

The religion question was the only voluntary question on the Census and 7 per cent of borough residents chose not to state their religion.

Other smaller, but significant, faith groups represented in the borough include: Hindu (1.8 per cent of the population), Buddhist (1.2 per cent), Jewish (0.6 per cent) and Sikh (0.4 per cent).

A small number of residents (897 residents) ticked the 'any other religion' category. In total, these residents identified with 38 different minority religions, all fairly small in size (eg Pagan, Taoist and Jain).

Tower Hamlets compared with other areas

Tower Hamlets has the highest percentage of Muslim residents in England and Wales – 38 per cent compared with a national average of 5 per cent (Table 1). Tower Hamlets is the only local authority where the Muslim population is the largest single religious group. In all other areas the Christian population is the largest.

In terms of population numbers, Tower Hamlets has the fourth largest Muslim population in England and Wales following Birmingham, Bradford and Newham – whose Muslim populations were larger in number, but represented a smaller proportion of residents.

Table 1 Population by religion, 2011, Tower Hamlets and England

	Tower Hamlets Numbers	Tower Hamlets Percentage totals (%)	England & Wales Percentage totals (%)
All persons	254,096	100.0	100.0
Muslim	96,536	38.0	4.9
Christian	75,714	29.8	59.3
No Religion	53,435	21.0	25.2
Religion not stated	17,577	6.9	7.1
Hindu	4,626	1.8	1.5
Buddhist	2,993	1.2	0.4
Jewish	1,413	0.6	0.5
Sikh	905	0.4	0.8
Any other religion	897	0.4	0.4

Source: Census 2011 (Revised data issued by ONS for Tower Hamlets on 26.02.15).

The faith profile in Tower Hamlets is consistent with the unique ethnic profile of the borough's population, which is one third Bangladeshi, also the largest percentage nationally.

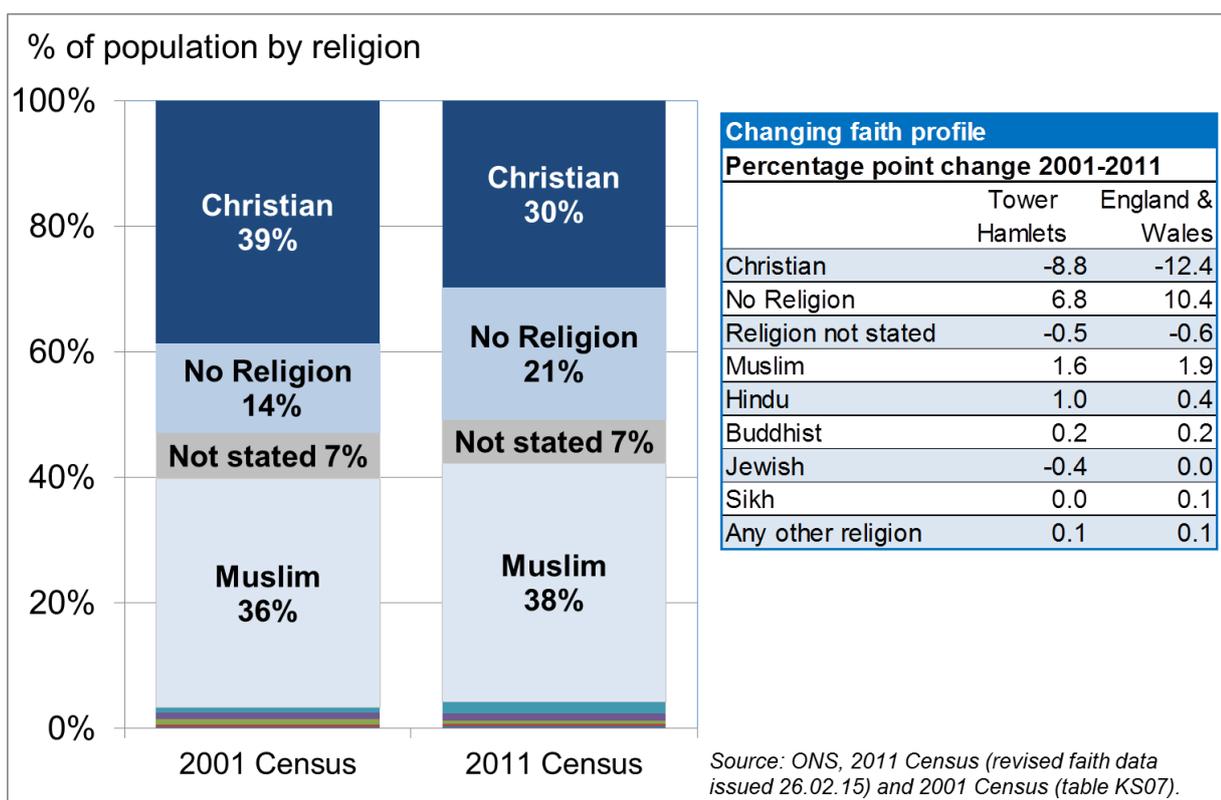
In contrast, Tower Hamlets has the lowest proportion of Christian residents nationally – 30 per cent of borough residents are Christian, around half the proportion nationally (59 per cent).

