# **Religion in Tower Hamlets** 2011 Census Update (Factsheet 2015-02)



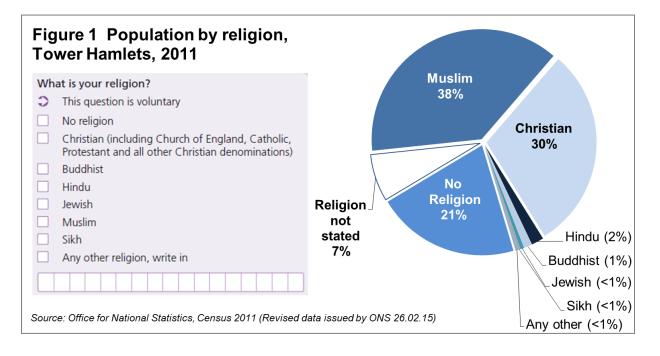
#### Summary

This report presents revised<sup>1</sup> 2011 Census statistics about the size of different faith groups in Tower Hamlets and explores changes over the last ten years. Key findings:

- 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. Conversely, the borough has the lowest proportion of Christian residents nationally: 30 per cent compared with a national average of 59 per cent.
- Between 2001 and 2011, the most significant changes in the borough's faith profile include a fall in the proportion of Christian residents (39 to 30 per cent) and a rise in the percentage with no religion (14 to 21 per cent) – these changes broadly reflect national trends over the same period. The proportion of the population that are Muslim has risen from 36 to 38 per cent.

# The faith profile in Tower Hamlets – 2011 Census figures<sup>1</sup>

The 2011 Census question on faith simply asked '*What is your religion*? Respondents were asked to tick one of eight categories which comprised: six religions, a '*no religion*' category, and an '*any other religion*' option which allowed residents to provide further detail. Figure 1 shows the results for Tower Hamlets. The borough's two largest religious groups are Muslim and Christian. At the time of the 2011 Census, 38 per cent of residents said they were Muslim and 30 per cent were Christian. Around one in five (21 per cent) residents said they had no religion.



<sup>1</sup> This briefing is based on <u>revised 2011 Census data</u> that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015. ONS has advised that the figures originally published for Tower Hamlets, on religion, contained errors. For this reason, figures presented here may differ from those in previous reports.

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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 | Tower Hamlets | England & Wales       |  |  |  |
|  | Numbers       | Р             | 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: Consus 2011 (Revised data issued by ONS for Tower Hamlets on 26.02.15) |               |               |                       |  |  |  |

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

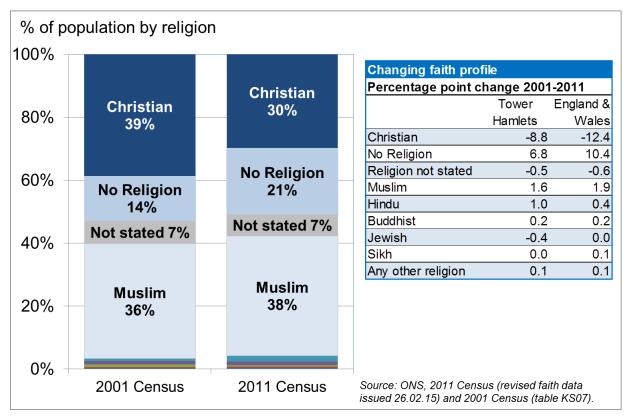
The faith profile in Tower Hamlets is consistent with the unique ethnic profile of the borough's population, which is one third Bangladeshi, also the largest percentage nationally.

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

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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.

| Table 2 Population   | growth by religion, | Tower Hamlets, | 2001-2011  |          |  |  |
|--|---------------------|----------------|------------|----------|--|--|
|  | 2001                | 2011           | Population |          |  |  |
|  | Census              | Census         | 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 <u>website</u>. For more information about this report, please contact: <u>Lorna Spence</u>, 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

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