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Migration and ethno-cultural characteristics

Measuring ethno-cultural characteristics in the 2011 Census of England and Wales

Note by the Office for National Statistics, United Kingdom

Summary

The 2011 Census in UK included a suite of questions on ethnicity, national identity, religion and language aimed allowing individual respondents to indicate their identity in the way they consider most appropriate, and thereby providing a detailed picture of the culturally diverse nature of the country's population.

The information collected on these topics varied slightly across the UK to meet the specific requirements of the individual constituent countries. This paper (using material from a number of published ONS reports¹⁻⁴) notes some of the key findings from the census as they relate to England and Wales. It reports that England and Wales has become more ethnically diverse with rising numbers of people identifying with minority ethnic groups. However, despite the 'White' ethnic group decreasing in size proportionately, it is still the majority ethnic group with which people choose to identify; some 86.0 per cent of the resident population did so compared with 91.3 per cent in 2001. Moreover, regardless of their main ethnic group, some 91.0 per cent of the population identified with at least one UK national identity.

The commonly reported religion was Christianity with 33.2 million people (59.3 per cent of the population). Muslims were the next largest religious group with 2.7 million people (4.8 per cent of the population). Some 14.1 million people said they had no religion, around a quarter (25.1 per cent) of the population.

Over 9 in 10 people aged three and over (92.3 per cent) reported 'English' (or 'Welsh' in Wales) as their main language. Of the remaining 7.7 per cent who had a main language other than English (or Welsh), Polish was the main language most often reported (by 546,000 people). Only 1.3 per cent (726,000) reported that they could not speak English well, and only 0.3 per cent (138,000) reported that they could not speak English at all.

I. Ethno-cultural characteristics

A. Introduction

1. A question on *ethnicity* has been included in the census since the 1991. The information collected enables national and local government and health service providers to allocate resources and plan programmes taking account of the special needs of ethnic minority groups. In particular, response to the question provides baseline figures against which the Government can monitor possible racial discrimination, social exclusion and inequalities within minority groups. The classification of ethnic groups used in the Census is now widely regarded as a standard for inter-censal surveys and ethnic monitoring. Different versions of the question were used in the different countries within the UK. The version used in England is shown at Figure 1(a)
2. In addition, for the 2011 Census a new separate component to the question asked about *national identity* was included to allow people, regardless of the broad ethnic group to record themselves, specifically as ‘English’, ‘Scottish’, ‘Welsh’ or ‘Northern Irish’, or any other national identity. Again, different versions of the question were used in the UK. Figure 1(b) shows the version asked in England.
3. Although a question on *religion* has traditionally been included in the census in Northern Ireland information was only collected throughout the UK for the first time in 2001. Responses to the question help provide information which supplements the output from the ethnicity question by identifying ethnic minority sub-groups, particularly those originating from the Indian sub-continent, in terms of their religion. Information is used to improve understanding of local populations and markets for service planning and to promote legal obligations under equality legislation and to prevent discrimination. As with the ethnicity question, different versions were asked across the UK. Figure 2 shows the version used in England.
4. A question on *main language* and ability to speak English included in the UK census for the first time in 2011 (in addition to those questions on knowledge of Celtic languages (Welsh, Gaelic and Irish) that have traditionally been asked in the census in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland since the 19th century). The information collected has highlighted areas and communities where foreign language service provision is necessary, and enables a better understand the diversity of the population and in particular the impact of English language ability on employment and other social inclusion indicators. Figure 3 again shows the version of the questions asked in England.
5. Full data for the UK on these topics is not yet available, so this paper restricts its analyses to the results of the census in England and Wales.

Figure 1(a) The 2011 Census ethnicity question asked in England (left), and Figure 1(b) The 2011 Census national identity question asked in England (right)

<p>16 What is your ethnic group?</p> <p>Choose one section from A to E, then tick one box to best describe your ethnic group or background</p> <p>A White</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British <input type="checkbox"/> Irish <input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy or Irish Traveller <input type="checkbox"/> Any other White background, write in <input type="text"/> <p>B Mixed / multiple ethnic groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> White and Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> White and Black African <input type="checkbox"/> White and Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background, write in <input type="text"/> <p>C Asian / Asian British</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Any other Asian background, write in <input type="text"/> <p>D Black / African / Caribbean / Black British</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> African <input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, write in <input type="text"/> <p>E Other ethnic group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Arab <input type="checkbox"/> Any other ethnic group, write in <input type="text"/> 	<p>15 How would you describe your national identity?</p> <p>Tick all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Welsh <input type="checkbox"/> Scottish <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Irish <input type="checkbox"/> British <input type="checkbox"/> Other, write in <input type="text"/>
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Figure 2 The 2011 Census question on religion asked in England

