

Article

Jewish identity, England and Wales: Census 2021

Characteristics and outcomes for people who identified as Jewish through the religion and ethnic group questions on Census 2021, in line with our Census 2021 White Paper.



Contact:
Teri Howells, Hannah Thomas,
Simone Lindo and Amy Davison
census.customerservices@ons.gov.uk
+44 1633 456326

Release date:
18 December 2023

Next release:
To be announced

Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [People who identified as Jewish in 2011 to 2021](#)
3. [Age and sex](#)
4. [Location](#)
5. [Reported ethnic groups and religions](#)
6. [Place of birth](#)
7. [Main language](#)
8. [Marital and civil partnership status](#)
9. [Education](#)
10. [Labour market](#)
11. [Housing](#)
12. [General health](#)
13. [Jewish identity data](#)
14. [Glossary](#)
15. [Data sources and quality](#)
16. [Related links](#)
17. [Cite this article](#)

1 . Main points

- 287,360 people identified as Jewish in England and Wales in Census 2021; this was 0.5% of the usual resident population.
- 219,160 people identified as Jewish through religion only, 16,030 through ethnic group only, and 52,165 through both religion and ethnic group.
- There has been a 5.7% increase in the number of people who identified as Jewish since the 2011 Census (271,904); this is broadly in line with the general increase in the population of England and Wales (6.3%).
- Most (53.6%) people who identified as Jewish lived in London; this compares with 14.8% of the England and Wales population who lived there.
- People who identified as Jewish were more likely to be self-employed compared with the England and Wales population (17.5% compared with 11.3%).

2 . People who identified as Jewish in 2011 to 2021

In Census 2021, covering England and Wales, a person was able to identify as Jewish through the religion question, the ethnic group question, or both. In this article, we refer to "Jewish identity groups". These groups are defined by the way in which people identified: through religion only, ethnic group only, or through both religion and ethnic group.

More information on how people identified as Jewish through their religion and ethnic group responses is in [Section 14: Glossary](#).

More information on how write-in responses are represented can be found in our blog post: [How am I represented in Census 2021 data?](#)

Considering religion and ethnic group responses, 287,360 people identified as Jewish on Census 2021. This is 0.5% of the England and Wales population.

This includes:

- 219,160 who identified through the religion question alone (76.3% of all people who identified as Jewish)
- 16,030 who identified through the ethnic group question alone (5.6%)
- 52,165 who identified through both questions (18.2%)

Overall, 94.4% of people who identified as Jewish on Census 2021 did so using the religion question. However, these numbers may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Figure 1: There was an increase in people who identified as Jewish through ethnic group

People who identified as Jewish on Census 2011 and Census 2021 split by how they identified

Notes

1. Counts have been rounded to nearest 1000.

The slope chart in Figure 1 shows an increase in the number of people who identified as Jewish, from 271,904 in the 2011 Census, to 287,360 in Census 2021. This is a 5.7% increase, broadly in line with an England and Wales population increase of 6.3%.

Considering how people identified as Jewish, there has been a fall in the number of people who identified through the religion question alone (from 238,134 in 2011 Census to 219,160 in Census 2021, an 8.0% decrease). At the same time, there has been an increase in the number of people who identified as Jewish through the ethnic group question:

- 16,030 identified as Jewish through the ethnic group question alone in Census 2021, compared with 8,558 in 2011 (an 87.3% increase)
- 52,165 identified as Jewish through both the religion and ethnic group questions in Census 2021, compared with 25,212 in 2011 (a 106.9% increase)

3 . Age and sex

Figure 2: Age profile of those who identified as Jewish more evenly distributed than England and Wales population

Percentage of people who identified as Jewish and the England and Wales population in each age group, split by sex, Census 2021

The population pyramid in Figure 2 shows that people who identified as Jewish:

- were more consistently distributed across the age groups between 15 to 19 years and 65 to 69 years than the England and Wales population
- had a larger proportion of people aged under 15 years than the England and Wales population
- had noticeably higher proportions of females than males in the 70 to 74 years and 85 years and over age groups

The median age for people who identified as Jewish was 41, one year higher than the median age for the England and Wales population.

Figure 3: Age profiles varied by how people identified as Jewish

Percentage of people who identified as Jewish overall and in each Jewish identity group, in each age group, split by sex, England and Wales, Census 2021

The population pyramids in Figure 3 show the age and sex profiles for the different Jewish identity groups.

