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Coverage

United Kingdom

Theme

Social and welfare

Minority ethnic groups in the UK

A statistical picture of minority ethnic groups in the United Kingdom is drawn by a new report from the Office for National Statistics. Published today* on the National Statistics website only, it looks at the characteristics and circumstances of the UK's minority ethnic groups.

The data in this report are drawn from Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey, British Crime Survey, Family Resources Survey, Health Survey for England, Labour Force Survey and the Youth Cohort Study. 2001 Census results estimating the numbers and demographic characteristics and geographical spread of the minority ethnic population will be published starting February 2003. This report will be updated with these data when available.

Population

- The size of the minority ethnic population was 4.5 million in 2001/02 or 7.6 per cent of the total population of the United Kingdom. Indians were the largest minority group, followed by Pakistanis, Black Caribbeans, Black Africans, and those of Mixed ethnic backgrounds.
- Minority ethnic groups have a younger age structure than the White population. In 2001/02 the Mixed group had the youngest age structure - more than half (55 per cent) were under the age of 16. The White group had the highest proportion of people aged 65 and over at 16 per cent.
- In England people from minority ethnic groups made up 9 per cent of the total population in 2001/02 compared with only 2 per cent in both Scotland and Wales. Nearly half (48 per cent) of the total minority ethnic population lived in the London region, where they comprised 29 per cent of all residents.

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- Asian households tend to be larger than those from other ethnic groups. In spring 2002, Bangladeshi households were the largest with an average of 4.7 people, followed by Pakistanis (4.2 people), and Indians (3.3 people).
- In spring 2002, the proportion of lone parent families was highest among the Mixed group, at 61 per cent of all families with dependent children, followed by Black Caribbeans (54 per cent).

Labour market

- People in minority ethnic groups in the UK had higher unemployment rates than White people in 2001/02. Bangladeshi men and women had the highest unemployment rates at 20 per cent and 24 per cent respectively.
- In 2001/02 just over 40 per cent of Bangladeshi men aged under 25 were unemployed compared with 12 per cent of young White men.
- People from Pakistani and Chinese groups are far more likely to be self-employed than those in other groups. Around one-fifth of Pakistani (22 per cent) and Chinese (19 per cent) people in employment were self-employed in 2001/02. This compares with only one in ten White people and less than one in ten Black people.

Income

- In 2000/01 Pakistani and Bangladeshi households in Great Britain were more reliant than other groups on social security benefits – which made up nearly a fifth (19 per cent) of their gross income. Benefits were also a considerable source of income for the Black group (15 per cent).
- In 2000/01 people from minority ethnic groups were more likely than White people to live in low-income households in Great Britain. Almost 60 per cent of the Pakistani/Bangladeshi group were living in low-income households before housing costs were deducted. This increased to 68 per cent after housing costs.

Education

- Indian girls and boys in England and Wales, were more likely to get five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C than their White, Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi counterparts. Sixty-six per cent of Indian girls and 54 per cent of Indian boys achieved this in 1999.
- In 2001/02, people from Chinese, Indian, Black African and Other Asian groups were more likely to have degrees than White people in the UK. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis were the most likely to be unqualified.

Victims of crime

- In 1999 in England and Wales the risk of being the victim of a racially motivated incident was considerably higher for members of minority ethnic groups than for White people. The highest risk was for Pakistani and Bangladeshi people at 4.2 per cent, followed by 3.6 per cent for Indian people and 2.2 per cent for Black people. This compared with 0.3 per cent for White people.

Health

- In England, Asians were considerably more likely than the general population to describe their health as bad or very bad in 1999. After standardising for age, Pakistani/Bangladeshi men and women were three to four times more likely than the general population to rate their health in this way.
- In 1999 Bangladeshi men and women living in England were nearly six times more likely than the general population to report having diabetes after standardising for age. Risk ratios among Pakistani men and women were almost as high as those for the Bangladeshi group. Indian men and women were almost three times as likely as the general population to report having diabetes.

Lifestyles

- In England in 1999, Bangladeshi men were the group most likely to smoke cigarettes (44 per cent), followed by Irish (39 per cent) and Black Caribbean men (35 per cent). Among women, Irish and Black Caribbeans had the highest cigarette smoking rates, although only Irish women (33 per cent) had rates higher than the general population (27 per cent).
- In England in 1999, more than 34 per cent of Irish men and almost a fifth of Irish women drank above 21 units of alcohol a week for men and 14 units a week for women. All other minority ethnic groups were less likely than the general population to drink above these levels.

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. The Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey data presented here have been weighted to be consistent with the best population estimates available before the results of the 2001 Census were published. New regional and local mid-year population estimates for 1992-2000, which are consistent with the 2001 Census figures, will be published by ONS in early spring 2003. When these data are available, a reweighting of all the Labour Force Survey (LFS) series will be carried out. This will be complete in autumn 2003. The data presented here will then be replaced by final estimates which are consistent with the new population estimates derived from 2001 Census.
2. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
3. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. © Crown copyright 2002.