<p>20 What is your religion?</p> <p>This question is voluntary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No religion <input type="checkbox"/> Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations) <input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist <input type="checkbox"/> Hindu <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish <input type="checkbox"/> Muslim <input type="checkbox"/> Sikh <input type="checkbox"/> Any other religion, write in <input type="text"/>
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Figure 3 the 2011 Census questions on language

<p>18 What is your main language?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> English GO TO 20 <input type="checkbox"/> Other, write in (including sign language) <input type="text"/> 	<p>19 How well can you speak English?</p> <p>Very well Well Not well Not at all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Very well <input type="checkbox"/> Well <input type="checkbox"/> Not well <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all
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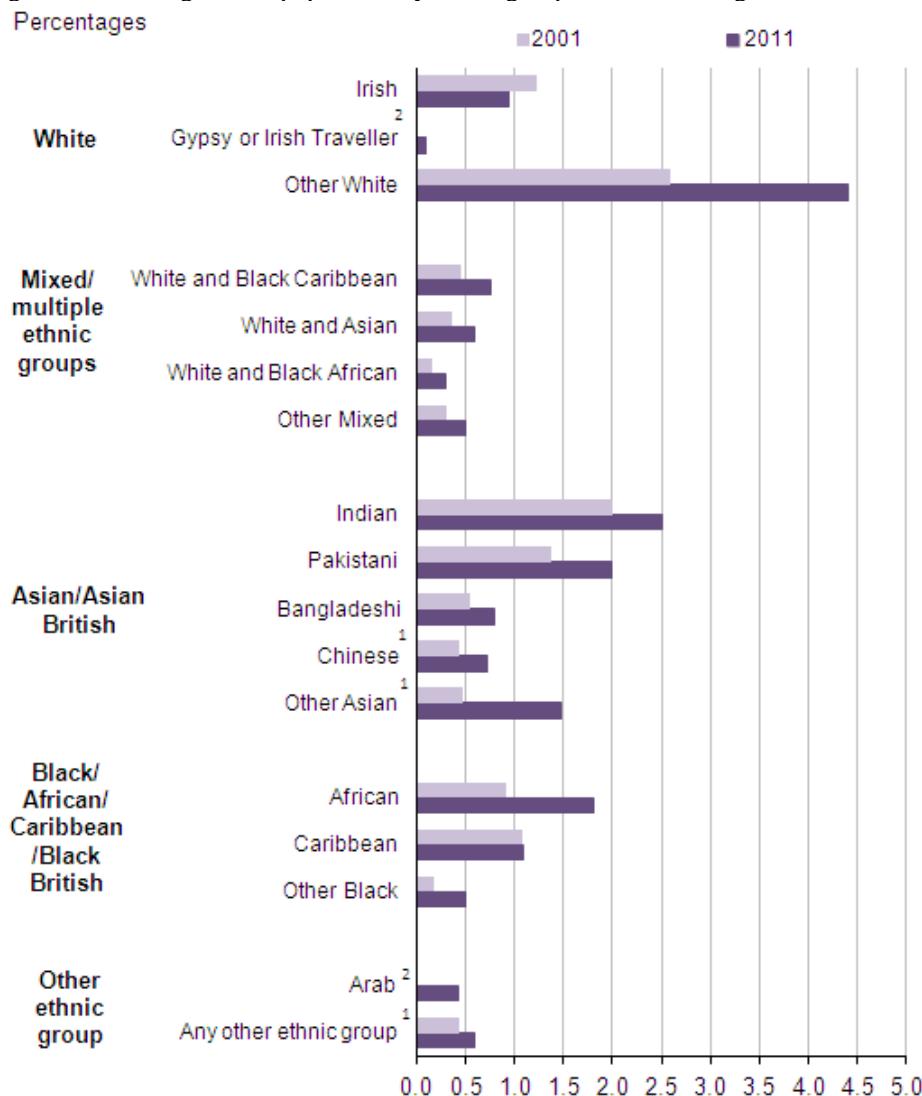
II. Ethnic group

A. The national picture

6. The majority of the usual resident population, 48.2 million people (86.0 per cent of the population), reported their main ethnic group as 'White' in the 2011 Census. Within this group, 'White British' was the largest sub-category, with 45.1 million people (80.5 per cent), followed by the residual 'Any Other White' with 2.5 million people (4.4 per cent) (Figure 4).

7. Indian was the next largest main ethnic group with 1.4 million people (2.5 per cent) followed by Pakistani (2.0 per cent). This is consistent with census results on international migration which found that South Asian countries (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) continued to rank highly within the most common non-UK countries of birth. The remaining ethnic groups each accounted for up to 2 per cent of the population in 2011.

Figure 4 Percentage of the population by ethnic group, 2001-2011 England and Wales



8. Over the last two decades England and Wales has become more ethnically diverse. While 'White' continued to be the majority ethnic group with which people identify, it decreased proportionately over the last two decades. In 1991, the 'White' group accounted for 94.1 per cent of the population. Between 1991 and 2001, this group decreased to 91.3 per cent, and the trend continued throughout the following decade with a further decrease to 86.0 per cent. Within the main 'White' ethnic group, 'White British' had decreased from 87.5 per cent in 2001 to 80.5 per cent in 2011.