People who identified as Jewish through religion only were consistently distributed across the age groups between 15 to 19 years and 65 to 69 years (similar to the overall Jewish identity group). Their median age was 43. The split between females and males was 52.0% female and 48.0% male.

People who identified as Jewish through ethnic group only were more likely to be aged between 30 to 59 years compared with the overall Jewish identity group. They were less likely to be aged under 19 years. Their median age was 41. There were noticeably higher proportions of males than females in age groups between 20 to 24 years and 40 to 44 years.

People who identified through both religion and ethnic group had a younger age profile, with a higher proportion of people aged under 19 years. Their median age was 36. They were the most evenly split across males and females (49.2% were female and 50.8% were male).

4 . Location

Figure 4: Most people who identified as Jewish lived in London

Percentage of people who identified as Jewish and the England and Wales population in each region of England and Wales, Census 2021

The bar chart in Figure 4 shows that most (53.6%) people who identified as Jewish lived in London. This compares with 14.8% of the England and Wales population who lived in London.

Figure 5: How people identified as Jewish varied across the regions of England and Wales

People who identified as Jewish split by how they identified in each region of England and Wales, Census 2021

The stacked bar chart in Figure 5 shows that using the ethnic group question to identify as Jewish varied across the regions of England and Wales.

In East of England, 15.6% of people who identified as Jewish used the ethnic group question; 12.4% answered alongside the religion question and 3.2% answered through the ethnic group question alone.

In comparison, in London, over a quarter of people who identified as Jewish used the ethnic group question; 22.3% answered alongside the religion question and 5.5% answered through the ethnic group question alone.

Figure 6: One fifth of people who identified as Jewish lived in Barnet

How people who identified as Jewish were spread across Lower Tier Local Authorities (LTLAs) in England and Wales, split by Jewish identity group, Census 2021

The maps in Figure 6 show that people who identified as Jewish were clustered around Manchester, Leeds, and London. In particular, Barnet in London was the Lower Tier Local Authority (LTLA) where 20.1% of people who identified as Jewish lived.

Considering the Jewish identity groups:

- people who identified through religion only were the most spread out across England and Wales
- people who identified through both religion and ethnic group were more clustered in London; over a quarter (27.0%) lived in Barnet and 9.9% in Hackney
- people who identified through ethnic group only had higher proportions living in Brighton and Hove (1.9%), Bristol (1.8%), and Cambridge (1.6%)

5 . Reported ethnic groups and religions

Jewish ethnic group write-ins

People who identified as Jewish through ethnic group only were most likely to provide a write-in response under the high-level "White" group (54.9%). This was followed by the "Any other ethnic group" (33.6%). Just over one-tenth (10.5%) provided a write-in under "Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups". Lastly, 0.9% provided a write-in under "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African".

Considering people who identified as Jewish through both religion and ethnic group, 49.6% provided a write-in under "Any other ethnic group" and 48.5% under the high-level "White" group.

Reported ethnic group for people who identified as Jewish through religion only

People who identified as Jewish through religion only were most likely to identify their ethnic group using the "White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British" tick-box (82.9%). Just over one-tenth (10.9%) provided a write-in response under "Any other White background".

More information on how people were able to identify their ethnic group on Census 2021 is in [Section 14: Glossary](#). We also provide a downloadable copy of the questionnaire on our [Census 2021 paper questionnaires page](#).

Reported religion for people who identified as Jewish through ethnic group only

People who identified as Jewish through ethnic group but did not identify as Jewish through religion mostly identified as having no religion (67.3%). Around one-fifth (19.2%) did not answer the religion question, which was voluntary. Of the religions provided as tick-box responses, Christian was the most common (8.4%).

6 . Place of birth

Figure 7: After the UK, the most common place of birth for people who identified as Jewish was the Middle East and Asia

People who identified as Jewish and the England and Wales population split by place of birth, Census 2021

The stacked bar chart in Figure 7 shows the UK was the most common place of birth for people who identified as Jewish overall (79.5%). This was followed by the Middle East and Asia at 7.0% and Europe (excluding UK) at 5.8%.

People who identified as Jewish through ethnic group only were more likely to have a place of birth outside the UK compared with the other identity groups. One-tenth (10.0%) were born in Europe (excluding UK), 8.9% were born in the Middle East and Asia, and another 8.9% in the Americas and the Caribbean.

