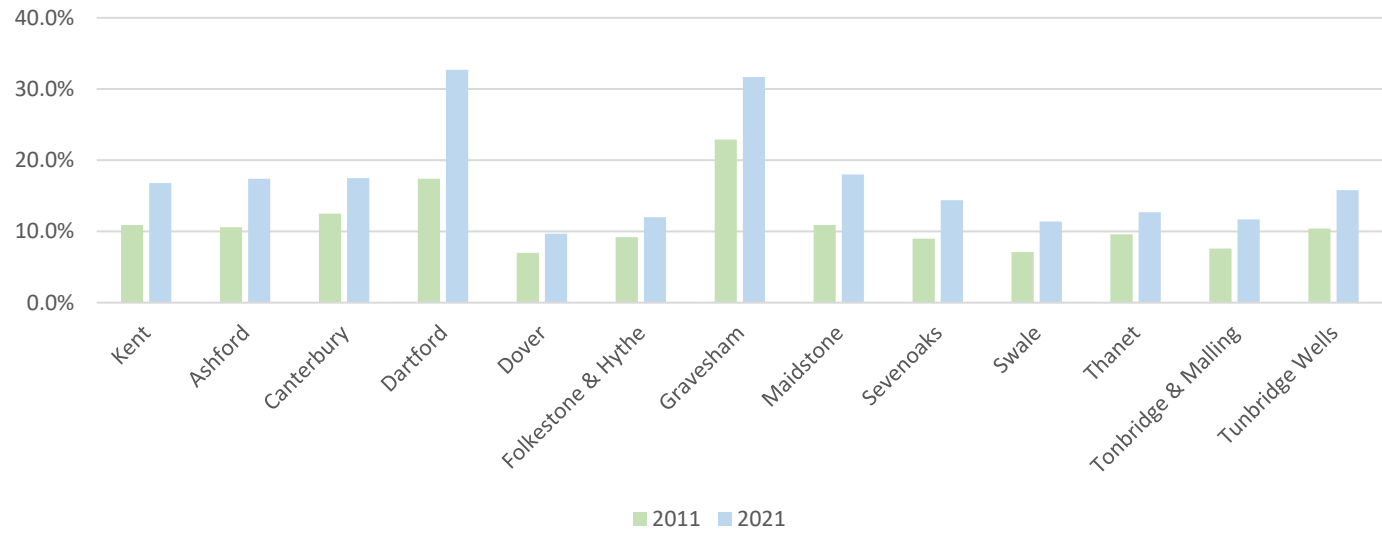


Table 9: NINos allocated by world area of origin - 2022

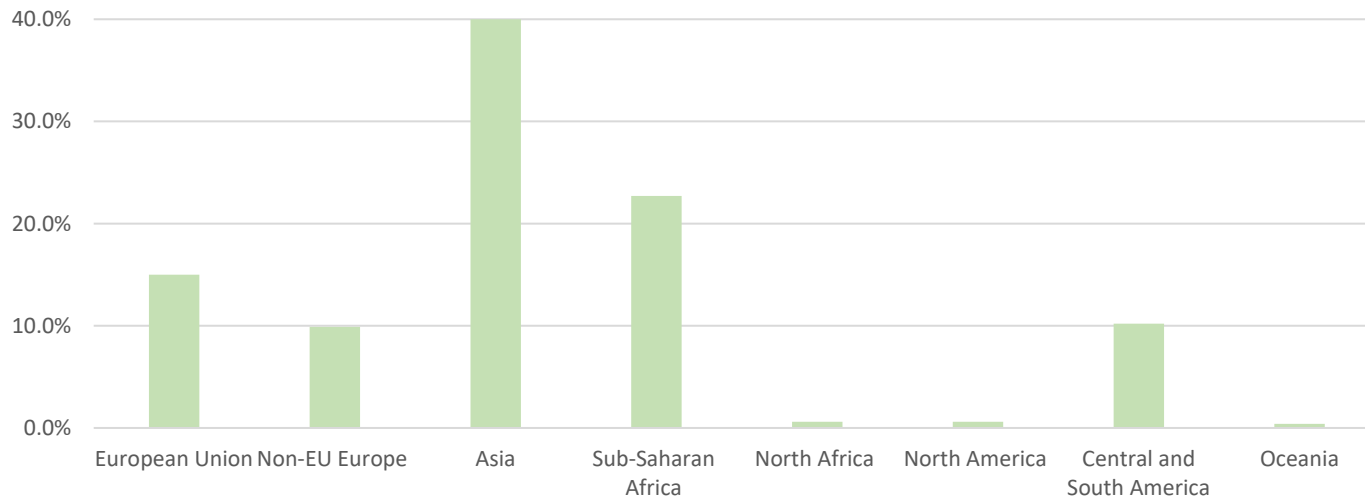


Table 10: Declared religious status - 2021

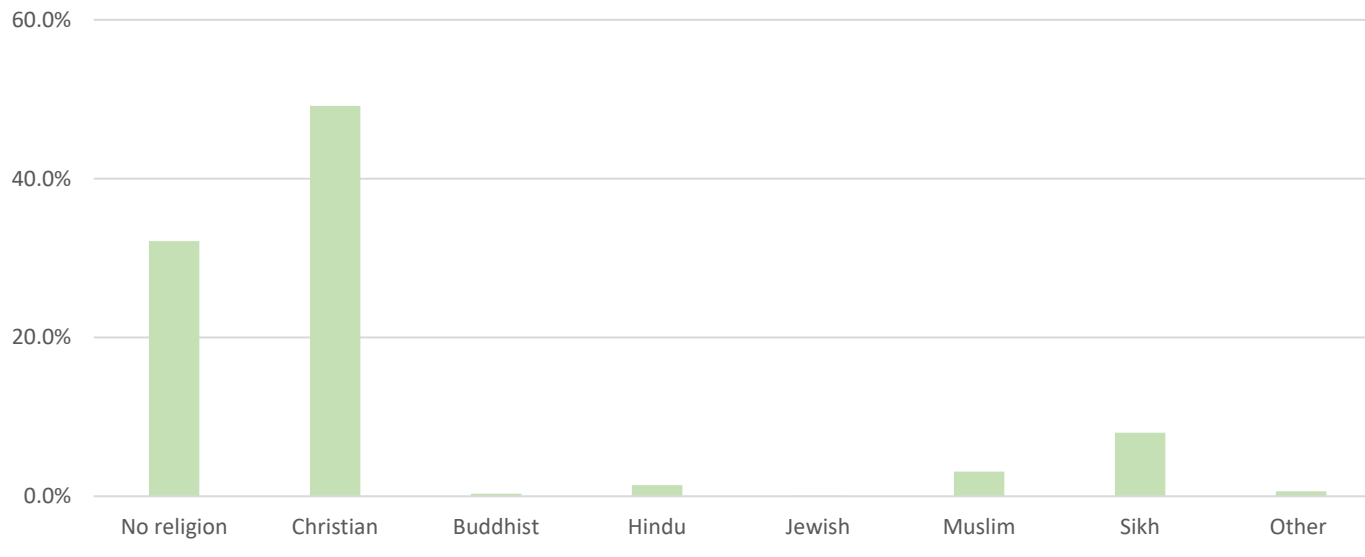


Table 11: Disabled residents - 2021

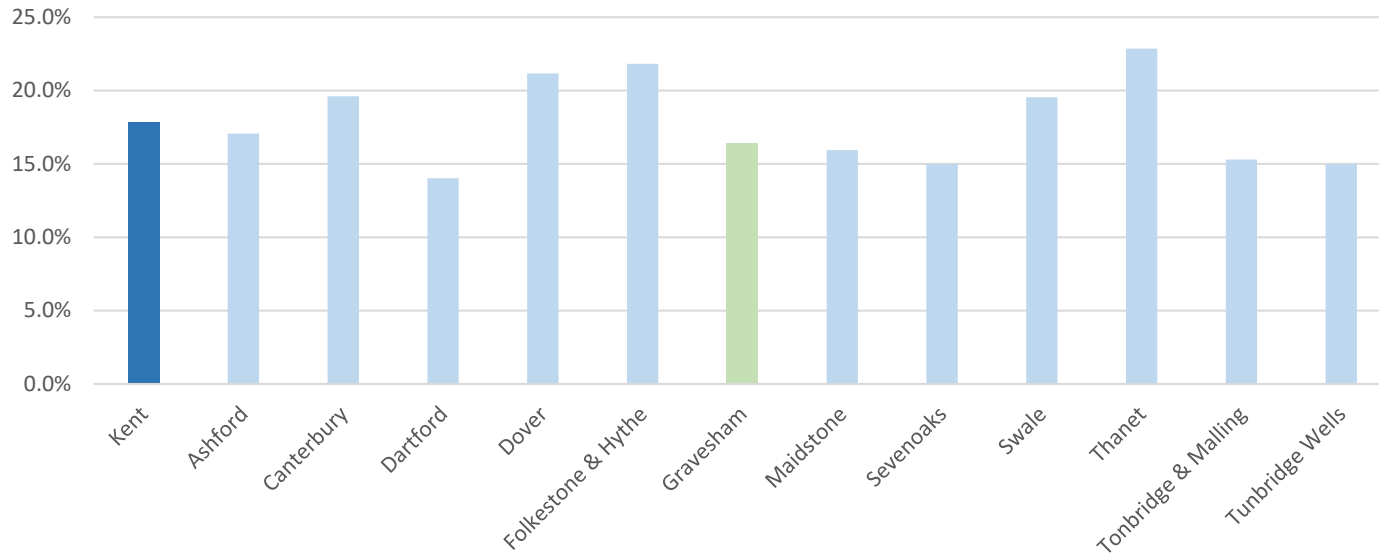