9. However, the reader should note that caution is needed when comparing census ethnic data generally between censuses due to changes (a) to the number (and order) of tick box responses offered and (b) how the questions were worded. Since the 1991 Census, for example, the number of tick boxes has increased from nine to 18 together with some changes to tick box labels, placement and question instructions. Changes to the questionnaire were made to improve data collection and accuracy of the results, but such improvements will affect direct comparability of 2011 and 2001 statistics. For example:

(a) The re-positioning of the 'Chinese' tick box from 'Any other ethnic group' to Asian/Asian British means that the 'Asian other' and 'Asian' populations will not be comparable between 2001 and 2011. There may be some impact on responses to the 'White and Asian' tick box under the 'Mixed/multiple ethnic groups' category;

(b) The inclusion of a new tick box for 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' means that respondents that used the new tick-box in 2011 may have identified as 'British', 'Irish' or 'Any other White background' in 2001. However, 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' accounted for just 58,000 usual residents (0.1 per cent of the population), making it the smallest ethnic category (with a tick box) in 2011;

(c) Similarly data from the 2001 Census suggested that many British Arabs ticked one of the 'Other' categories whereas in 2011 there was a new specific 'Arab' tick box response available to them. 'Arab' responses accounted for 240,000 usual residents (0.4 per cent of the population);

10. Notwithstanding this proviso, it is clear that while the main 'White' ethnic group decreased proportionately over the last two decades (this trend is supported by evidence from other sources of data such as the ONS Annual Population Survey), the remaining minority ethnic groups have continued to grow since the 1991 Census. Examination of the detailed minority ethnic groups shows how ethnic diversity in England and Wales has indeed changed;

(a) The 'Any Other White' category had the largest proportional increase among all the ethnic groups, with an increase of 1.1 million (1.8 percentage points) between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses. This includes, for example people born in Poland who were the second largest group of non-UK born residents in 2011 and whose population increased by 0.5 million (a nine-fold increase) between 2001 and 2011;

(b) The 'Asian/Asian British' ethnic group categories had some of the largest increases between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses. People identifying as Pakistani and Indian each increased by around 0.4 million (0.5 percentage points and 0.6 percentage points respectively);

(c) Each of the remaining ethnic groups showed small increases of up to 1 per cent.

B. Regional differences in diversity

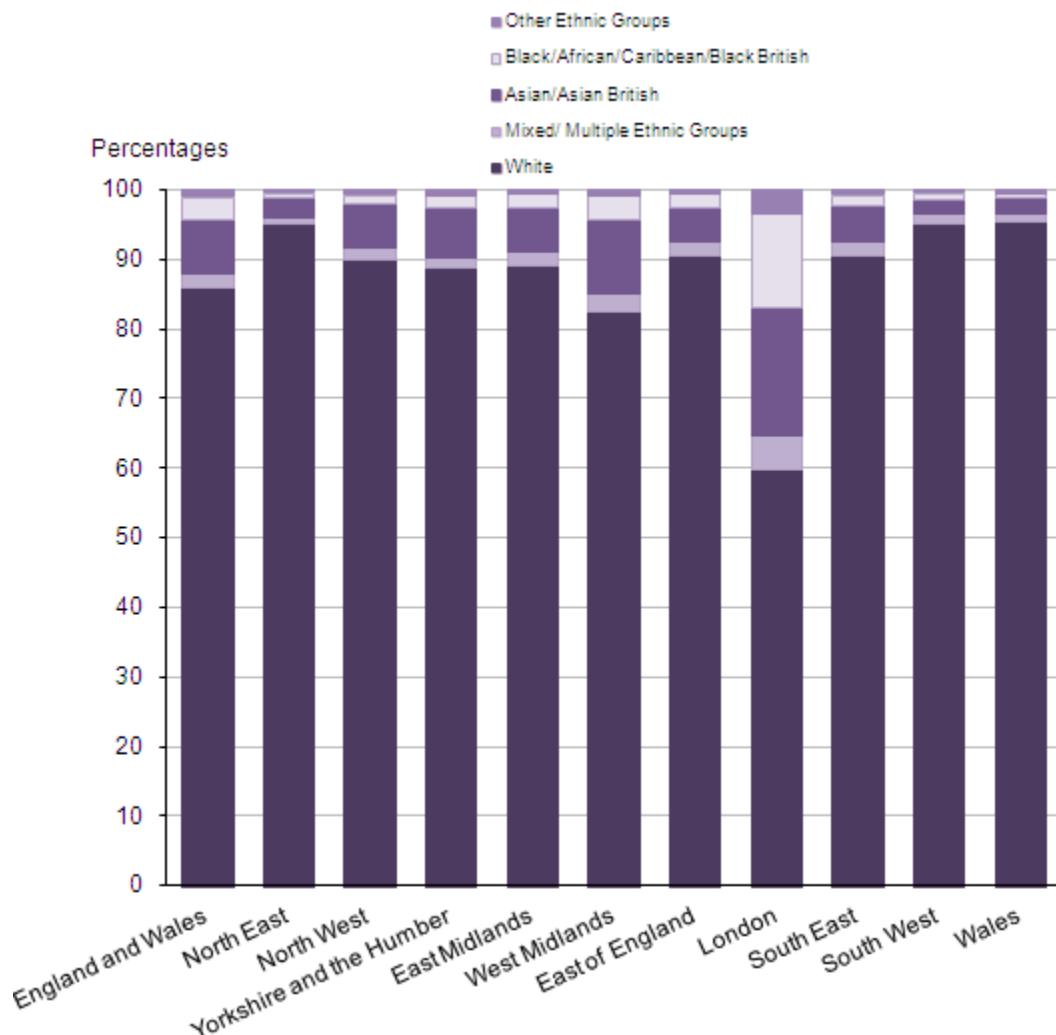
11. Across the English regions and Wales, London was the most ethnically diverse area, with the highest proportion of minority ethnic groups and the lowest proportion of the