People who identified as Jewish through both religion and ethnic group were more likely to be born in the Middle East and Asia compared with the other Jewish identity groups (11.6% compared with 8.9% for ethnic group only and 5.8% for religion only).

7 . Main language

In this section, we consider people aged three years and over.

English or Welsh was stated as a main language for 93.6% of people who identified as Jewish aged three years and over on Census 2021. This is slightly above the percentage for the England and Wales population (91.1%).

The percentage of each identity group that stated English or Welsh as their main language was:

- 94.5% of people who identified as Jewish through religion only
- 90.6% of people who identified as Jewish through both religion and ethnic group
- 90.6% of people who identified as Jewish through ethnic group only

Hebrew was stated as a main language by 5,675 people who identified as Jewish (2.0% of all people who identified as Jewish). Of these people, the majority (56.7%) identified through religion only.

Yiddish was stated as a main language by 4,635 people who identified as Jewish. This is 1.6% of all people who identified as Jewish. Of these people, the majority (64.6%) identified through religion only.

8 . Marital and civil partnership status

In this section, we consider people aged 16 years and over.

Figure 8: Most people who identified as Jewish were married or in a civil partnership

Percentage of people aged 16 years and over in Jewish identity groups and in the England and Wales population in each marital and civil partnership status, England and Wales, Census 2021

The stacked bar chart in Figure 8 shows that 53.9% of people who identified as Jewish aged 16 years or over were married or in a civil partnership. This is higher than for the England and Wales population (44.6%).

Of the Jewish identity groups, people who identified as Jewish through both religion and ethnic group were most likely to be married or in a civil partnership (57.3%). A slightly lower percentage of people who identified through religion alone were married or in a civil partnership (53.9%). People who identified as Jewish through ethnic group alone were least likely to be married or in a civil partnership (42.8%).

These trends may be partly explained by identification with a religion. Higher percentages of people who identified with a religion were married or in a civil partnership compared with people who stated no religion or who did not answer the religion question (as was the case for most people who identified as Jewish through ethnic group alone).

These figures should also be considered alongside the age profiles of the identity groups shown in [Section 3: Age and sex](#). Overall age patterns of marital and civil partnership status should also be considered, as shown in our [Marriage and civil partnership status in England and Wales article](#).

9 . Education

In Census 2021, respondents aged 16 years and over were asked to record their qualifications. In this section, we look at the highest level of qualification achieved. For more information on how we record this, see our [Highest level of qualification variable: Census 2021 dictionary](#).

People who identified as Jewish were more likely to report a Level 4 or above qualification as their highest level of qualification compared with the population of England and Wales (50.7% compared with 33.8%). These qualifications include:

- Higher National Certificate
- Higher National Diploma
- bachelor's degree
- post-graduate qualifications

This trend was evident across all age bands and for both sexes. The largest differences were seen for both females and males aged 45 to 49 years. Almost two in three (65.4%) females in this age group who identified as Jewish reported their highest level of qualification as Level 4 or above compared with 42.8% of females in this age group in England and Wales. The percentages for men were similar, 64.2% for males who identified as Jewish and 39.0% for males in England and Wales.

Figure 9: People who identified as Jewish were more likely to hold a Level 4 or above qualification

Percentage of people aged 16 years or over who identified as Jewish overall, in each Jewish identity group and in the England and Wales population, whose highest level of qualification was level 4 or above

The bar chart in Figure 9 shows that almost three-quarters of people who identified as Jewish through the ethnic group question alone held a [Level 4 or above qualification](#) (73.2%). This compares with 61.7% of people who identified through both religion and ethnic group and 46.4% of people who identified as Jewish through the religion question alone. All of these figures compare with 33.8% for England and Wales overall.

Several factors could explain the differences across Jewish identity groups. These include different age profiles and visa requirements for people born in the Middle East or Asia or the Americas and Caribbean.

10 . Labour market

This section looks at the labour market status for those aged 16 to 64 years based on Census 2021 data.

Census 2021 was conducted during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and it is possible that this affected the way people responded. See our [Comparing Census 2021 and Labour Force Survey estimates of the labour market, England and Wales: 13 March 2023 article](#) for further information about interpreting census labour market data.