Table 12: Reported crime / hd pop (1,000) - 2022

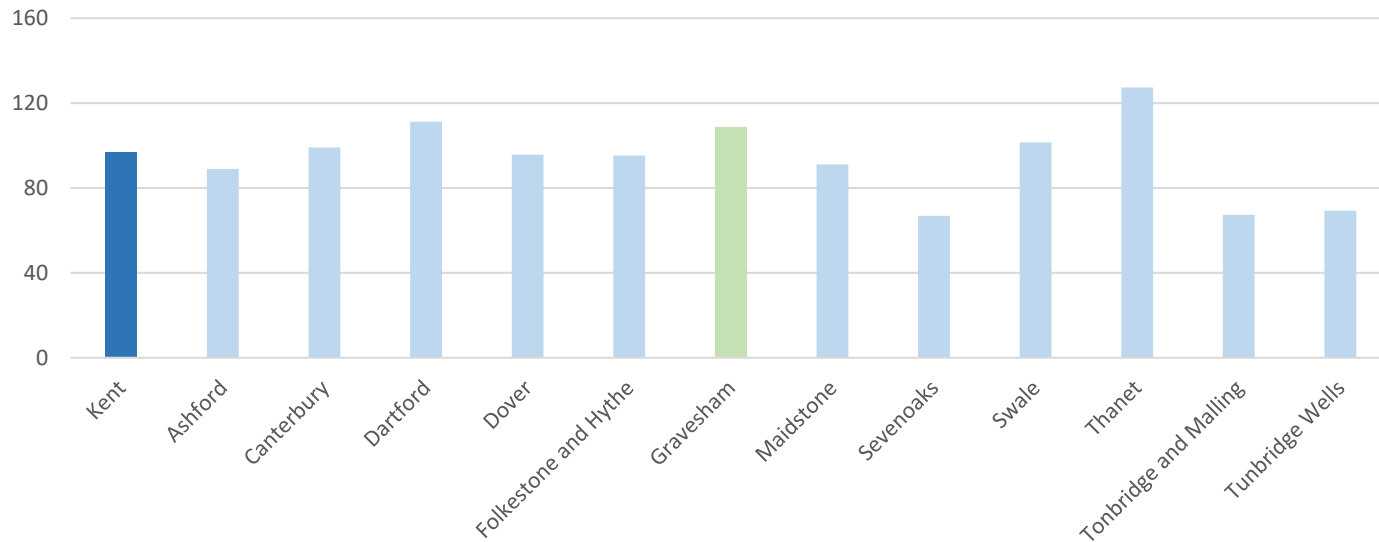


Table 13: VAT and/or PAYE based enterprises growth - 2010-2023

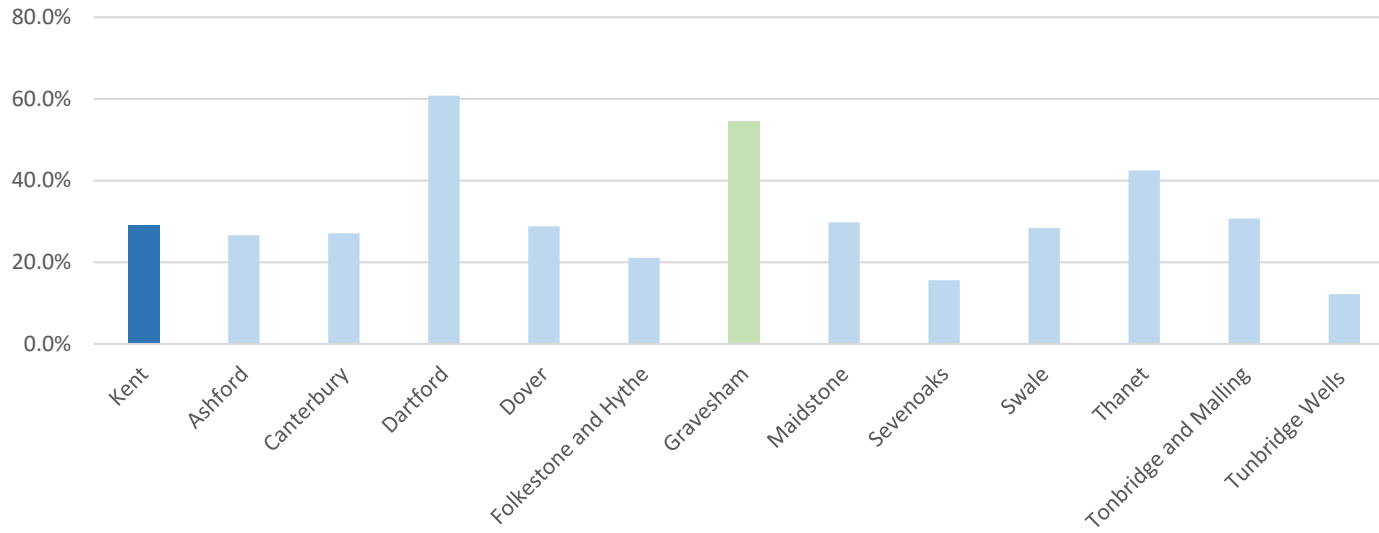


Table 14: Gravesham industrial profile - 2023

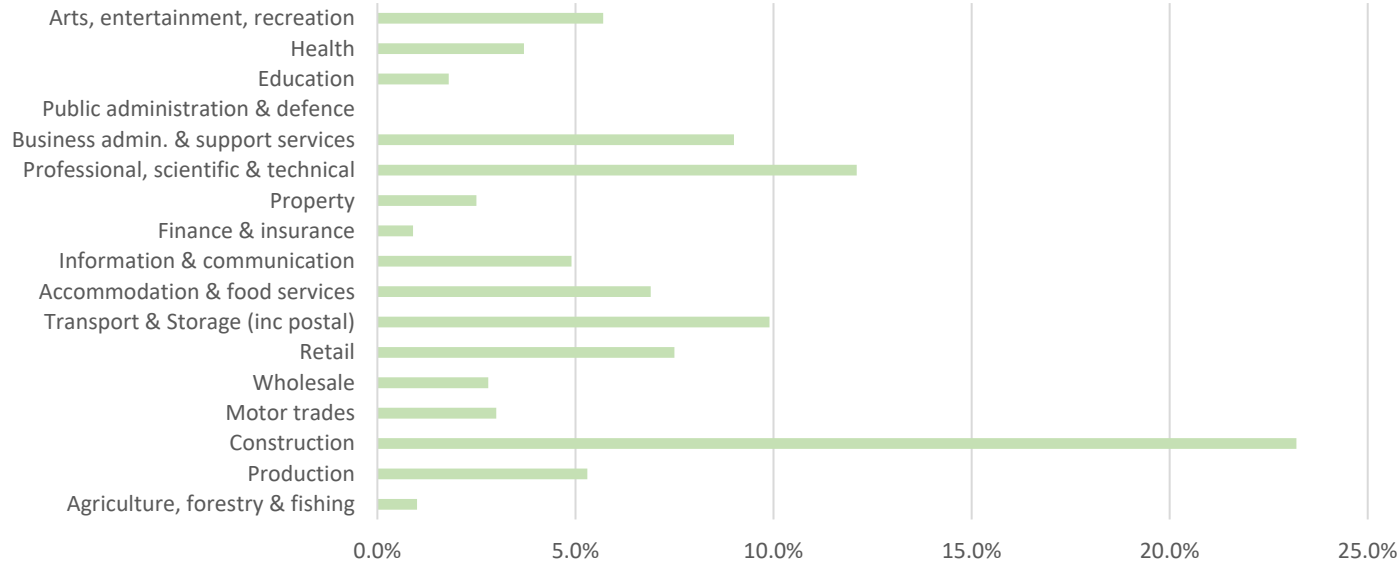