'White' ethnic group at 59.8 per cent, in 2011 (Figure 5). London had above average proportions for most minority ethnic groups including 'African' (7.0 per cent), 'Indian' (6.6 per cent), and 'Caribbean' (4.2 per cent). It also had the highest incidence of 'Any Other White' at 12.6 per cent.

12. The West Midlands (which includes the major city of Birmingham) was the second most diverse with the 'White' ethnic group at 79.2 per cent and higher than average percentages of minority ethnic groups: 'Pakistani' at 4.1 per cent, 'Indian' at 3.9 per cent and 'Caribbean' at 1.5 per cent. It also had a lower than average 'White' ethnic group at 82.7 per cent.

13. Wales was the least diverse area, followed by the South West and North East. Over 95 per cent of the population identified themselves as 'White' in these areas. Wales had the lowest percentage of minority ethnic groups, with the majority at 1 per cent and below (excluding 'Any Other White' at 1.8 per cent). Within the 'White' ethnic group, the North East had the highest percentage of White British at 93.6 per cent, followed by Wales at 93.2 per cent and the South West at 91.8 per cent.

Figure 5 Percentage of population by ethnic group, 2011, English regions and Wales



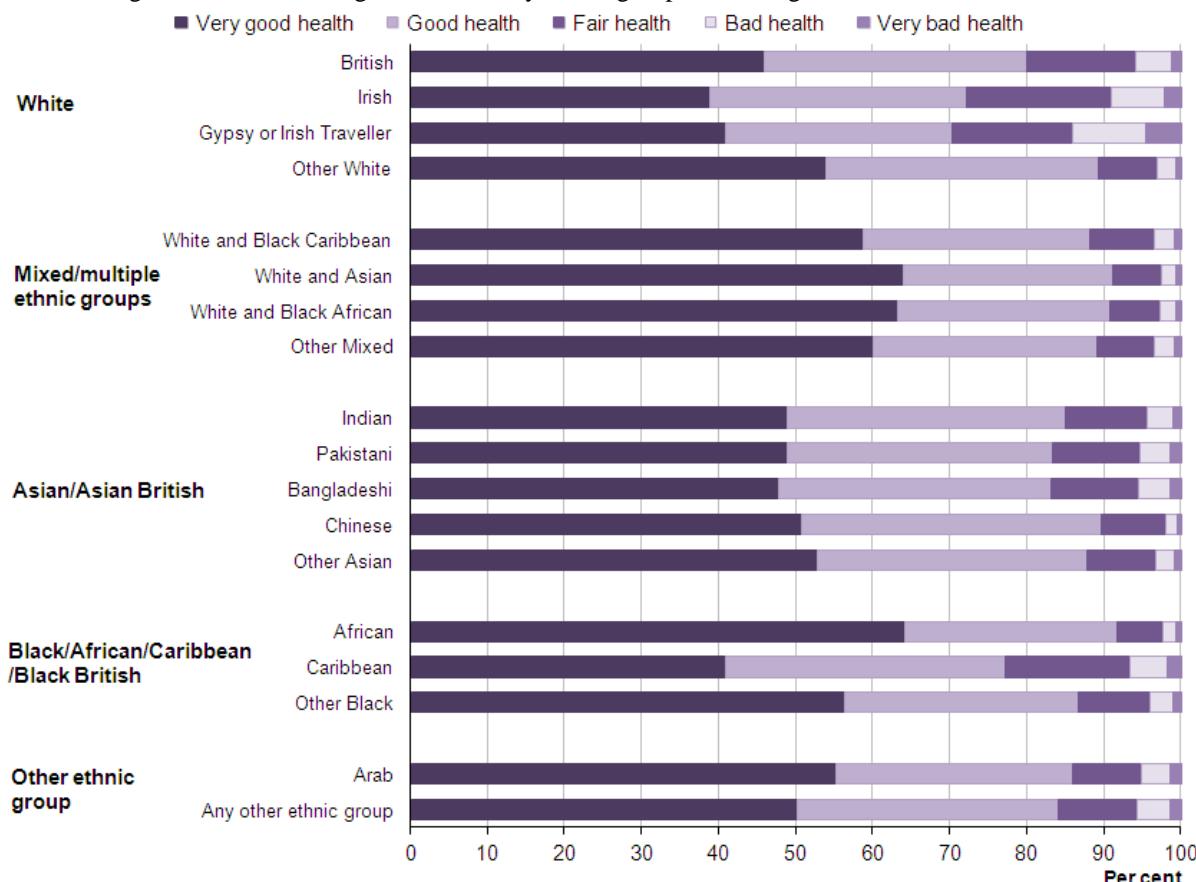
14. Ethnically diverse areas, such as London, had the greatest proportional changes since the 2001 Census, while the least diverse areas such as Wales had the smallest