People aged 16 to 64 years who identified as Jewish were less likely to be employees compared with the England and Wales population (55.2% and 59.6%, respectively). In comparison, they were more likely to be self-employed (17.5% and 11.3%, respectively).

Figure 10: People who identified as Jewish were more likely to be self-employed

Percentage of females and males who identified as Jewish and in the England and Wales population in each age group who were self-employed, Census 2021

The bar charts in Figure 10 show that people who identified as Jewish were more likely to be self-employed compared with the England and Wales population. This trend was evident for both sexes, for all five-year age groups for females and for all of the five-year age groups from 35 to 39 years for males.

Almost a fifth (19.5%) of females who identified as Jewish in the 60 to 64 years age band were self-employed, compared with 7.5% of females in this age band in the England and Wales population. For males, the percentages were 32.0% and 17.9%, respectively.

People who identified as Jewish were more likely to be self-employed across all regions of England and Wales. London was the region with the highest percentages of self-employment. Of the 16 to 64-year-olds who identified as Jewish in London, 18.9% were self-employed compared with 13.7% of the overall London population.

Of the identity groups, people who identified as Jewish through ethnic group only were the most likely to be self-employed (21.7%). This compares with 18.6% of people who identified through both religion and ethnic group and 16.8% of people who identified through religion only.

More data on economic activity and occupation is available, see our [accompanying datasets page](#).

11 . Housing

This section is about people living in households. It does not include data on people living in communal establishments, such as university halls of residence or care homes.

The analysis looks at percentages of people, rather than percentages of households, because ethnic group and religion are individual.

Figure 11: Over half the people who identified as Jewish through both religion and ethnic group were living in households of four or more

Percentage of people who identified as Jewish overall, in each Jewish identity group, and in the England and Wales population in each household size category

Notes

1. The order of the legend matches the order of the stacks in each bar.

The stacked bar chart in Figure 11 shows that 43.3% of people who identified as Jewish were living in households of four or more people. This compares with 38.1% of the England and Wales population.

The percentage in households of four or more people varied across the Jewish identity groups. People who identified through both the religion and ethnic group were most likely to be in this household size (51.9%). People who identified through ethnic group only were least likely (31.3%).

These figures should be considered alongside age profiles. People who identified through both religion and ethnic group had a younger age profile, with a larger proportion of people aged under 15 years. This could suggest more dependent children, leading to larger household sizes.

These figures also vary across regions, 67.7% of people who identified as Jewish in the North East and 53.1% of people who identified as Jewish in the North West were living in households with four or more people. This compares with 45.9% of people who identified as Jewish in London and 24.8% in Wales.

More data on household size is available on our [accompanying datasets page](#). More information on household size distribution is available in [Section 15: Data sources and quality](#).

Overcrowded accommodation

When looking at people living in overcrowded accommodation, we consider the occupancy rating for bedrooms. This provides a measure of whether accommodation is overcrowded, ideally occupied or under-occupied. See how we record this in our [Occupancy rating for bedrooms variable: Census 2021 dictionary](#).

Overall, people who identified as Jewish on Census 2021 were less likely to live in overcrowded accommodation (6.7%) compared with the England and Wales population (8.4%). However, this was not true across all regions of England and Wales.

Figure 12: Experience of overcrowding varies across regions for people who identified as Jewish

Percentage of people who identified as Jewish and population of England and Wales in overcrowded accommodation in each region of England, and Wales, Census 2021

The range plot in Figure 12 shows that, in nearly all regions of England and Wales, people who identified as Jewish were less likely to live in overcrowded accommodation. In the North East and North West the opposite was true. People who identified as Jewish were more likely to be living in overcrowded accommodation than the overall population of those areas.

In the North East, 12.0% of people who identified as Jewish were living in overcrowded accommodation compared with 4.3% of the overall North East population. In the North West, the percentages were 10.7% compared with 7.1%. This is likely to be related to Jewish people in these regions living in larger households. In the North West, 53.1% of Jewish people were living in households with four or more people compared with 36.6% of the overall North West population.

Overcrowding rates also vary within regions. For example, within London, where most people who identified as Jewish lived, 8.2% of people who identified as Jewish were living in overcrowded accommodation. But this rises to over a third (34.7%) for people who identified as Jewish who lived in Hackney (compared with 22.7% for people in Hackney overall).

12 . General health

Overall, people who identified as Jewish reported better health outcomes compared with the England and Wales population. Very good or good health was reported by 85.1% of people who identified as Jewish compared with 82.0% of the England and Wales population.