Table 15: Business Survival Rates (%) - 2017-2022

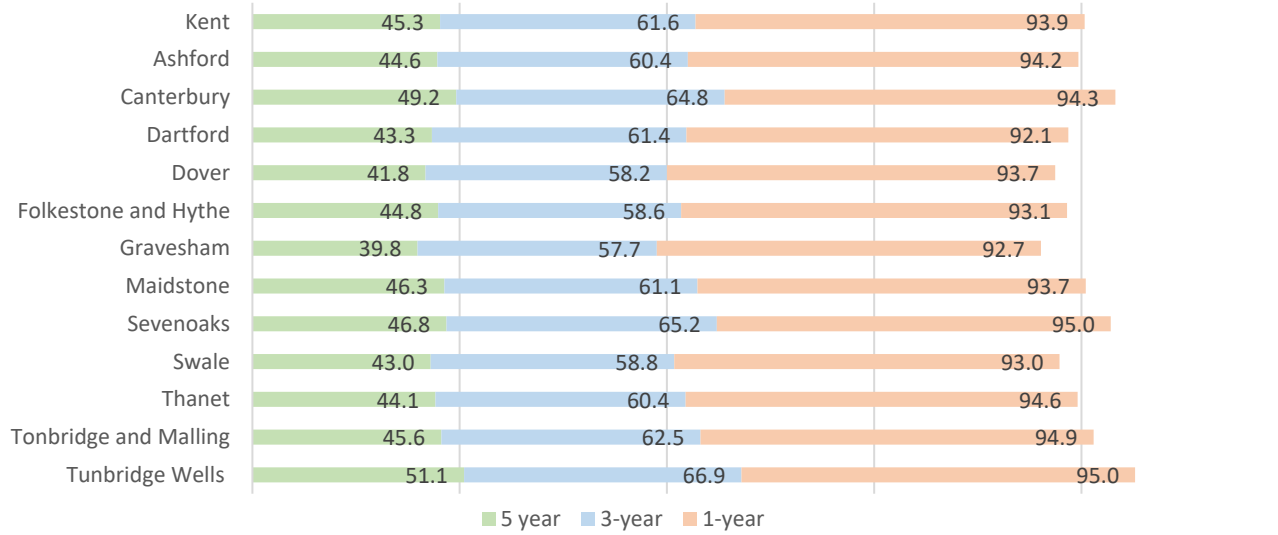


Table 16: Enterprises by employment sizebands - 2023

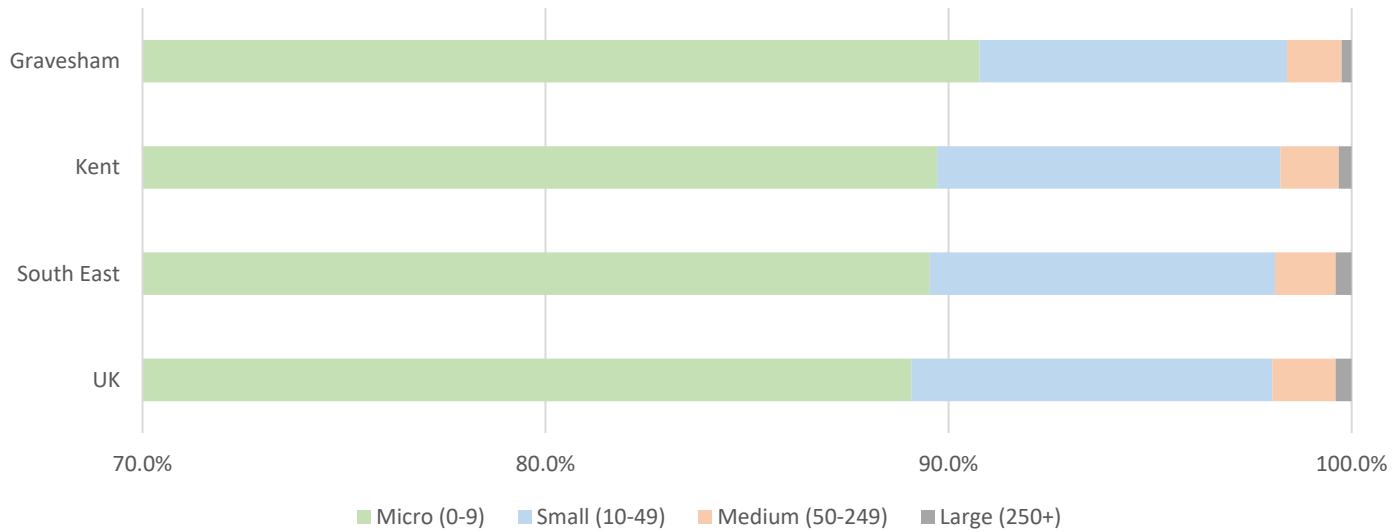




Table 17: GVA per hour worked - 2021

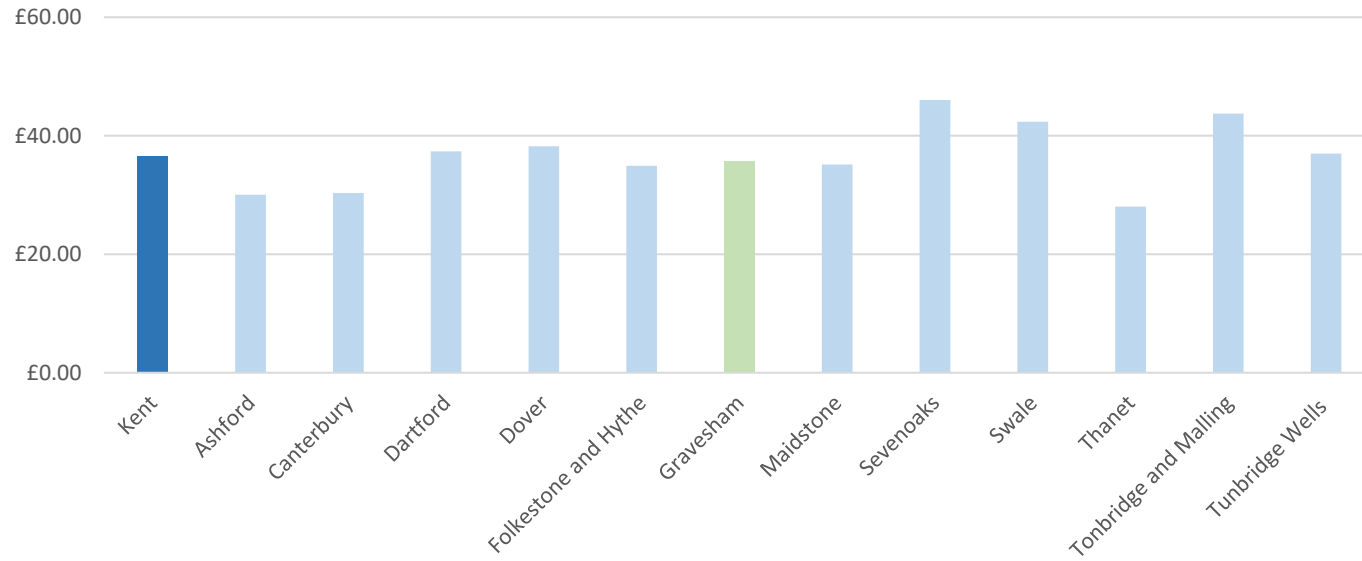