proportional changes. London had the greatest changes across the majority of the ethnic groups between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses. While ‘White British’ decreased by 14.9 percentage points, ‘Any Other White’ and ‘Any Other Asian’ had increased by 4.4 and 3.0 percentage points respectively. The West Midlands also displayed significant changes across the ethnic groups: ‘White British’ decreased by 7 percentage points and ‘Any Other White’, and ‘Caribbean’ both increased by 1.3 percentage points. Wales and the North East had the smallest changes across the majority of the ethnic groups, with ‘White British’ decreasing by 2.8 percentage points and all other ethnic groups increasing by less than a 1 percentage point.

C. Ethnic inequalities in health

15. Ethnic inequalities in health are well known⁵, generally showing a poorer health profile among ethnic minority groups compared with the overall population. However, there are limited data sources available to assess health variations by different ethnic groups. The inclusion of a self-assessment question on general health in the 2011 Census has provided an opportunity to investigate the relationship between ethnic group and health inequality at a level of breakdown, not available from other data sources.

Figure 6 Variations in general health by ethnic group, 2011, England and Wales



16. The 2011 Census included a question about general health, asking people to rate their health as either ‘Very good’, ‘Good’, ‘Fair’, ‘Bad’ or ‘Very bad’. In 2011, 81.2 per cent of people (45.5 million) in England and Wales reported their general health as either ‘Very good’ or ‘Good’ (referred to in this paper collectively as ‘Good health’) and 18.8 per cent (10.5 million) rated their health as ‘Fair’, ‘Bad’ or ‘Very bad’ (referred to here as ‘Not

good health'). Across the different ethnic groups, there was a very diverse picture of general health, and even within ethnic groups there was substantial variability

17. Figure 6 shows, for example, that the 'Black African' ethnic group had the highest proportion of people whose health was assessed as 'Very good' (64.2 per cent) or 'Good' (27.4 per cent) whereas, the 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' group had the lowest proportion, with only 40.9 per cent rating their general health as 'Very good' and 29.3 per cent as 'Good'.

18. To some extent, the variability in general health among different ethnic groups can be explained by their differing age structures. For example, the 'White' ethnic groups are among those with the highest levels of 'Not Good' general health partly due to an ageing population with ailments associated with old age. Of the Irish population, 27.8 per cent had 'Not good' health, the second highest ethnic group in England and Wales. This is partly explained by the fact that 30.7 per cent of the Irish population in England and Wales are aged 65 or above (median age 53), compared with only 16.4 per cent of the population as a whole. Conversely only 10.4 per cent of people with Chinese ethnicity reported 'Not good' health - consistent with the much younger age structure of the Chinese population in England and Wales among whom 20.6 per cent were aged between 20 and 24 (median age 28).

D. National identity

19. The 2011 Census introduced a question on national identity for the first time. This was a the result of an increased interest in 'national' consciousness and demand from people (most strongly expressed in Wales) to acknowledge their national identity. National identity is multi-dimensional, so respondents were given the option of indicating more than one national identity. Some 91.0 per cent of the population identified with at least one UK national identity (English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, and British).

20. 'English' identity (either on its own or combined with other identities) was the most common identity reported (37.6 million people, 67.1 per cent). 'English' as a sole identity (not combined with other identities), was chosen by 32.4 million people (57.7 per cent).