This trend was evident across all five-year age groups. The gap between the percentages reporting good or very good health was largest for those aged 60 to 64 years (79.8% for people who identified as Jewish compared with 71.0% for the England and Wales population).

More data on reported health status for people who identified as Jewish is available in our [accompanying datasets page](#). This includes country and regional level data.

13 . Jewish identity data

[Jewish identity data: population counts](#)

Dataset | Released 18 December 2023

Counts of people who identified as Jewish overall and by identity group at national, country, region, and Lower Tier Local Authority level in Census 2021. Also included are national counts for Census 2011 and comparison counts for England and Wales overall.

[Jewish identity data: age and sex](#)

Dataset | Released 18 December 2023

Counts of people who identified as Jewish overall and by identity group split by age band and sex at national, country, region, and Lower Tier Local Authority level.

[Jewish identity data: characteristics](#)

Dataset | Released 18 December 2023

Counts of people who identified as Jewish overall and by identity group split by legal partnership, main language, country of birth, reported ethnic group and religion at national, country, and region level. Also included are counts of people who stated their main language was Yiddish or Hebrew at national level.

[Jewish identity data: housing](#)

Dataset | Released 18 December 2023

Counts of people who identified as Jewish overall and by identity group split by household size and occupancy rating at national, country, region, and Lower Tier Local Authority level. Breakdowns by age band and sex are also included for Jewish overall counts split by occupancy rating.

[Jewish identity data: labour market](#)

Dataset | Released 18 December 2023

Counts of people who identified as Jewish overall and by identity group split by economic activity and occupation at national, country and region level. Breakdowns by age band and sex are also included for Jewish overall counts.

For the full list of available datasets, please see our [accompanying dataset page](#).

14 . Glossary

Usual resident

A usual resident is anyone who, on Census Day, 21 March 2021, was in the UK and had stayed or intended to stay in the UK for a period of 12 months or more or had a permanent UK address and was outside the UK and intended to be outside the UK for less than 12 months.

Jewish identity

Identifying as Jewish on Census 2021 was a process of self-identification. This is why we talk about "people who identified as Jewish" instead of "Jewish people" or the "Jewish population".

Ethnic group

"Ethnic group" refers to the ethnic group that the person completing the census feels they belong to. This could be based on their culture, family background, identity, or physical appearance.

Respondents could choose 1 out of 19 tick-box response categories, including write-in response options.

There were two stages to the ethnic group question. The respondent identifies first through one of the following high-level options before selecting a tick-box:

- "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh"
- "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African"
- "Mixed or Multiple"
- "White"
- "Other ethnic group"

Some of the tick-boxes required further identification through a write-in response.

To see the ethnic group question on the household, individual and Welsh questionnaires, visit our [Census 2021 paper questionnaires page](#).

Religion

The religion people connect or identify with (their religious affiliation), whether or not they practise or have belief in it.

This question was voluntary, and the variable includes people who answered the question, including "No religion", alongside those who chose not to answer this question.

This variable classifies responses into the eight tick-box response options. Write-in responses are classified by their "parent" religious affiliation, including "No religion", where applicable.

Occupancy rating bedrooms

Whether a household's accommodation is overcrowded, ideally occupied or under-occupied. This is calculated by comparing the number of bedrooms the household requires with the number of available bedrooms.

The number of bedrooms the household requires is calculated according to the Bedroom Standard, where the following should have their own bedroom:

- adult couple
- any remaining adult (aged 21 years or over)
- two males (aged 10 to 20 years)
- one male (aged 10 to 20 years) and one male (aged 9 years or under), if there are an odd number of males aged 10 to 20 years
- one male aged 10 to 20 years if there are no males aged 0 to 9 years to pair with him
- repeat the third, fourth and fifth bullets for females
- two children (aged 9 years or under), regardless of sex
- any remaining child (aged 9 years or under)

An occupancy rating of:

- negative 1 or less implies that a household's accommodation has fewer bedrooms than required (overcrowded)
- plus 1 or more implies that a household's accommodation has more bedrooms than required (under-occupied)
- 0 suggests that a household's accommodation has an ideal number of bedrooms

General health

A person's assessment of the general state of their health from "very good" to "very bad". This assessment is not based on a person's health over any specified period of time.