Table 18: Enterprises by turnover sizebands (£'000) - 2023

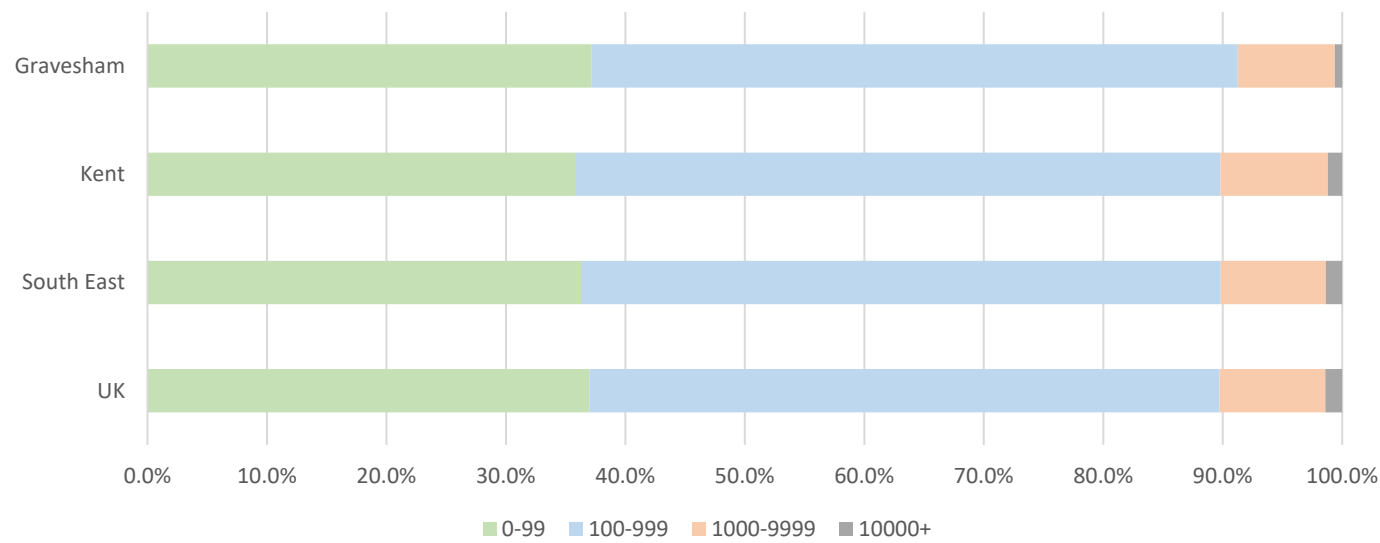


Table 19: Unemployment rate - October 2023

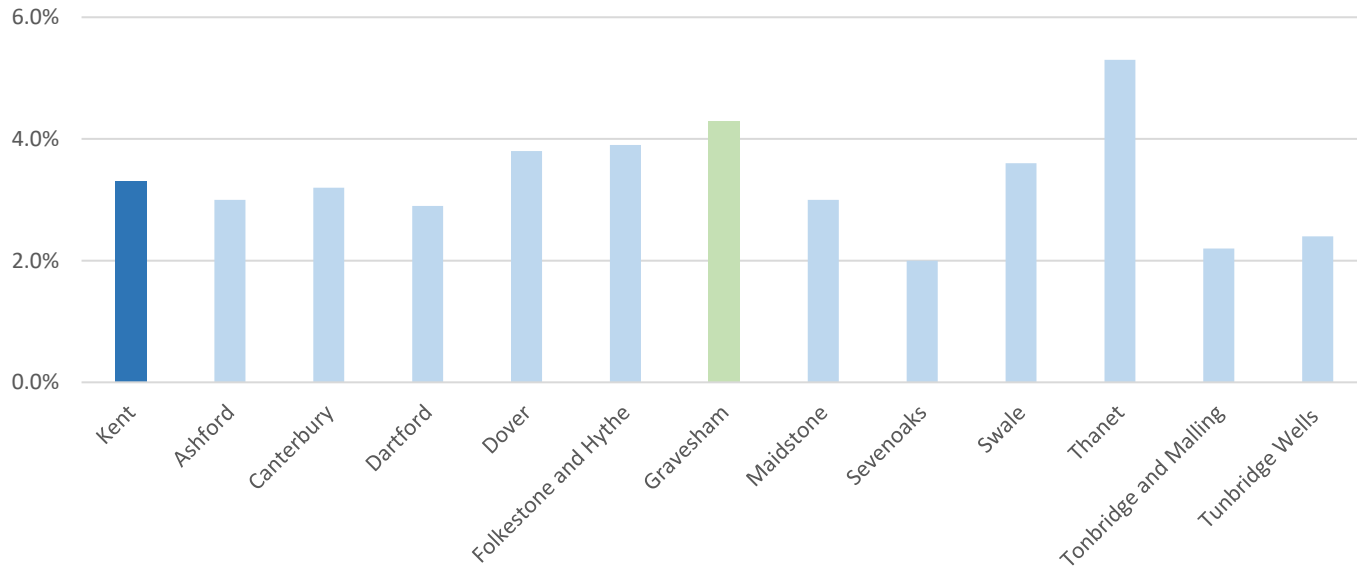


Table 20: Average weekly full-time earnings - 2022

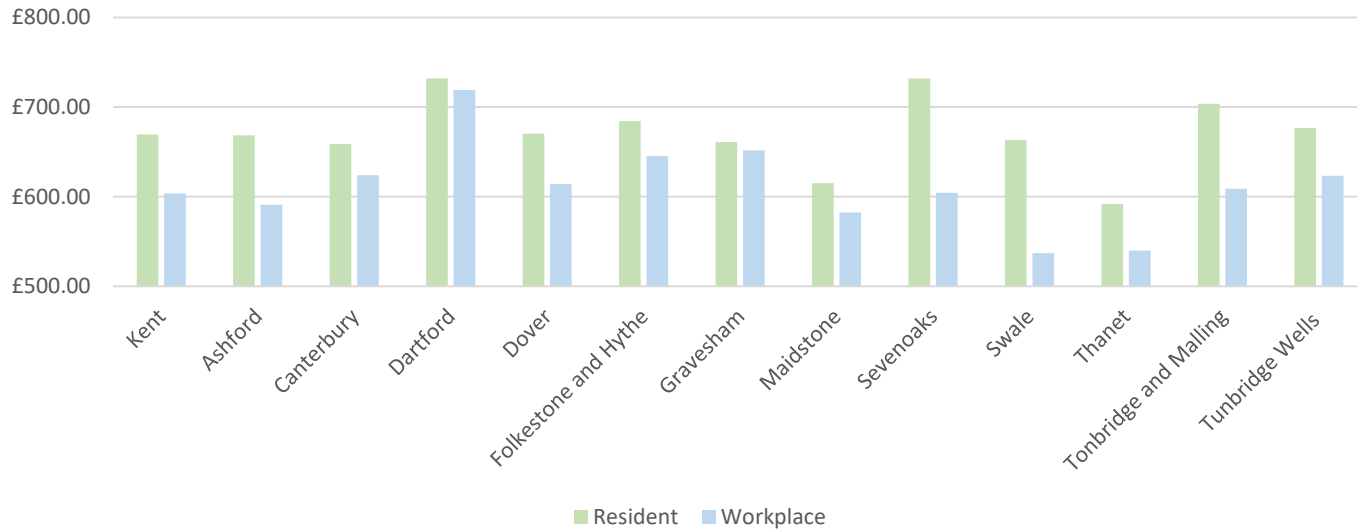


Table 21: Pupil capacity rate - 2022