21. 'British' identity (either on its own or combined with other identities) was chosen by 16.3 million people (29.1 per cent), of whom 10.7 million people (19.1 per cent) identified themselves solely as 'British'. Welsh identity was chosen by 2.4 million people (4.3 per cent) either on its own or combined with other identities), of whom 2 million people (3.7 per cent) identified themselves as 'Welsh' only. A small percentage of people in England and Wales associated reported themselves as having a 'Scottish' or 'Northern Irish' identity (1.0 per cent and 0.3 per cent respectively), while 5.5 million people (9.8 per cent) said they had an 'Other' national identity

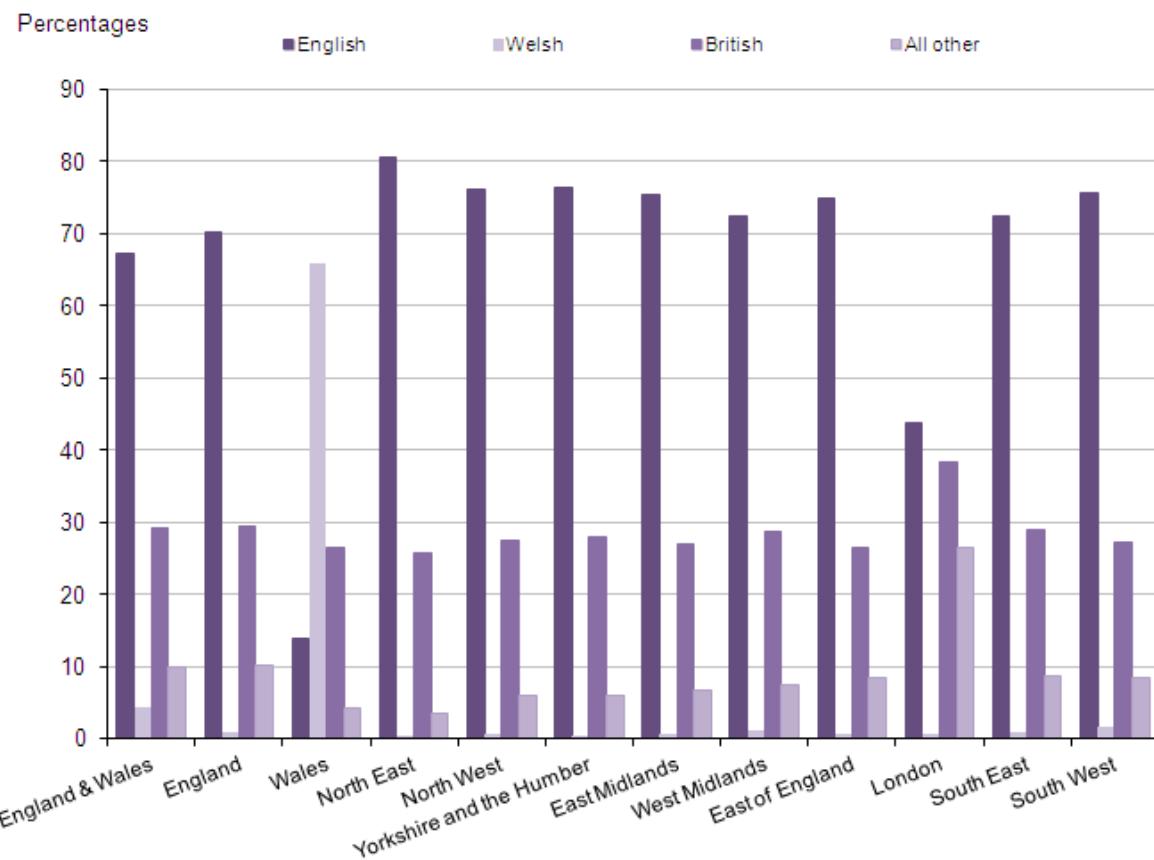
22. However, a person's national identity can depend on many factors such as where they live, country of birth and ethnicity. For instance, 70.1 per cent of people residing in England associated themselves with an 'English' identity (on its own or combined with other identities) and 65.9 per cent of people in Wales said they were 'Welsh' (on its own or combined with other identities) (Figure 7). Other key findings were:

(a) The highest percentage of the population with an 'English' identity (on its own or combined with other identities) was found in the North East at 80.5 per cent, an area (as previously noted) with a high 'White' ethnic population;

(b) The highest percentage of the population with a 'British' identity (on its own or combined with other identities) was found in London at 38.3 per cent, the ethnically most diverse area. Not surprisingly then, London also had the highest percentage of people

associating with an ‘Other’ national identity (26.4 per cent) and the lowest with an ‘English’ identity (43.7 per cent);

Figure 7 Regional distribution of residents by national identity, 2011



23. The overall percentage of people identifying as ‘Cornish’ (on its own or combined with other identities) in England and Wales was low at 83,000 people (0.1 per cent). However, within Cornwall 13.8 per cent of the population reported themselves as ‘Cornish’.