For more information, see our [General health, England and Wales: Census 2021 bulletin](#).

Economic activity status

People are economically active if, between 15 March and 21 March 2021, they were:

- in employment (an employee or self-employed)
- unemployed, but looking for work and could start within two weeks
- unemployed, but waiting to start a job that had been offered and accepted

It is a measure of whether or not a person was an active participant in the labour market during this period.

For more information, see our [Economic activity status, England and Wales: Census 2021 bulletin](#).

Economically inactive are people who did not have a job between 15 and 21 March 2021 and had not looked for work between 22 February and 21 March 2021 or could not start work within two weeks.

People are inactive if they were recorded as being one of the following:

- retired (whether receiving a pension or not)
- studying
- looking after home or family
- long-term sick or disabled
- another reason

For information on how a respondent's reason for inactivity was recorded, please read our [Comparing Census 2021 and Labour Force Survey estimates of the labour market, England and Wales: 13 March 2023 article](#).

Because of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the UK labour market, the estimated number of people who were economically inactive might be higher than anticipated in some areas. It is possible that some people on furlough may have identified as economically inactive, instead of temporarily away from work.

Occupation

Classifies what people aged 16 to 64 years do as their main job. Their job title or details of activities they do in their job and any supervisory or management responsibilities form this classification. This information is used to code responses to an occupation using our [Standard Occupational Classification \(SOC\) 2020](#).

It classifies people who were in employment between 15 and 21 March 2021 by the SOC code that represents their current occupation.

In this publication, we use nine "high-level" categories for the types of work people do:

- "managers, directors or senior officials"
- "professional occupations"
- "associate professional and technical occupations"
- "administrative and secretarial occupations"
- "skilled trades occupations"
- "caring, leisure and other services"
- "sales and customer service"
- "process, plant and machine operation"
- "elementary occupations"

For more information, see our [Industry and occupation, England and Wales: Census 2021 bulletin](#).

Highest level of qualification

The highest level of qualification is derived from the question asking people to indicate all qualifications held, or their nearest equivalent. This is used to calculate the highest level of qualification (so, the highest level of qualification that an individual reported irrespective of previous qualifications listed) using the following categories:

- no qualifications: no formal qualifications
- Level 1: one to four GCSE passes (grade A* to C or grade 4 and above) and any other GCSEs at other grades, or equivalent qualifications
- Level 2: five or more GCSE passes (grade A* to C or grade 4 and above) or equivalent qualifications
- apprenticeships
- Level 3: two or more A Levels or equivalent qualifications
- Level 4 or above: Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma, Bachelor's degree, or post-graduate qualifications
- other qualifications, of unknown level (for further information, see [Section 8: Measuring the data of our Education, England and Wales: Census 2021 bulletin](#))

Country of birth

The country in which a person was born. For people not born in one of the four parts of the UK, there was an option to select "elsewhere". People who selected "elsewhere" were asked to write in the current name for their country of birth.

Main language

A person's first or preferred language.

This question was only asked for those aged three years and over.

Legal partnership status

Classifies a person according to their legal marital or registered civil partnership status on Census Day, 21 March 2021.

It is the same as the 2011 Census variable "Marital status" but has been updated for Census 2021 to reflect the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc) Act 2019, which made provision for the extension of civil partnerships to couples who are not of the same sex.

15 . Data sources and quality

Quality considerations for Census 2021 and its strengths and limitations can be found in our [Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\) for Census 2021](#).

Information about our quality assurance processes can be found in our [Maximising the quality of Census 2021 population estimates methodology](#).

Quality information relating to the census data on religion is published on our [Ethnic group, national identity, language, and religion quality information for Census 2021 methodology](#). This page will be updated if any new issues are identified.

Census data collection and response rate

The census provides estimates of the characteristics of all people and households in England and Wales on Census Day, 21 March 2021. It is carried out every 10 years and gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales.

The person response rate for Census 2021 was 97% of the usual resident population of England and Wales, and over 88% in all local authorities. Most returns (89%) were received online. The response rate exceeded our target of 94% in England and Wales and 80% in all local authorities.

Representation of Jewish people in Census 2021

We received questions from some user groups around how Orthodox Jewish communities are reflected in the census results. This section will discuss the work done in this area.

Defining people who identified as Jewish

We have defined people who identified as Jewish in this article as everyone who answered either the religion question or the ethnic group question as "Jewish". This includes records created through the coverage adjustment described in the next section.