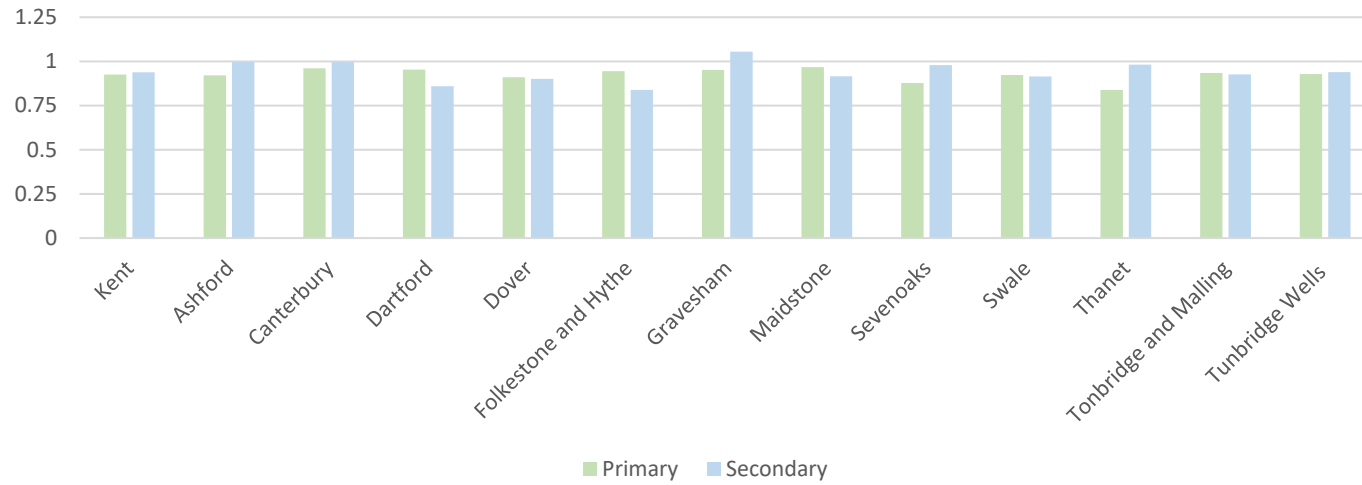


Table 22: SEN pupils in receipt of an EHCP

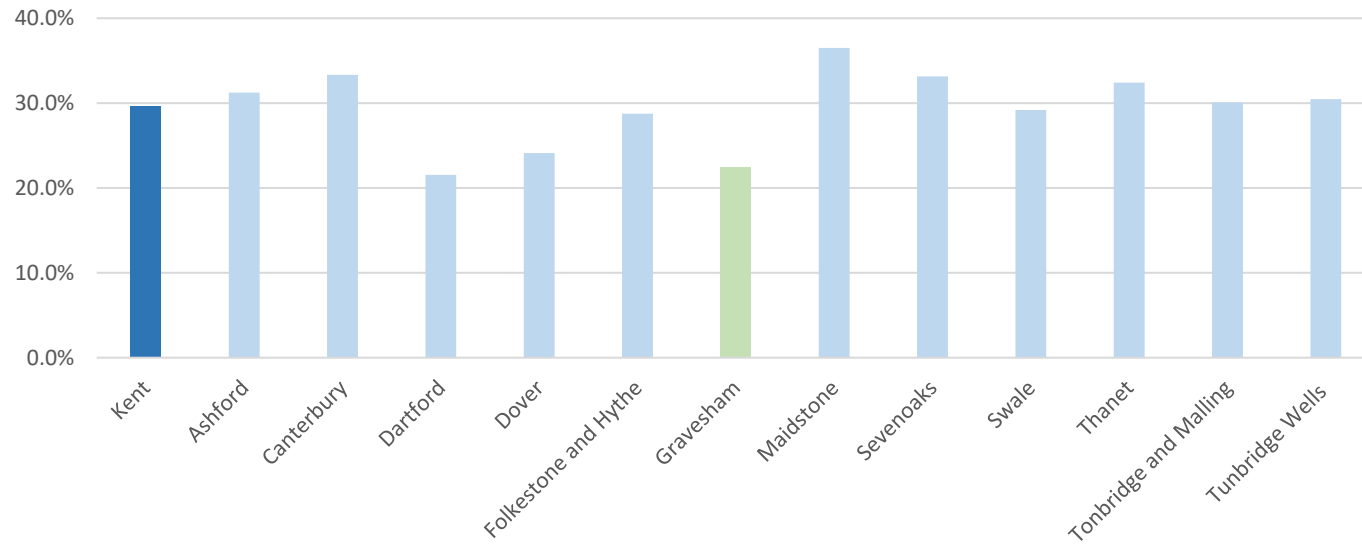


Table 23: Schools rated as good or outstanding - 2022

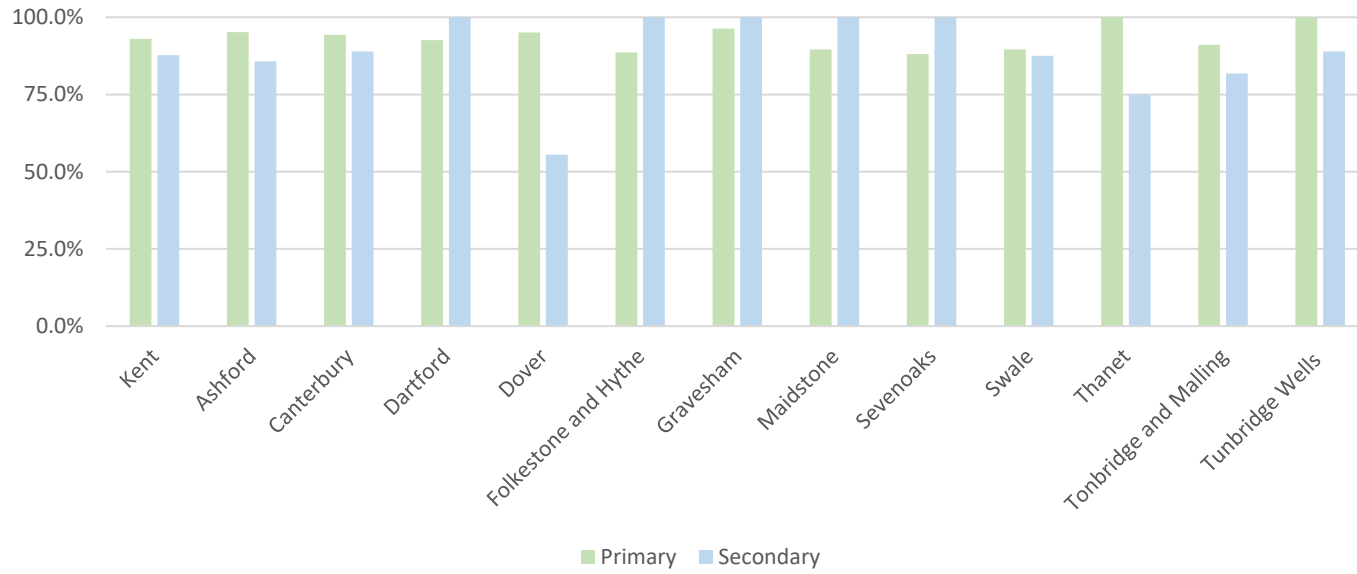


Table 24: Qualifications profile - 2021