E. Religion

24. Despite falling numbers, Christianity (33.2 million people (59.3 per cent of the population) remains the largest reported religion in England and Wales (Figure 8). Between 2001 and 2011 there had been a decrease in people who identify as Christian (from 71.7 per cent to 59.3 per cent), whereas among the next biggest group, Muslims (2.7 million people in 2011, the proportion had increased from 3.0 per cent to 4.8 per cent). Meanwhile the proportion of the population who reported they have no religion has now reached a quarter of the population (25.1 per cent) compared with just one in seven (14.8 per cent) in 2001.

25. Other key findings from the 2011 Census were

(a) The religion question was the only voluntary question in the 2011 Census but only 7.2 per cent of people did not answer it;

(b) London was the most diverse region with the highest proportion of people identifying themselves as Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Jewish;

(c) The North East and North West had the highest proportion of Christians, and Wales had the highest proportion of people reporting no religion;

(d) Knowsley (in the North West region) was the local authority with the highest proportion of people reporting to be Christians (80.9 per cent) and Tower Hamlets (in London) had the highest proportion of Muslims at 34.5 per cent - over seven times the national average);

(e) Norwich (in the East of England) had the highest proportion of the population reporting no religion at 42.5 per cent.

Figure 8 Religious affiliation, 2011, England and Wales

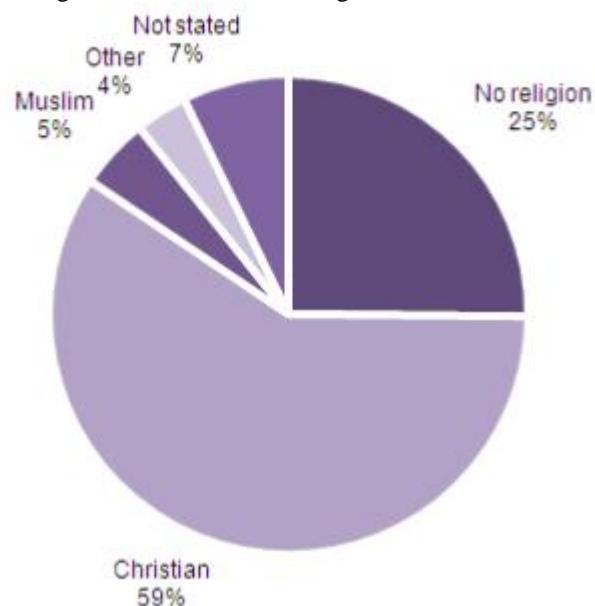
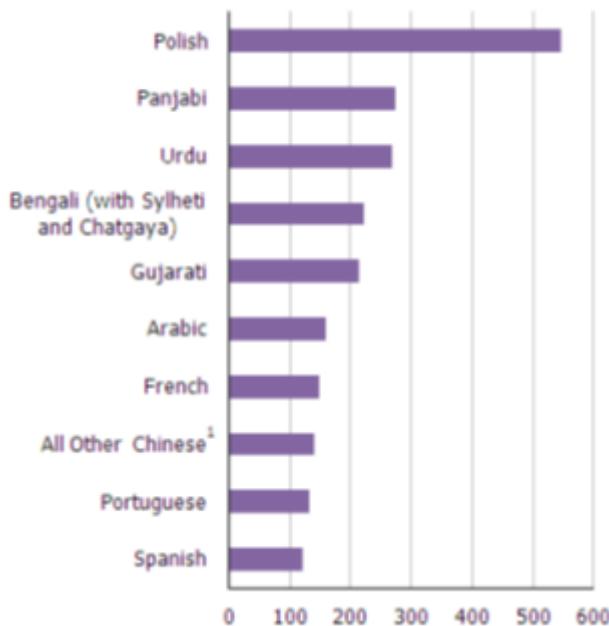


Figure 9 The top ten main languages other than English/Welsh
Thousands



F. Main language

26. Over 9 in 10 people aged three and over (92.3 per cent) reported ‘English’ (or ‘Welsh’ in Wales) as their main language. Of the remaining 7.7 per cent who had a main language other than English (or Welsh), Polish was the main language most often reported (546,000 people, 1.0 per cent).

27. Figure 9 shows that after Polish the next most common main languages were from South Asia: Panjabi (273,000 people) and Urdu (269,000) each with 0.5 per cent and Bengali (with Sylheti and Chatgaya, 221,000) and Gujarati (213,000) each with 0.4 per cent. Arabic was the main language of 159,000 people and French the main language of 147,000 both around 0.3 per cent.

28. In London, the proportion whose main language was other than English (22.1 per cent) was almost three times the national average, reflecting the culturally diverse nature of the capital’s population. But not surprisingly, perhaps, some of the ‘other’ main languages were found to be concentrated in different parts of the country. Thus, for example four fifths of the 500 people who reported ‘Cornish’ as their main language lived in Cornwall, while almost half those whose main language was ‘Pahari’ lived in Birmingham. But there were large concentrations of foreign languages in London: three quarters of those who reported ‘Yiddish’ lived in Hackney, a quarter of those who reported ‘Hebrew’ lived in Barnet and one in five who reported ‘Bengali’ lived in Tower Hamlets.