As religion was a voluntary question on the census, "missing values" on census responses to this question were legitimate responses. Therefore, we did not impute values to replace the missing value as with mandatory questions.

Someone who did not answer the census religion question, and who did not identify as "Jewish" in response to the ethnic group question, would not be recorded as Jewish in the census results, even if they described themselves as Jewish in other parts of life, such as in a social context. In 2021, 94% of people chose to answer the census question on religion.

Coverage

The first step to producing good quality estimates for any population group is achieving a high census response rate. Our approach to ensuring this is summarised in Section 3 of our [Maximising the quality of Census 2021 population estimates methodology](#).

As part of this, we worked closely with various community groups and leaders before, during and after the census collection phase. This included the Jewish community where we had bespoke and translated communications for Jewish media outlets and dedicated engagement staff with Yiddish or Hebrew language skills working in local communities.

This work contributed to the census achieving a final estimated response rate of 97% for both the total population and the Jewish population.

Even though we achieved a high response rate, we want the census estimates to cover the whole population so we use a range of statistical methods to estimate and adjust for people who do not respond. This means that if we have a lower response rate for a particular population group the final census estimate for that group will not be an under-estimate. This process of estimating and adjusting does introduce some statistical uncertainty into final estimates, as is normal with any statistical estimation.

Overall, the methods we have used mean that:

- there is no reason to expect the census estimates of people who identified as Jewish (using the definition described in the previous section) to be an under-estimate
- there is some statistical uncertainty in the estimates of people who identified as Jewish
- estimates of people who identified as Jewish below local authority level (such as wards or Lower-layer Super Output Areas) will have a higher level of uncertainty than at the local authority level.

More information on Census 2021 coverage adjustment and estimation is available in our methodology articles: [Coverage adjustment for Census 2021 in England and Wales](#) and [Coverage estimation for Census 2021 in England and Wales](#).

Household size

Our method of adjusting for undercoverage involves adding new households to the census database. We do this to reflect households that did not respond to the census and to reflect individuals in responding households who were not included on the census return. We do not add these latter individuals into existing households, we create new households for them.

As a result, populations tending to have large households who respond to the census but miss some individuals from their return may see their household size distribution:

- slightly over-estimate the number of small households
- slightly under-estimate the number of large households

Given the high level of person response and the overall household size distribution, this effect would be small when considered across all people who identified as Jewish. However, it might be more evident in estimates for small areas which had a high proportion of such households.

Quality assurance

We conducted rigorous quality assurance on the data for every census topic. Our standard quality assurance of the religion data included:

- comparing the census estimates with results from the Annual Population Survey (APS), our [Population estimates by ethnic group and religion for 2019 article](#), and the GP Patient Survey (GPPS)
- validating the age profile of the Jewish population against that seen in the 2011 Census
- investigating the size of Jewish populations in different local authorities and whether changes since 2011 were plausible

We carried out additional checks on aspects of the data on the Jewish population in response to specific questions raised by users. These included:

- checking response rates in the Stamford Hill area within Hackney and Haringey, and in areas in Gateshead and Salford which are known to have a high proportion of the Orthodox Jewish population
- comparing census estimates of Jewish children in Stamford Hill with data from the school census
- checking for evidence that people in large households were being missed from census estimates for these areas

These checks suggested there was no cause for concern around the census estimates of people who identified as Jewish. Users should be aware of the very minor caveat about the household size distribution mentioned in the household size section.

16 . Related links

[Ethnic group, national identity, language and religion: data and analysis](#)

Webpage | Last updated 13 December

Information about data and analysis available for ethnic group, national identity, language and religion. This includes a list of data and analysis available on people who identified as Jewish through religion (94.4% of all people who identified as Jewish).

[Create a custom dataset](#)

Interactive tool | Updated regularly

The Census 2021 create a custom dataset tool allows you to make your own datasets, combining variables from demography and migration, ethnic group, national identity, language and religion, housing, labour market, education and health, disability and unpaid care.

[Create a population group profile](#)

Interactive tool | Updated regularly

The Census 2021 create a population group profile tool allows you to see how a selected population group compares to the whole population of England and Wales across a variety of measures including health, education and employment.

17 . Cite this article

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 18 December 2023, [ONS website, article, Jewish identity, England and Wales: Census 2021](#)