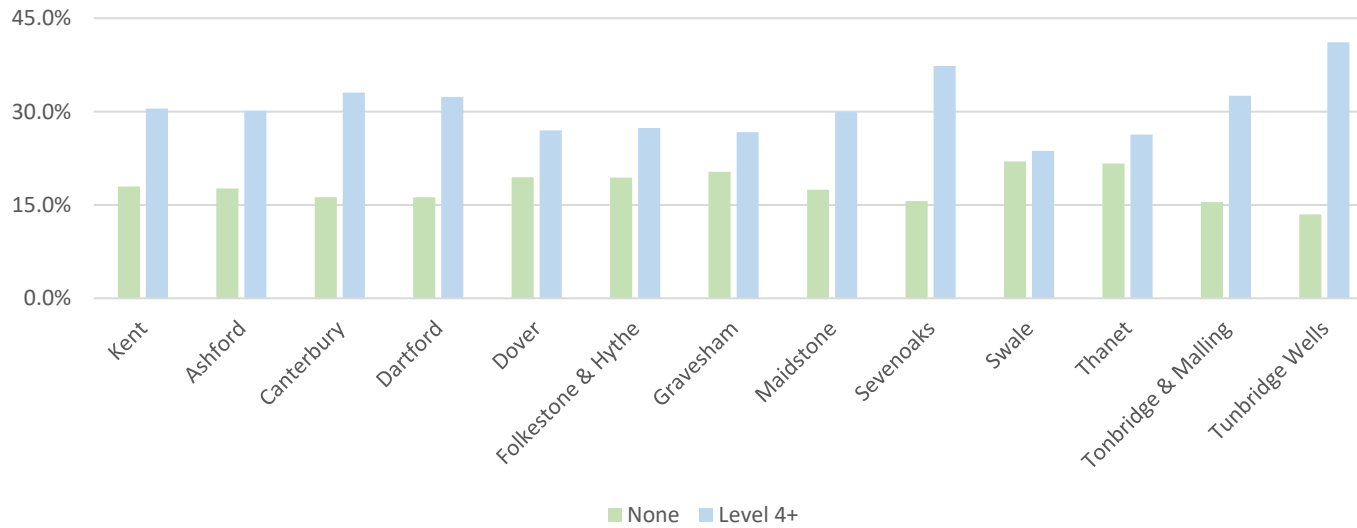


Table 25: Average life expectancy (1-year range) - 2021

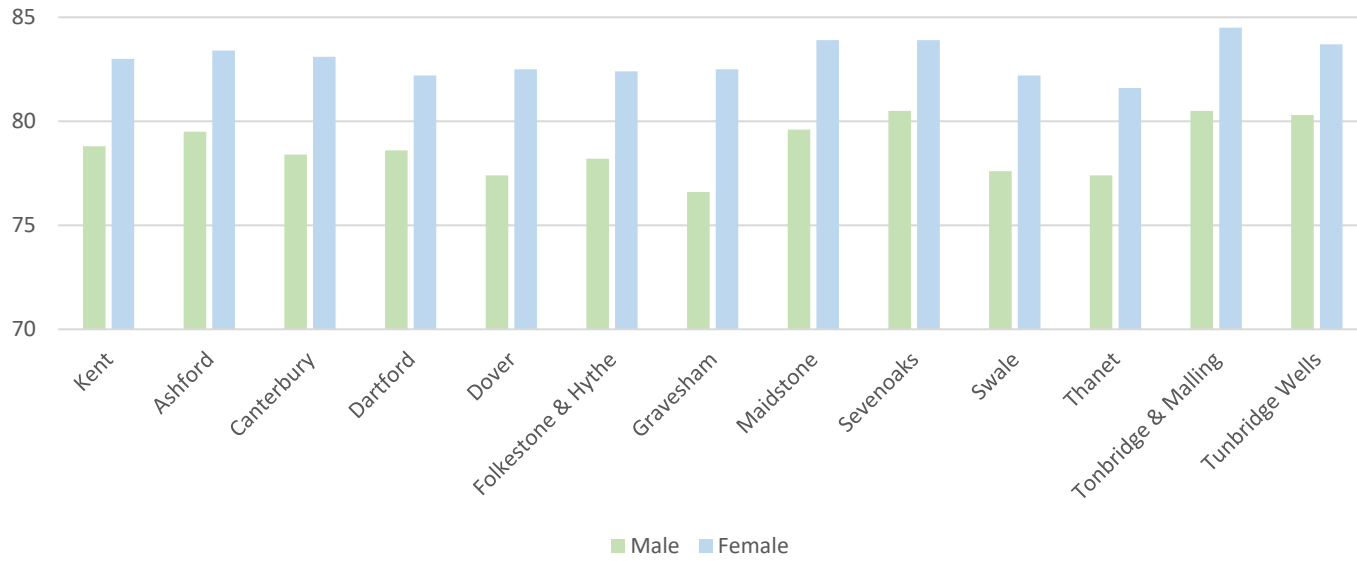


Table 26: People classified as obese or overweight - 2022

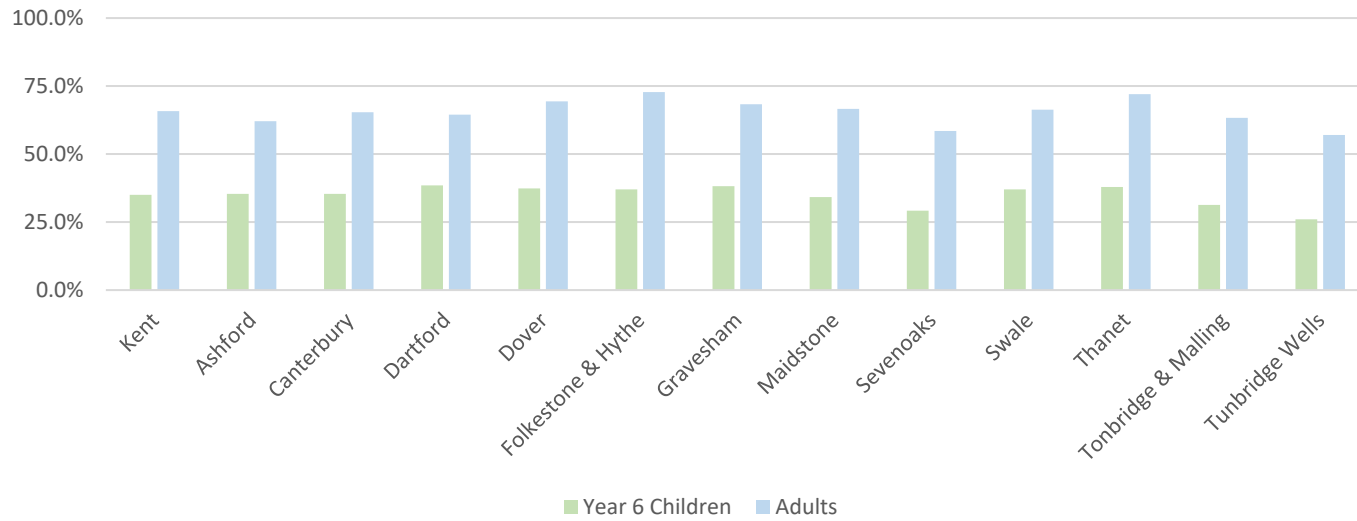


Table 27: People who provide unpaid care 50 or more hours a week