Change between 2001 and 2011: composition of the population by faith

There have been significant changes in the faith composition of the population over the last ten years. Most notably, there has been a decline in the proportion of Christians and an increase in the percentage reporting no religion at all. Similar trends have been evident nationally (Figure 2).

In Tower Hamlets, the percentage of the population who are Christian has fallen from 39 to 30 per cent between 2001 and 2011. In England and Wales, there has also been a sharp fall in the percentage from 72 to 59 per cent, though nationally, Christianity remains the largest religion.

Figure 2 Population composition by religion, Tower Hamlets, 2001-2011



The proportion of borough’s population who reported no religion has risen from 14 to 21 per cent. In England, the proportion rose even more strongly, rising from 15 to 25 per cent of the population.

Change between 2001 and 2011: numbers

Table 2 shows the absolute change in population size of each religious group over the last ten years. The Tower Hamlets population has increased by 30 per cent between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses – the largest increase in England and Wales. Similarly, most religious group populations have also shown strong growth in size, with the exceptions of: the Christian population, which has seen no significant change in size; and the Jewish population which has seen a decline in population.

The number of Muslim residents in Tower Hamlets increased at a slightly faster rate than the population generally (a 35 per cent rise) - as a result, the proportion of the population who are Muslim has increased marginally from 36 to 38 per cent over the last ten years. Given the

decline in the size of the Christian population in the borough over the period, Muslims are now the largest single religious group in the borough.

	2001 Census	2011 Census	Population change	% change
All persons	196,106	254,096	57,990	30
Christian	75,783	75,714	-69	0
Muslim	71,389	96,536	25,147	35
No Religion	27,823	53,435	25,612	92
Religion not stated	14,591	17,577	2,986	20
Buddhist	1,938	2,993	1,055	54
Jewish	1,831	1,413	-418	-23
Hindu	1,544	4,626	3,082	200
Sikh	682	905	223	33
Any other religion	525	897	372	71

Source: ONS, 2011 Census (revised data issued by ONS 26.02.15) and 2001 Census (Table KS07).

The borough's Hindu population while relatively small in size, has seen the fastest growth rate of all groups – trebling in size since 2001 from 1,544 up to 4,626 residents. As a proportion of the population - Hindu residents now represent 1.8 per cent of the borough population, up from 0.8 per cent in 2001.

Buddhists have also seen strong population growth of 54 per cent (a rise of 1,055 residents) and now represent 1.2 per cent of the borough's population – similar to the proportion in 2001 (1.0 per cent).

The Sikh population, the smallest of the borough's main religious groups, grew at a rate similar to that of the general population, and currently represents 0.4 per cent of the borough population.

Further information: This briefing was produced by the Council's Corporate Research Unit. For more information about the Census results, please see the Council's [website](#). For more information about this report, please contact: [Lorna Spence](#), Research Officer, Corporate Research Unit.

For information about the recent corrections to faith statistics, please refer to the Office for National Statistics website:
<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/census-data/census-products--issues-and-corrections/index.html>