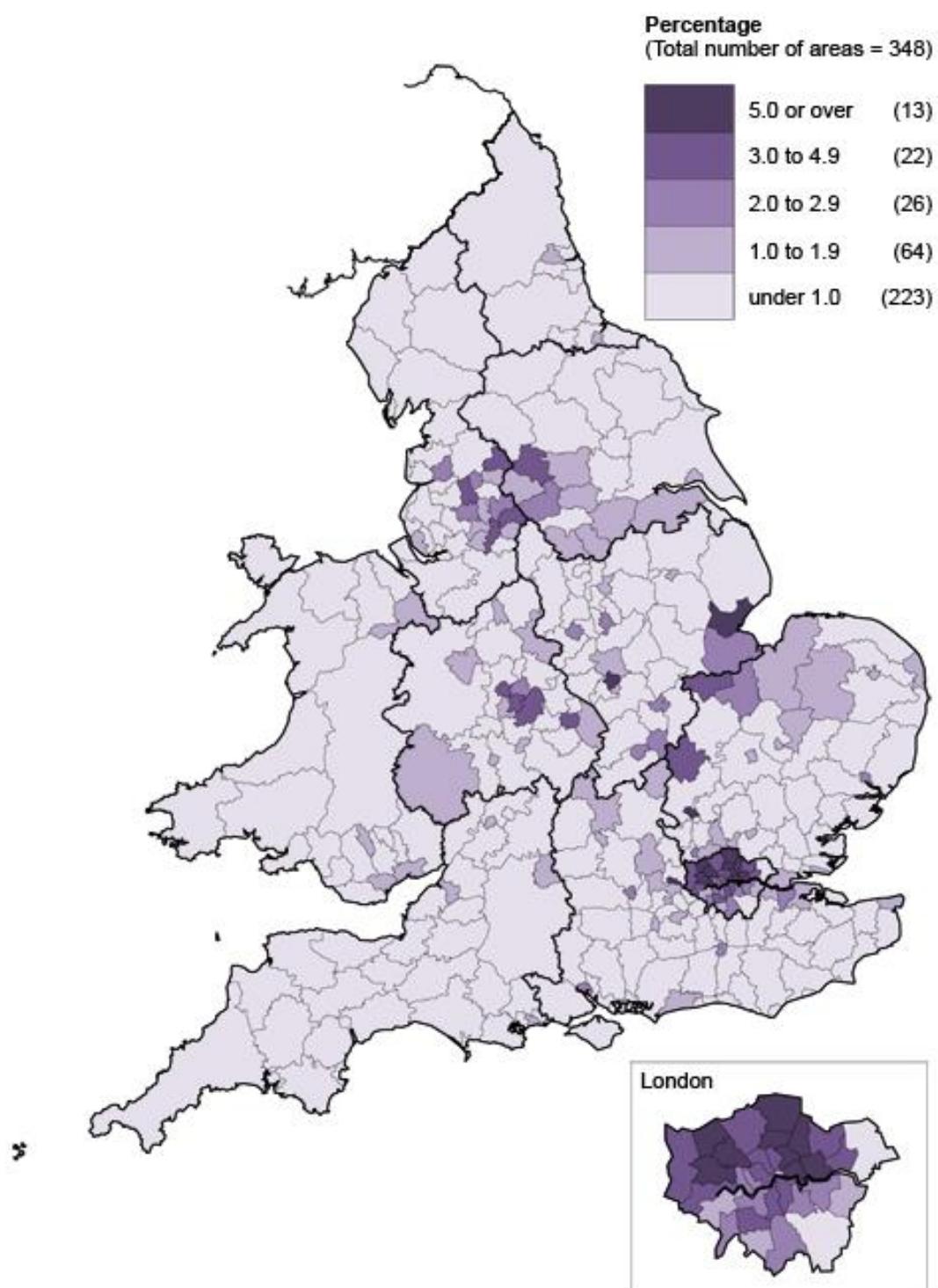
G. Proficiency in English

29. People who reported a main language other than English were also asked how well they spoke English. While 7.7 per cent of the population (4.2 million) of England and Wales had a main language other than English, only 1.3 per cent (726,000) reported that they could not speak English well, and only 0.3 per cent (138,000) reported that they could not speak English at all. The proportions were highest in London with nearly 4.1 per cent of the population (320,000 people) unable to speak English well or not at all followed by 2.0 per cent in the West Midlands. The North East had the lowest proportion of people who were unable to speak English well or not at all. Figure 10 shows the geographical spread of those not able to speak English well.

H. References

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- 5 Fitzpatrick, J, Jacobsen, B, and Aspinall, P. (2006). Indications of Public Health in the English Regions 4: Ethnicity and Health. Association of Public Health Observatories.

Figure 10 Distribution of areas where English was not spoken well, 2011



Source: Space-Time Research Pty Ltd.

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