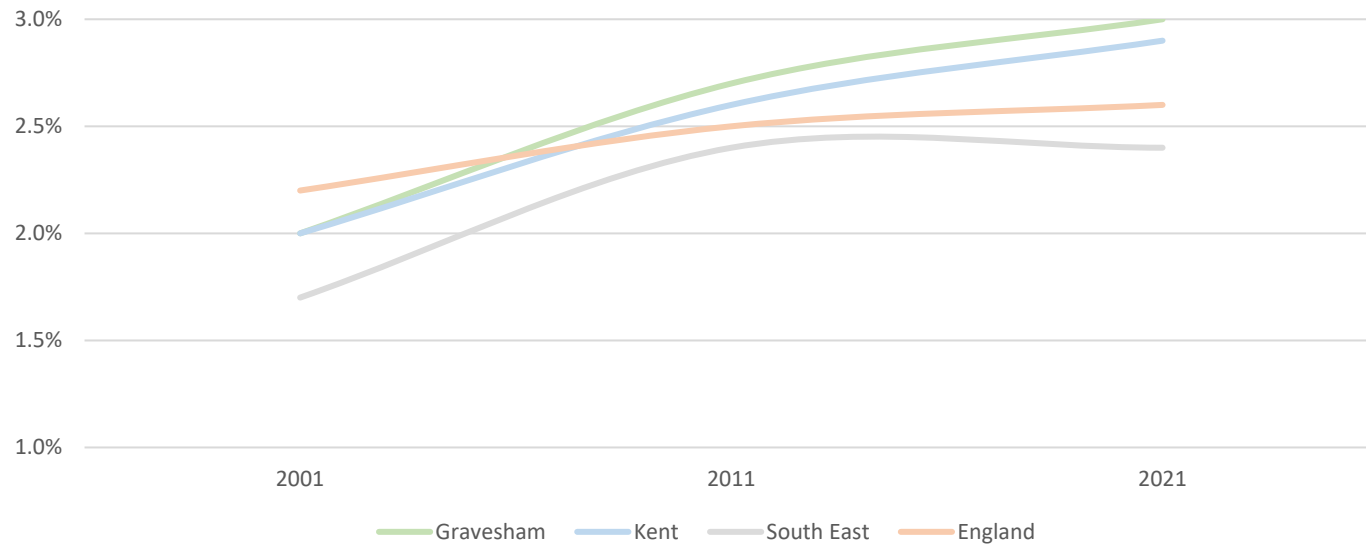


Table 28: Personal well-being rating - 2023



Table 29: % of homes over-occupied - 2021

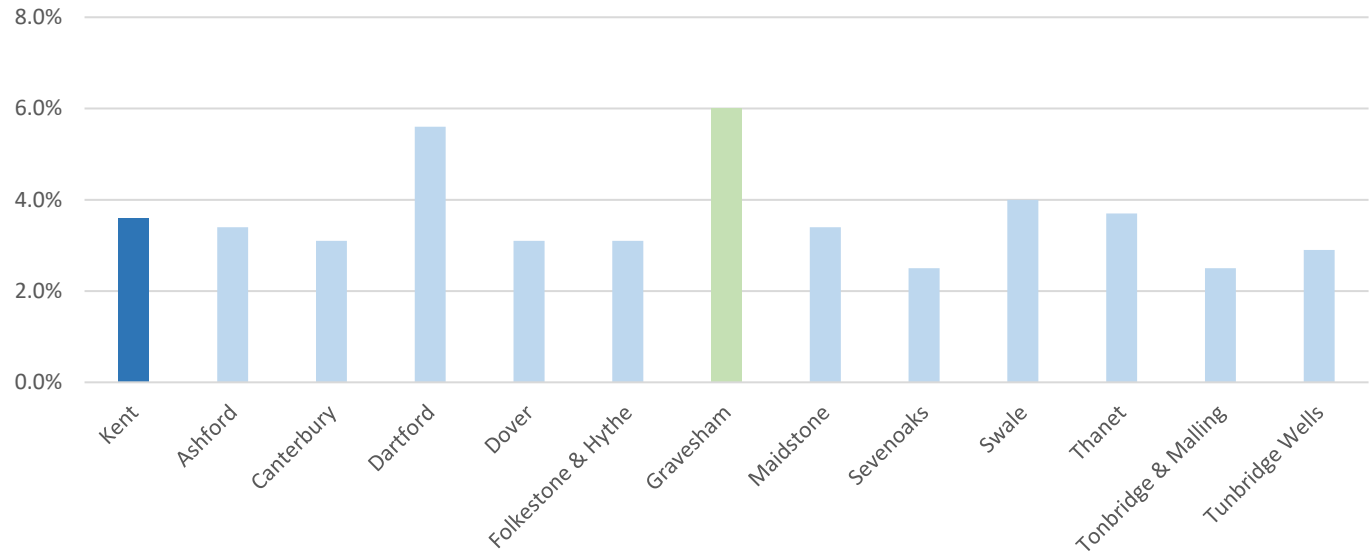


Table 30: Home ownership - 2001-2021

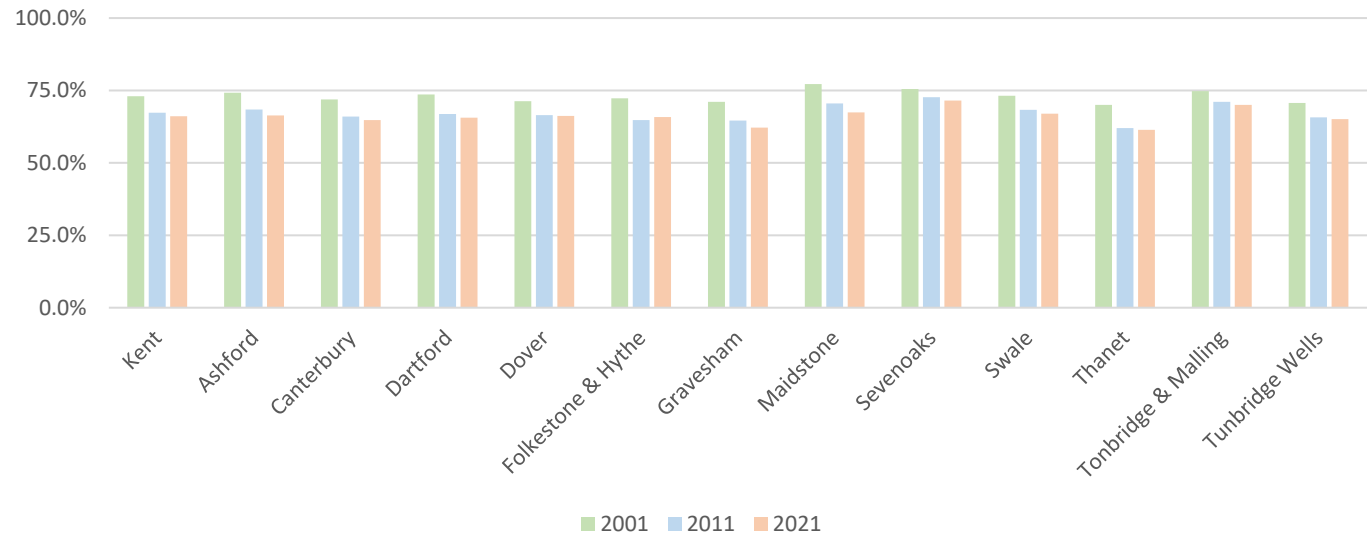




Table 31: Annual average price of all property types - September 2023

