



Judaism in the UK

Statistics

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Population statistics

- There are 263,346 Jews in England and Wales according to the last census (2011) although due to the voluntary nature of the question on faith and under-reporting, the Institute of Jewish Policy Research estimates that the actual figure is 284,000.
- After years of decline, the Jewish community increased marginally from 259,927 in the 2001 census.
- In 1951, the Jewish community of the UK was estimated to be 420,000.
- Those areas of the country with large concentrations of strictly Orthodox Jews (Stamford Hill, north west London, north Manchester and Gateshead) all saw significant increases, whilst areas associated with mainstream Jewry, such as Redbridge and Brent, saw declining Jewish populations.
- Jews represent 0.5% of the UK population. They are the fifth largest religious community in the UK after Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs.
- There are Jews living in every one of the 348 local authority areas in England and Wales, including four in MerthyrTydfil and four in the Isles of Scilly.
- There are 54,084 Jews living in the London Borough of Barnet accounting for one in five (20.5%) of all Jews in England and Wales.
- Four out of every five UK Jews live in Greater London.
- More than 6,000 people speak Hebrew as their first language and almost 4,000 say that their main language is Yiddish.
- The median (most common) age for Jews living in England and Wales is in the band from 50-54; in contrast it is 75-79 in Bournemouth and nought to four in Hackney.

Synagogue membership

- Approximately half of all UK Jews do not belong to a synagogue
- 82,963 Jewish household - three-quarters of all the all-Jewish householders in the UK - are members of one of 409 synagogues.
- The long-term decline in synagogue membership recorded over the last 20 years is flattening out. Overall, synagogue membership declined by less than 1% between 2005 and 2010.
- The largest synagogue group, by denomination, is Central Orthodox (including the United Synagogue) with around 50% of the total membership. This compares with 66% for this strand in 1990.
- By contrast, the number of Strictly Orthodox synagogue members has more than doubled over this 20-year period, from 5% to 11% of the total membership.
- The overall proportion of 'non-Orthodox' strands relative to 'Orthodox' strands has increased from 25.9% in 1990 to 30.8% in 2010.

Jewish attitudes to religious observance

- 57% of Jews attend a Friday night meal most weeks; half (49%) frequently light candles at home on Friday night; just under one in five (18%) refrains from turning on lights on Shabbat (the Sabbath).
- More respondents observe kashrut (Jewish dietary laws) inside their home (52%) than outside their home (36%).
- In almost all aspects of Jewish religious behaviour, younger respondents are more observant than older respondents.
- A quarter (26%) of respondents describe themselves as being 'Traditional'; a similar proportion (24%) as 'Secular/Cultural'; and a minority (16%) as 'Orthodox' or 'Haredi'. 18% describe themselves as 'Reform/Progressive'.
- Compared with type of upbringing, the Traditional group has seen a net loss of a third (34%), whereas the Secular/Cultural group has seen a net gain of 63%.

Intermarriage

- One in four (26%) Jews in a partnership has a non-Jewish partner.
- Of those in marriages which are currently intact, 23% are intermarried; of those who cohabit but are not married, 61% have a non-Jewish partner.
- 62% of those who describe their current Jewish position as Secular/Cultural are intermarried.
- 76% of 'in-married' Jews attend a Friday night meal most weeks, compared with 18% of the intermarried.

Education

- There are more than 26,000 Jewish pupils attending Jewish schools today.
- Approximately 60% of all Jewish children attended a Jewish school in 2008, up from 25% thirty years ago.
- Approximately half of these come from the strictly orthodox community where demand for Jewish schooling is 100%.
- In London, where the majority of Jewish children live, children from the mainstream community make up about 50% of the total in Year 1 and Year 7 of Jewish schools.
- More than three-quarters (77%) of respondents to NCJS survey believe Jewish schools strengthen pupils' Jewish identity; 61% believe Jewish schools increase pupils' chances of Jewish in-marriage.
- With the exception of Orthodox and Haredi parents, Jewish schools are most popular among middle-income families, but as household income rises above £110,000 per annum, Jewish schools are increasingly less likely to be chosen.

Charitable giving

- 93% of Jews report donating money to a charity (Jewish or otherwise) in the past year (2013 figure).
- A higher proportion (45%) of Jews prioritises non-Jewish charities than Jewish charities (37%).

1. Figures based on 2011 national census
2. Figures based on 2010 report by the Board of Deputies in conjunction with the Institute of Jewish Policy Research
3. From the 2013 NJCS national survey of the UK Jewish community conducted by the Institute of Jewish Policy Research
4. Figures from the 2013 NJCS Survey and the 2008 Jewish Leadership Council Report on the Future of Jewish Schools