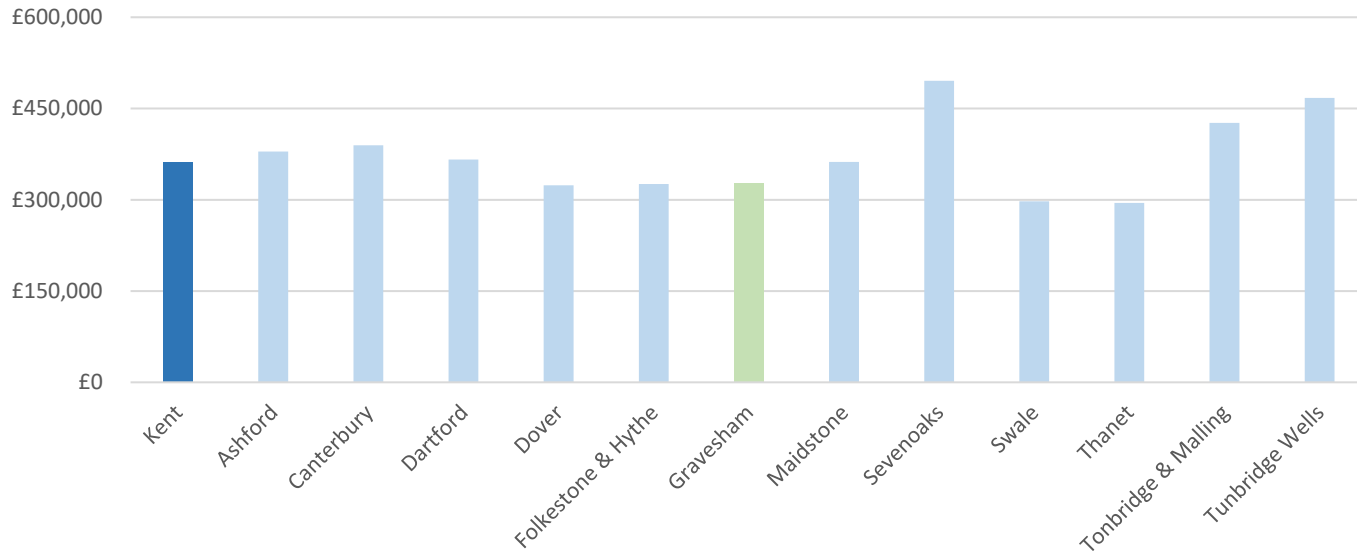


Table 32: Average monthly private housing rent - 2022

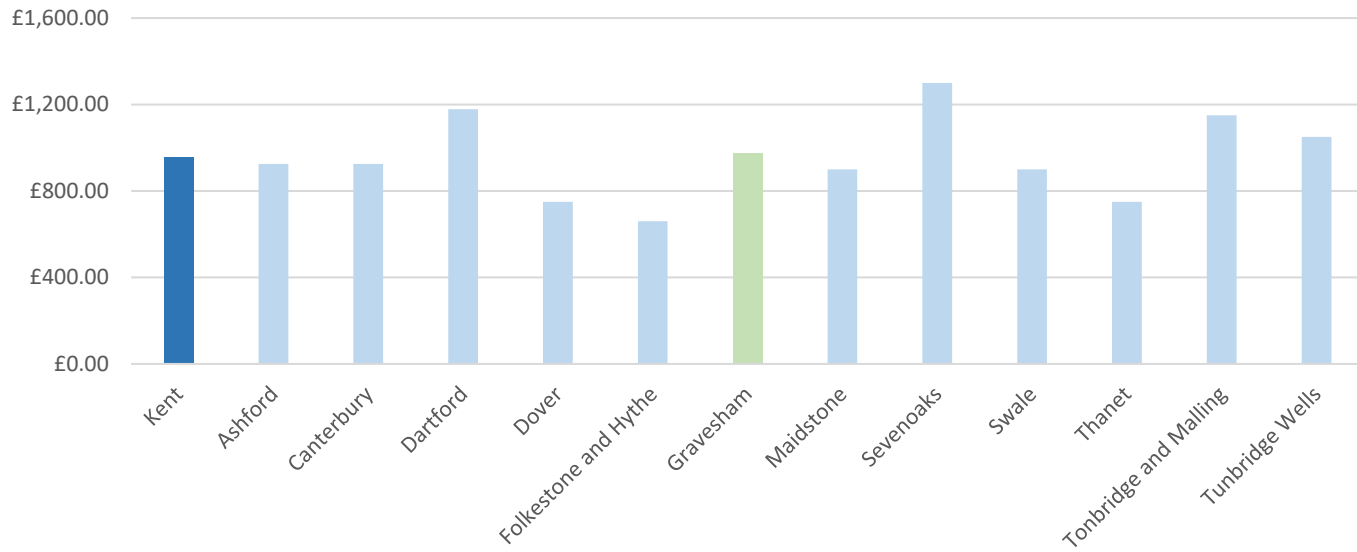


Table 33: Vacant homes - 2022

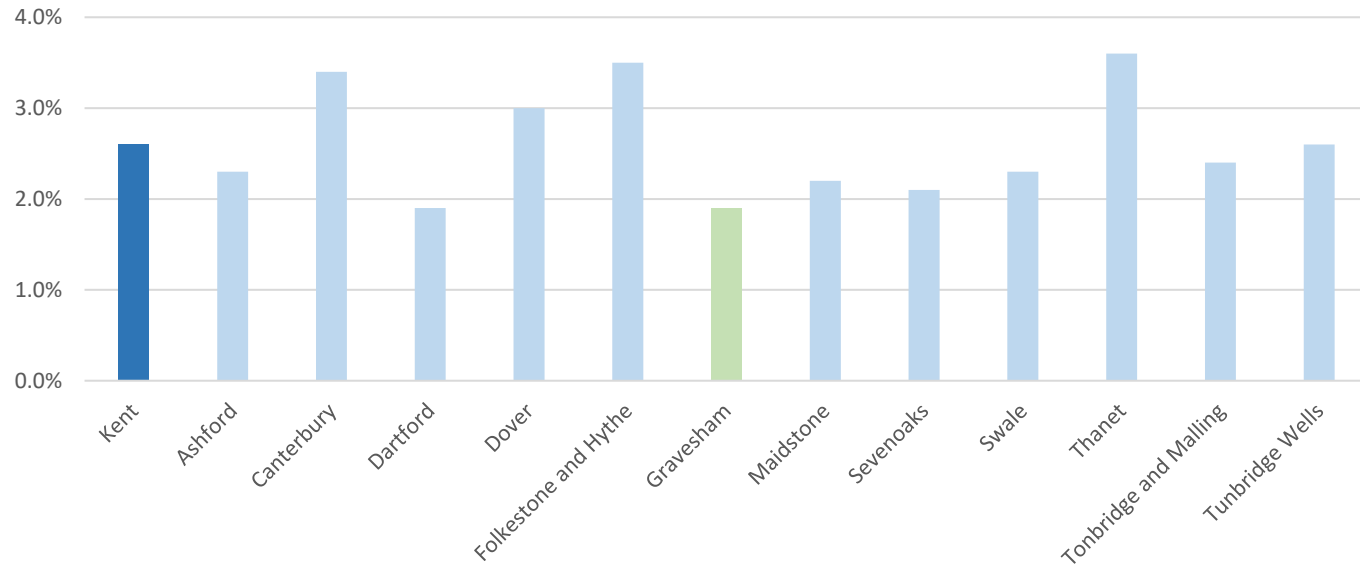


Table 34: Average weekly social housing rent - 2022

